

INTEGRATION OF EAST GERMANY IN THE EU TREATIES

This special committee, chaired by Gerardo Fernández Albor and with the UK (Labour) rapporteur, worked extremely effectively, and we were able to look over the entire legislation within the time allowed, to enable it to be adapted. This was essential for accession to the European Community to go smoothly.

We provided for 18 observers in the Rules of Procedure. This was the planned figure for extra German members which would have been adopted if the GDR had acceded. These were gradual advances which created the condition for achieving integration subsequently in the Parliament. But I must reiterate: It was the Parliament alone which had this idea of the observers and put it into practice.

DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS AFTER THE REUNIFICATION OF GERMANY

We wanted to achieve an outcome which more accurately reflected population sizes. We met with fierce resistance on this from the French, who considered that Germany and France should always have an equal number of representatives. We nevertheless managed - with an absolute majority, after three votes - to get a compromise proposal from the Political Affairs Committee (which also took all the smaller states into consideration, such as the Netherlands, which was under-represented compared with Belgium) through Parliament with the necessary absolute majority and to submit this proposal to the European Council in Edinburgh.

However, there could be no deal if France did not give its backing to the solution we had proposed. Mitterrand had had the National Assembly decide that France would agree to it only if the seat of the Parliament remained in Strasbourg. Since it was now within my power to complete the construction work there and overcome this hurdle, I did so. The Parliament followed my lead in this. And so the Parliament's proposal on the redistribution of the number of MEPs was accepted in Edinburgh.