

① Confederati

STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT DELEGATION

MADRID 2-3 APRIL 1991

Mr President, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The European Parliament delegation wants, in its turn, to congratulate the Spanish Parliament and thank it for taking the initiative to call for this Conference.

Since the beginning of the CSCE, the European Parliament has given it full support. It is now particularly happy to take part in the joint effort to add a parliamentary dimension to this European enterprise. We are determined to participate fully in this new development of parliamentary democracy for all of Europe and to do so according to our responsibilities and to the role we play today and tomorrow.

This is the spirit in which the European Parliament envisages its participation in the Parliamentary Assembly of the CSCE foreseen by the Charter of Paris for a New Europe.

1. Having said this, I must now state here that the European Parliament is not satisfied with the observer status that has been given to it at this conference, and certainly cannot be satisfied with an observer status in a future parliamentary assembly with no right to intervene in debates or in decision-taking. The questionnaire (before the conference) wants to know, "if membership has to follow certain conditions". The European Parliament can rightly state that it certainly fulfils the fundamental conditions in that respect.

Firstly, the Charter of Paris was signed by the Heads of State or Government of the participant states and also by the European Community as such by its dual executive branch, namely the President-in-Office of the Council (Mr Andreotti) and the President of the Commission (Mr Delors). From a legal point of view, the parliament of the European Community - that is the European Parliament - finds itself in a situation equal to the situation of all parliaments of the other signatories to the Charter. To give it only observer status, therefore, is obviously an erroneous interpretation of the legal and political situation recognised by the Paris Conference.

Secondly, the European Parliament is elected by direct universal suffrage in periodical, pluralistic and free elections by an electorate representing 340 million citizens in 12 Member Countries, these being members of the CSCE. The European Parliament, therefore, asks to be considered equal to any other parliamentary assembly elected under the same conditions in a European state. It is certainly inadequate to relegate it to the second row when its parliamentary legitimacy clearly puts it in the first row with the national parliaments of the 12 Member States of the Community and that of the other parliaments directly elected in Europe.

2. The Charter of Paris wants the creation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the CSCE to take into account "the acquired experience and the work already realised" in the field of parliamentary participation in European and international enterprises. The European Parliament can certainly speak of great experience in that field and can certainly make contributions to the setting up and work of the future Parliamentary Assembly of the CSCE:

- The European Parliament has the experience of the creation of a pluri-national parliamentary institution, of direct elections in numerous countries on the same day for the same parliamentary body, and of working methods for an inter-parliamentary assembly with growing influence and parliamentary powers.
- The European Parliament has the experience of the day-to-day cooperation among the political forces of 12 European nations already, helping them to overcome linguistic, national and party lines for the common European good.
- The European Parliament works every day in nine official languages and has had to give itself the means of interpretation, compte rendu, translation and publishing necessary to that effect. As a fully-fledged member, the European Parliament would not hesitate to offer this experience to the future assembly and all its members. Similarly, it could certainly provide contributions and facilities wished for to the future secretariat of the CSCE Assembly and to the organisation of the meetings and activities of this Assembly.

Mr Chairman, dear colleagues, we all agree that Europe finds itself in a major evolution. Let me mention a very significant new fact in the making.

The Governments of the Twelve Member States of the European Community are just about to decide to make external policy and security a field of Community competence and of common policy. This important new step will, of course, develop the responsibility and role of the European Parliament in its debates and votes, and on the European scene.

Evolution, we all know, asks for careful reactions and thinking. Some decisions can be made today, but others would better be taken at further meetings, especially at the setting-up meeting of the CSCE Assembly.

Let me add already my thanks to those delegates here who have stressed the original place of the European Parliament and asked for its full membership!

We very much hope that political, constitutional and practical considerations, taking into account my arguments, will help us without diversion to reach a mutually acceptable formula for the EP participation and membership.

The Chairperson of the Political Affairs Committee of the EP, Mrs Cassanmagnago-Cerretti and myself thank you for your invitation and wish you every success in this historic process and enterprise.

Georgios ROMEOS

President of the European Delegation
Vice-President of the European Parliament