

THE INTERINSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION

The Council was sometimes anxious to build bridges with the Parliament. What you have to see is this: We always made an effort to find a common position, as far as possible, with the Commission, in order to step up pressure on the Council. The time factor is particularly important since the Council always set very short deadlines, in which the Parliament had to deliver an opinion. We always kept to them. It was the Council itself that was unable to keep to them. That was the real problem as far as legislation was concerned.

FAMILY PHOTO WITH THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PRESIDENT AT EU SUMMITS

It began as a symbolic gesture and later became part of the protocol. I say a 'symbolic gesture' because, as far as I know, no decision had been taken by the Council. Rather, I was chatting with the Secretary-General of the Council and he had just said, 'They're taking the photo now, let's go into the next room', when a British admiral came up to me and said, 'Her Majesty requests you to come for the photograph'.

Now, this could have been a one-off, but the next summit was held in Edinburgh, and since the photo there was also going to be taken with Queen Elizabeth II, it was clear that I would be in it again. The third summit was in Copenhagen, and the tradition, which everybody had since got used to, was continued by Queen Margrethe of Denmark.