

THE MAASTRICHT TREATY: NEW POWERS FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

My principle was always: If there is a possibility of acquiring additional rights, and we are granted additional rights, to use them in full, to the very limit, and to attempt to go further, by extending the Parliament's sphere of influence through interinstitutional agreements or informal arrangements.

Codecision, of course, brought us great progress and allowed us to have considerable influence over legislation. We endeavoured to make it clear that we had received new powers - or new opportunities to participate. And the decisive factor was that these new opportunities build up. We therefore sought to make use of the opportunities for proposing amendments and also to bear in mind that we were in a position to reject any proposals made. This called for very good contacts with Council representatives and the Commission.

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And my only failure in preparing Maastricht, to give you a negative example: I did not succeed in inserting into the Treaty of Maastricht a way to ensure that the Parliament could not be dissolved by the Council, but would have to agree to dissolution itself.