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Research Article

## Challenging Intergovernmentalism and EPC. The European Parliament and Its Actions in International Relations, 1970-1979

**Umberto Tulli**, *Università degli Studi di Trento*

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## Abstract

Since the adoption of the Davignon Report in 1970, European Political Cooperation (EPC) was supposed to be an intergovernmental area of action, with no role for the European Parliament. However, far from being a talking shop with no power, the European Parliament undertook many initiatives to increase its role, powers and visibility, even in external relations. Based on a growing body of scholarship and recently declassified documents from European archives, this paper focus on three major initiatives developed during the Seventies by the European Parliament, namely the creation of an inter-parliamentary mission with the American Congress in 1972; the inception of the European Community Visitors Program, and the growing involvement of the European Parliament in the CSCE and the so-called 'Helsinki process'. Through these initiatives, the European Parliament tried to exert some control over – and to shape – intergovernmental EPC. Furthermore, through the actions in foreign affairs, the European Parliament tried also to solidify its role in European integration: through the acquisition of new powers and competencies, it would have been easier to justify the introduction of direct elections.

## Keywords

European Parliament, External Relations, Parliamentary diplomacy, European Political Cooperation.

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The European Parliament's actions in international relations do not represent a topic generally studied by historians. The rationale is manifold. First, on a very general level, assessing the role of parliaments in international affairs and foreign relations is a complicated matter since, traditionally, foreign policy has been an exclusive area of the executive power. This has an impact also on historiography, which is still dominated by an International Relations-approach. With its focus on negotiations and crises among national governments, it leaves little room for the study of Parliaments and legislative bodies. There are of course many exceptions, and scholars' interest in 'parliamentary diplomacy', broadly defined as an alternative form of diplomacy developed by legislative institutions, is constantly growing, tackling national parliaments or supranational assemblies, those superparliaments that spread through Western Europe and the Atlantic world after the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> Second, looking at the European Parliament and the development of a European foreign policy, it is only after the Maastricht Treaty that the European Parliament was associated with foreign relations, although initially it had a merely consultative role.<sup>2</sup> Before then, Member States had adopted a political coordination for their national foreign policies, the European Political Cooperation. This sort of embryonic foreign policy among the European Community (EC) Members was first introduced by the 1970 Davignon Report. It was a purely intergovernmental field of action, outside of the Treaties, which did not contemplate any role for the European Parliament.<sup>3</sup> Thirdly, in the historiography concerning European

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<sup>1</sup> There are of course many exceptions. See J. A. Hovey, *The Superparliaments. Interparliamentary Consultation and Atlantic Cooperation* (Preager, 1966); N. Götz, 'On the Origins of Parliamentary Diplomacy. Scandinavian Bloc Politics and Delegation Policy in the League of Nations', *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association*, 40(3), pp. 263-279; E. Barbé, A. Herranz-Surrallés (eds.), *The Role of Parliaments in European Foreign Policy: Debating on Accountability and Legitimacy* (Office of the European Parliament, 2005). Nevertheless, most histories of the European Parliament and scholarly works on the development of EPC do not mention its role in foreign affairs. See Y. Mény (ed.), *Building Parliament: 50 Years of European Parliament History, 1958-2008*, (European University Institute and Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2009); B. Rittberger, *Building Europe's Parliament: Democratic Representation Beyond the Nation-State* (Oxford University Press, 2005); D. Allen, R. Rummel, W. Wessels (eds.), *European Political Cooperation: Towards a Foreign Policy for Western Europe* (Butterworth Scientific, 1982)

<sup>2</sup> S. Stavridis and D. Irrera, *The European Parliament and Its International Relations* (Routledge, 2015)

<sup>3</sup> D. Allen, R. Rummel, W. Wessels (eds.) (1982), op. cit.

integration and European institutions, the corpus concerning the European Parliament is quite marginal. With a few exceptions, historians tend to dismiss the non-elected Parliament as a sort of polyglot talking-shop, innocent of legislative powers and, incidentally, with no voice over EPC.

In recent years, however, a few scholars have focused on the activities and actions developed by the European Parliament during the Seventies in order to enhance its role in the EC, increase its powers and obtain the right to be directly elected by universal suffrage.<sup>4</sup> This article aims at adding a contribution to this literature by suggesting that the non-elected European Parliament (EP) has tried to exert some forms of influence over European decision-making and policies, even in a purely intergovernmental area, which had no link to the EC, as EPC was. The focus is therefore on the years between 1970, when EPC was introduced, and 1979, when the first direct elections by universal suffrage took place. On a very general level, the article seeks to contribute to the ongoing reappraisal of the 1970s in European integration history. For many years, the decade has been portrayed as a moment of difficulties, crisis and even stagnation in the process of European integration. Yet, more recent studies have suggested a more nuanced appraisal, thus considering the 1970s as a decade of radical change and transformation both for the world and for the community.<sup>5</sup> The article will focus on a specific aspect of this reappraisal, namely the intersection between institutional evolution of the EC and its affirmation on the global political arena. It will show how the European Parliament tried to exert some forms of control over EPC by discussing a number of reports and adopting resolutions on the need to create some links between EPC and the Community and on the opportunity to give the Parliament a role on the development of EPC. It will also show how the European Parliament was able to circumvent EPC and Member States' control over the EC's external relations.

In doing that, the analysis will further highlight two issues. Firstly, it will suggest that the prodromes of the current debate on the role of the European Parliament in the development of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the democratic deficit affecting it, can be found in the 1970s debates. Twenty years after the inception of the CFSP, the European Parliament is still demanding to have a greater role in the development of the European Union's foreign policy. Year after year, it has repeated this claim through resolutions, official questions, and, above all, in its annual reports on the development of the EU's foreign policy. This study will suggest that, even before the introduction of direct elections, the European Parliament urged the introduction of some forms of democratic control and scrutiny over the European Political Cooperation. Secondly, the actions that the European Parliament developed during the 1970s to modify EPC were intended to assert the powers of the Parliament in the EC decision-making and to transform the European Parliament into a genuine Parliament. Linking these actions to the contemporary debate on the introduction of direct elections, the article will argue that, far from being a powerless talking shop, the European Parliament was able to use its informal and mostly symbolic powers in foreign affairs to enhance its legitimacy in the public eye and, eventually, to obtain the right to be directly elected. It would be naïve and wrong to consider that the European Parliament's actions in the Community's external relations was the driving force beyond the transformation of the institution into an elective assembly. Nevertheless, during the Seventies, the European Parliament tried to exercise more powers in many different areas – EPC included – to increase its influence, to obtain the right to be directly elected and to contain the intergovernmental dimension of European integration. As a consequence, the analysis will

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<sup>4</sup> See Y. Mény (ed.) (2009), op. cit.; P. Ludlow, 'Governing Europe: Charting the Development of a Supranational Political System' in A. Varsori and W. Kaiser (eds), *European Union History. Themes and Debates*, (Pgrave Macmillan 2010), 109-128; S. Kahn, 'Le Parlement européen et-il un ODHNI (objet démocratique et historique non identifié)?', *Histoire@Politique. Politique, culture, société*, ii, n. 8 (2009), 1-14; R. Corbett, F. Jacobs, and M. Schackleton, 'The European Parliament at Fifty: A View from the Inside', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41(2) (2003), 353-373; J. Lodge, 'The European Parliament after Direct Elections: Talking Shop or Putative Legislature?', *Journal of European Integration*, 5(3) (1982), pp. 259-84. This traditional view has been recently challenged by A. C. Knudsen, 'The 1970 and 1975 Budget Treaties: Enhancing the Democratic Architecture of the Community' in F. Laursen (ed.), *Designing the European Union. From Paris to Lisbon*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 98-103; D. Pasquonucci, *Uniti dal voto? Storia delle elezioni europee, 1948-2009* (FrancoAngeli, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> A. Varsori and G. Migani (eds.), *Europe in the International Arena during the 1970s. Entering a Different World* (Peter Lang, 2011); H. Marhold, 'How to Tell the History of European Integration in the 1970s', *L'Europe en formation*, 2009/3, 353-354 (2009); For a global perspective, see N. Ferguson, C. Maier, D. Sargent and E. Manela (eds.), *The Shock of the Global. The Seventies in Perspective* (Harvard University Press, 2011).

suggest that the EP tried to exert some powers over EPC, in order to limit the intergovernmental evolution of the Community and strengthen its supranational dimension.

Against this background, the article will, first, describe the origins and main features of EPC and the inconsequential role (if any) the European Parliament had in it. Second, it will focus on two initiatives the European Parliament developed in the early 1970s, namely, the inception of an inter-parliamentary mission with the American Congress and the creation of the European Community Visitors Program (now European Union Visitors Program). These actions were outside EPC function. They represented the European Parliament's attempt to develop a parallel foreign policy to challenge Member States' exclusive monopoly on the Community's external affairs. It is worth noting, however, that these initiatives were not the first actions the European Parliament developed in the field of external relations. It had already established some official contacts with the assemblies of the Western European Union and the Council of Europe; it had participated in the political debate over British membership (although its opinions were not binding); and it had developed a forum for discussions with Associated African and Malagasy States (Parliamentary Conference of the EEC-AAMS Association). Yet, it was only in the 1970s that EC Member States officially inaugurated an embryonic foreign policy and the European Parliament wittingly tried to shape it. In the third section, the article will examine the role of the European Parliament in the development of a common European stance vis-à-vis the CSCE Review Conference, which opened in Belgrade, in 1977.

### THE INCEPTION OF EPC AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The Hague Summit of December 1969 among the EC Heads of State and Government marked a new start for Europe, which was made possible by Charles De Gaulle's retirement from the political scene. Under the triptych 'completion, deepening, enlargement', the summit defined an ambitious political agenda that allowed the Community to enter the 1970s with a renewed sense of direction and a firm commitment to a European re-launch.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, in the following years, some remarkable successes were realised. Among the decisions of the summit, the Heads of State and Government instructed their foreign ministers to 'study the best way of achieving progress in the matter of political unification'.<sup>7</sup> Less than a year later, on October 1970, foreign ministers presented the so-called Luxembourg or Davignon Report (I) (named after the Belgian diplomat Etienne Davignon), which defined the fundamental tenet of the European Political Cooperation (EPC), the first attempt to harmonize and coordinate EC member states' foreign policies within a single coherent framework. Being an intergovernmental, informal, and non-binding forum outside of the EC institutional framework, EPC developed its own institutional framework, mechanisms, and procedures. It was an area agreed upon by foreign ministers and managed by diplomats. Each meeting among the foreign ministers was prepared for by the Political Committee which was bringing together the political directors from each foreign ministry, comprising different working groups, and groups of correspondents from national ministries and diplomatic posts. According to the Davignon Report, the Parliament was excluded from EPC. Even the Commission could not claim a role in its blueprint, although discussions on international economic and commercial matters gave the Commission a limited yet important role during the negotiations for the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.<sup>8</sup>

For many years, scholars took a quite dismissive approach to the development of EPC. In an early

<sup>6</sup> See the special edition on the 1969 Hague summit of the *Journal of European Integration History*, 9(2) (2003), edited by J. Van der Harst; P. Chassaigne, *Les années 1970. Fin d'un monde et origine de notre modernité* (Armand Colin, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> 'Communiqué Final du Sommet de La Haye, 2 décembre 1969', in Archives of European Integration, University of Pittsburgh (hereinafter AEI), Accession 420 European Integration – Summit Meeting For a general description of the Summit's achievements see M. E. Guasconi. *L'Europa tra Continuità e Cambiamento. Il vertice dell'Aja del 1969 e il rilancio della costruzione europea* (Polistampa, 2004); and J. Van Der Harst (ed.), 'The Hague Summit of 1969', *Journal of European Integration History*, 9(2) (2009).

<sup>8</sup> M. Gainar, *Aux Origines de la diplomatie européenne. Les Neuf et la coopération politique européenne de 1973 à 1980* (Peter Lang, 2012); W. Wallace, 'Foreign and Security Policy. The Painful Path from Shadow to Substance', in H. Wallace, W. Wallace, M. A. Pollack (eds.), *Policy-Making in the European Union* (Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 429-456. On the EEC role in the negotiations for the CSCE see A. Romano, *From Détente in Europe to European Détente. How the West Shaped the Helsinki CSCE* (PeterLang, 2009).

assessment of EPC, the former Member of the European Parliament, Jean Penders, took a quite dismissive approach, hoping for possible improvements both for EPC and its accountability to the European Parliament. The historian Van Der Harst, for example, suggests that the 'EPC [...] turned into a low-key forum for coordination of foreign policies and never developed into a credible player in the global arena'.<sup>9</sup> On the contrary, some recent works highlighted that early developments in the European Political Cooperation created a dynamic and proactive image for the European Community. Already in the biennium 1973–1975, some remarkable achievements were realised: the EC participated as a single actor at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE); it unanimously rejected Kissinger's initiative for a new Atlantic Charter and for the 'Year of Europe'; and it actively worked for peace in the Middle East through diplomatic initiatives, such as the 1973 November Declaration and the following Euro-Arab dialogue.<sup>10</sup>

Although EPC was an intergovernmental field of action, from its inception Member States made provisions for a limited and mostly symbolic involvement of the European Parliament in it. According to the first EPC Report, the 1970 Luxembourg Report, the president of the Council of foreign ministers would meet the Political Affairs Committee in a six-monthly informative colloquium on an 'informal' basis 'in order to give members of the European Parliament and ministers an opportunity to freely express their own opinions'.<sup>11</sup> The European Parliament immediately took an unambiguous stance. It welcomed the reaffirmation of the political aims of the Community and called for an extension of EPC to security and defence.<sup>12</sup> Yet, it also urged the Council to involve the assembly and to consider its influence over the implementation of EPC.<sup>13</sup> A window of opportunity to increase the European Parliament's role in EPC materialised in 1973 thanks to its revision, through the adoption of the Second Davignon Report, which slightly enhanced the role of the European Parliament, calling Member States to submit an annual report, which would be discussed by the Members of the European Parliament. In addition to this, Members of the European Parliament had the right to address oral or written questions to Foreign Ministers.<sup>14</sup>

This transformation was part of a firmer stance assumed by the Parliament which, at the time, was trying to increase its powers and, eventually, to obtain the right to be directly elected. Between 1970 and 1973, the European Parliament was still a non-elected Assembly, whose powers had registered a substantial increase in the budgetary realm and in unofficial contacts with the Council, through a new conciliation procedure. Yet, it was still far from assuming legislative powers. Similarly, EPC remained substantially outside of parliamentary scrutiny.<sup>15</sup> According to Etienne Davignon, the lack of democratic legitimacy and the fact that EPC was not a community policy prevented the Parliament to play a significant role in it: 'the European Parliament has a marginal place: it is not yet elected (...) so, it is really hard to give it a place over an area that is outside the Community (as EPC) and even on issues which fall under the EC, its role is weak and marginal'.<sup>16</sup> Despite the adoption of the Second Davignon Report and the now official role for the European Parliament, discussion with its Political Committee remained sporadic and did not add any immediate

<sup>9</sup> J. J. M. Penders, 'The European Parliament and European Political Cooperation', *Irish Studies in International Affairs*, 2(4) (1988), pp.41-46; J. Van Der Harst, 'The 1969 Hague Summit: a New Start for Europe?', *Journal of European Integration History*, 9(2) (2003), p.7.

<sup>10</sup> D. Möckli, *European Foreign Policy during the Cold War: Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the Dream of Political Unity*, (I.B. Tauris, 2008); M. Gainar, (2012), op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> 'Report by the Foreign Ministers of the Member States on the problems of political unification', 27 October 1970. Available at <[http://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/4/22/4176efc3-c734-41e5-bb90-d34c4d17bbb5/publishable\\_en.pdf](http://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/4/22/4176efc3-c734-41e5-bb90-d34c4d17bbb5/publishable_en.pdf)>. [Last accessed 10 April 2016].

<sup>12</sup> 'Relazione presentata a nome della Commissione politica sull'avvenire politico della Comunità europea', 5 October 1970, in Historical Archives of the European Union, Florence (here in after HAEU), Accession: PE0 1158.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>14</sup> Second Report on European Political Cooperation in Foreign Policy Matters, 23 July 1973. Available at <[www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/1/1/8b935ae1-0a38-42d4-a97e-088c63d54b6f/publishable\\_en.pdf](http://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/1/1/8b935ae1-0a38-42d4-a97e-088c63d54b6f/publishable_en.pdf)>. [Last accessed 25 October 2016].

<sup>15</sup> See R. Corbett, *The European Parliament's Role in Closer EU Integration* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); A. C. Knudsen, 'The 1970 and 1975 Budget Treaties: Enhancing the Democratic Architecture of the Community', in F. Laursen, *Designing the European Union. From Paris to Lisbon* (Palgrave, 2012); D. Pasquinucci, *Uniti dal voto? Storia delle elezioni europee, 1948-2009* (FrancoAngeli, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> E. Davignon quoted in M. Gainar, (2012), op. cit., p. 361.

inputs to the development of EPC. Yet, starting in 1973, the European Parliament officially challenged the Member States' de facto monopoly on external relations.

### A PARALLEL FOREIGN POLICY? THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE CREATION OF AN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY, AND THE INCEPTION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY VISITORS PROGRAM

Between 1971 and 1974, estrangement and suspicion seemed to grow on both sides of the Atlantic. The economic turmoil triggered by Richard Nixon's unilateral decision to suspend the Bretton Woods system and the divergent approaches to the Middle East crisis were matched by a new and less supportive American attitude toward European integration. Even Europeans became increasingly skeptical and critical of the American ally.<sup>17</sup> It was also in contrast with these tensions, and in affirming its role in the EC decision-making machinery, that the European Parliament jumped into the field of the EC's external relations. In January 1971, a nine-member delegation from the House Foreign Affairs Committee of the American Congress toured Europe, with the premises of the European Commission as the last stop on the tour. Arrangements for the visit had been known since June 1970, when the Committee on External Economic Relations of the European Parliament urged the President of the assembly to organize a meeting between the American Congressmen and their European counterparts in order to foster an unofficial exchange of views on the state of transatlantic relations between the two legislative assemblies.<sup>18</sup> The meeting was then followed by an official visit to the U.S. Congress by a delegation of members of the European Parliament in May 1972. The talks touched upon many subjects affecting US-EC relations, ranging from American complaints over the Community's trade and agriculture policies, security and the role of both Assemblies in fostering closer US-European links. On both shores of the Atlantic the meeting was perceived as a success.<sup>19</sup> For the European Parliament it was particularly important. Not only did it start a series of bilateral meetings between MEPs and representatives from the American Congress, but it was also followed by similar initiatives: in 1974, the European Parliament inaugurated the European Community-Latin America inter-parliamentary forum and in 1980 the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association.<sup>20</sup>

Yet, the most important consequences of this program were on the European Parliament's attempt to play a significant role within the EC and EPC. Labelled by some critics as a sort of expansive 'political tourism', the importance of the contacts between the European Parliament and the US Congress should not be underestimated. Indeed, their meaning seems to be twofold: on the one side, they contributed to favour bilateral dialogue and understanding in a moment of transatlantic tensions and misunderstanding; on the other side, they represented a parliamentary action in foreign relations which was beyond Member States' control and, by extension, the Parliament's search for an increased role in the EC decision-making. As the

<sup>17</sup> Among many others: M. Smith, 'The Devil You Know: The United States and a Changing European Community', *International Affairs*, 68(1) (1992), pp.103-120; G. Lundestad, *The United States and Western Europe Since 1945: From 'Empire' by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift* (Oxford University Press, 2003); M. Gilbert, 'Gli Anni Settanta', in M. Del Pero and F. Romero (eds), *Le crisi transatlantiche. Continuità e Trasformazioni*, Roma, edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2007; T. A. Schwartz and M. Schultz, (eds.), *The Strained Alliance. U.S. – European Relations from Nixon to Carter* (Cambridge University Press, 2010)

<sup>18</sup> Parlamento Europeo, Ufficio di Presidenza, 'Processo verbale della seduta di Roma dell'8 giugno 1970', in CARDOC, document: PEO OD PV/BURE 1970 0608 0010, 'Lettres Confidentielles', in CARDOC, document: PEO AP RP/BURE 1971 A0-1007/070 and PEO AP RP/BURE 1971 A0-1007/07.

<sup>19</sup> EC Information Service, Press Release, 'House Leaders to Meet Members of the European Parliament', and 'EP and us Legislators Share Ideas, Problems', *European Community*, August-September 1972, 157, p.3, both in AEI, Accession 423.01 European Parliament. The European Parliament delegation was composed of Wilhelmus Schuijt (Christian Democrats, Netherlands), Linus Memel and Hans Richarts (both Christian Democrats from Germany), Giovanni Boano (Christian Democrat, Italy), Maurice Dewulf (Christian Democrat, Belgium), Hendrilus Vredeling (Socialist, Netherlands), Hans Lautenschlager and Eric Wolfram (both Socialists from Germany); Charles Durant (Liberal, France) William Borm (Liberal, Germany).

<sup>20</sup> European Parliament, Working Documents, Report drawn up on behalf of the Committee on External Economic Relations on the Results of the first European Community-Latin America Inter-Parliamentary Conference held in Bogotà from 15 to 18 July 1974, AEI, Accession 423.01 European Parliament. See also E. Baldassarri, 'The Importance of Parliamentary Exchanges in the Relationship between Europe and North America', in A. Nieddu and F. Soddu (eds.), *Assemblee rappresentative, autonomie territoriali, culture politiche* (Editrice Democratica Sarda, 2011).

American ambassador to the European Communities, J. R. Schaetzel, wrote, this program represented the dynamism embodied by the European Parliament, the EC institution which 'has shown more active interest in American-Community relations than either the Commission or the Council of Ministers' and the one that represented 'a counterweight to the Council of Ministers, which has a penchant for secrecy and narrow, national bargaining'.<sup>21</sup>

After the first meetings, the mood on both shores of the Atlantic was more positive and revealed the ambitious role the European Parliament wanted to play in the future development of the Community.<sup>22</sup> The official report written by American and European parliamentarians who participated in the meetings indicated that the Congressmen were 'greatly impressed by the development of a European political consciousness' and by 'the political development at the European Parliament and by its important future role in the European Community [...] the Parliament's importance is in its potential. In informal meetings over the two-day visit in Luxembourg [...] the common goal of elected representatives in solving some of the troublesome problems dividing Europe and America were discussed in details'.<sup>23</sup> On the European side, the vice President of the Parliament, the Italian Christian-Democrat Giovanni Bersani underlined the importance of such meetings in order to avoid a situation in which the parliamentary forces 'would be excluded by the growth and deepening of international contacts among governments' and to 'cut the distance between them, a distance which depends on both geography and the lack of reciprocal knowledge',<sup>24</sup> while the Head of the European delegation, the Dutch Wilhelmus Schuijt, pointed out the originality of the parliamentary delegation:

Our delegation does not intend merely to repeat the arguments that have been put forward on either side at the level of governments or experts but rather to enquire into the background of these arguments, their justification and the underlying objectives. Above all we wish to open a dialogue that will not end when we leave the United States but may be continued at regular intervals and developed further in a spirit of mutual understanding. This is not merely a diplomatic or even a governmental concern. But it should be, I venture to say, a matter of permanent preoccupation for the elected representatives of our peoples.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, the Socialist Member of the European Parliament, Eric Wolfram, underlined:

[T]hat the first official visit of a European Parliament's delegation to the United States was opportune and necessary. We did not speak on behalf of our national parliaments. On the contrary, we spoke as representatives of the European Parliament. [...] It is fundamental to develop even further our six-month consultations [...] to consultations among executives bodies, we should add consultations among the European Parliament, the American Senate and the House of Representatives.<sup>26</sup>

The following meetings took place in a similarly cooperative climate.<sup>27</sup> Back in Brussels after the May 1972 visit, Schuijt presented his report to the plenary session of the European Parliament in July. In a strongly worded speech, he reminded his audience of the importance of the American contribution to European integration and the danger represented by the worsening in transatlantic relations. To contrast with it,

<sup>21</sup> J. R. Schatzel, *The Unhinged Alliance* (Harper and Row, 1975), p. 105

<sup>22</sup> EC Information Service, Press Release, 'House Leaders to Meet Members of the European Parliament', AEI, Accession 423.01 European Parliament.

<sup>23</sup> House Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. Congress, 'The European Community and the American Interest. Report of Special Study Mission to Europe, January 1972', Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 19 March 1972.

<sup>24</sup> G. Bersani, quoted in A. Bitumi, *Un ponte sull'Atlantico. Il programma di visitatori e la diplomazia pubblica della Comunità europea negli anni Settanta* (il Mulino, 2014), p. 68.

<sup>25</sup> 'Remarks by Wilhelmus Schuijt, leader of a delegation of visiting members of the European Parliament at a plenary meeting with members of the United States Congress in Washington D.C., on May 31, 1972', in AEI, Accession 423.01 European Parliament.

<sup>26</sup> E. Wolfram, *Discussioni del parlamento europeo, sessione 1972 1973*, 3 July 1972, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, the November 1974 Communiqué, 'European Parliament comes to Washington', AEI, Accession 423 European Parliament.

Schuijt continued, the European Parliament should take a few initiatives ranging from the strengthening of the EC information service in Washington D.C. to the continuation of inter-parliamentary meetings. He then added a 'purely personal' proposal, the launching of a European program modelled after the Fulbright program.

With the Commission especially in mind, I would like to propose the following idea: could we not, for our part, introduce at the Community level a scholarship program designed for young Americans – students, researchers, teachers, journalists, etc. who will learn in Europe about Community integration through contacts they make from day to day?<sup>28</sup>

The origins and evolution of this program has been already studied by two historians, Giles Scott Smith and Alessandra Bitumi. While they offer useful and detailed insights on the Schuijt initiative as a tool for Atlantic coordination and discussion in a moment in which the Atlantic Alliance was strained, the program was significant also for the Community and the European Parliament. Indeed, if we move the spotlight to its significance for EEC, Schuijt's proposal was both a supranational initiative, originated within the European Parliament and managed by the European Parliament and the Commission, and an attempt to give the European Parliament a greater role in European foreign affairs (an area in which it had no role) and, more in general, in political discussions over European integration. Since the original proposal, the Schuijt initiative enjoyed vast parliamentary support beyond party politics and was directly addressed to the Commission. Schuijt's words found an echo in the Commissioner for External Relations and Trade, Ralph Dahrendorf, who participated in the parliamentary debate and endorsed the proposal. He explained that 'the idea' was 'to create a body, which we would jointly control and which would arrange exchanges between the United States and the European Community'.<sup>29</sup> Not only was this programme an innovative action with no precedent in the Community, but it was also a purely supranational initiative, managed entirely and exclusively by the European Parliament and the Commission. The former would keep the control over the political direction and meaning of the Program, the latter would add the necessary prestige and financial resources to make it successful. In early January 1974, the European Parliament approved a resolution introducing the European Community Visitors Programme (ECPV) and called upon the Commission to join the Parliament in its administration.<sup>30</sup> In February, the Commission confirmed its association with the Programme and ensured an initial budget of 48,000 ECUs. A few months later, the ECPV Secretariat was inaugurated in Brussels under the direction of Becker and Peter Barker-Jones on behalf of the Commission and the Parliament, respectively.

As modest as these two initiatives may appear, they nevertheless strengthened the international authority of the non-elected European Parliament. It became an official referent for the United States and through contacts with American Congressmen and politicians, it discussed the future evolution of the Community and the main problems in transatlantic relations. For Europe, it represented a new form of parliamentary diplomacy, which ran parallel to EPC and, to some extent, was opposed to it, while, through EPC, Member States wanted also to affirm their autonomy from Washington, the European Parliament wanted to reaffirm and reinforce the Atlantic bond between the Community and the United States. Equally important, once affirmed its role in the development of the EC external relations, the European Parliament took a more firm stance on its inconsequential role within EPC framework. Although the Second Davignon Report doubled the number of meetings between the EP Political Affairs Committee and the presidency and called the President the Council to illustrate EPC annual Report to the Parliament, many Members of the European Parliament judged these provisions inadequate. The British member of the European Parliament (MEP) Tufton Beamish, for example, urged the President of the Council, Walter Scheel, to address a number

<sup>28</sup> A Bitumi, 'Building Bridges Across the Atlantic', op. cit.; G. Scott-Smith, 'Mending the "Unhinged Alliance" in the 1970s: Transatlantic Relations, Public Diplomacy, and the Origins of the European Union Visitors Program', in *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, 16(4), (2005), pp. 749-778.

<sup>29</sup> R. Dahrendorf in, *Discussioni del parlamento europeo*, 3 July 1972, pp.16-17; A Bitumi, 'Building Bridges Across the Atlantic', op. cit.; G. Scott-Smith, op. cit.; M. Schultz and T. A. Schwartz (eds.), *The Strained Alliance: US-European Relations from Nixon to Carter*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

<sup>30</sup> G. Scott-Smith, 'Mending the "Unhinged Alliance" in the 1970s, op. cit.



of unanswered questions introduced by Members of the European Parliament in the previous months on the implementation of EPC. Beamish's question was discussed by a Political Committee meeting in late March 1974. After some hesitation, it was agreed to assume a conciliatory attitude toward the European Parliament, as confirmed by the December 1974 European Council,

in view of the increasing role of the political cooperation in the construction of Europe, it is important to closely associate the European assembly with the work of the Presidency, for example through replies to questions on the activities of political cooperation addressed by Members of the European Parliament to the presidency.<sup>31</sup>

### THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE 1977 BELGRADE CSCE REVIEW CONFERENCE

Nowhere were the pressures of the European Parliament on EPC more evident and constant as in the so-called Helsinki process, namely the international negotiations, which led to the signing of the CSCE Final Act in 1975 and the following dialogue, which developed between Eastern and Western countries based on it and its provisions, especially on those regarding the protection of human rights. The signing of the CSCE Final Act is now widely recognized by scholars – political scientists and historians alike – as a resounding success for the European Community, which was effectively able to speak with a single voice since the opening of negotiations in 1972. Some even go as far as to argue that the EC member states exercised the strongest influence over negotiations: not only were Member States able to keep a cohesive stance, but they also succeeded in shaping the diplomatic agenda of the conference, by introducing more provisions for economic and commercial contacts between East and West and, above all, a general commitment and some specific provisions toward the promotion of human rights.<sup>32</sup> For this reason, after 1975, EPC Member States and EC supranational institutions (the Commission and the European Parliament) identified the evolution of the CSCE as an important field for the evolution of the community's embryonic foreign policy. Member states selected CSCE negotiations and follow-up summits as permanent issues for EPC and, immediately, began to work for a growing coordination among them.<sup>33</sup> The Venice meeting of foreign ministers in September 1975 confirmed that Member States would speak with a single voice on all issues related to the CSCE, especially at the Belgrade CSCE review conference which opened in 1977.<sup>34</sup> Yet, two major changes occurred in the period leading to Belgrade.

First, as Member States were keen to debate human rights in East-West relations during the 1972-1975 negotiations, they also were extremely prudent in raising the issue of Soviet violations of human rights in the following years. The rationale for this change of attitude was manifold. Domestic constraints in countries such as Italy, Germany and France intertwined with a new American attitude toward the CSCE and its human rights provisions, as well as with the growing importance of intra-European economic, commercial, social and cultural contacts. Fearing that a firm stance on human rights would have endangered the political dialogue between the two 'Europes' and eventually triggered a Soviet withdrawal from the CSCE, EPC Member States would avoid any direct polemics on human rights, focusing instead on the elaboration of new proposals for the economic and commercial contacts between East and West.<sup>35</sup> Second, since the 1974 Paris Summit of Heads of State and Government, Member States had agreed on the introduction of direct elections to the European Parliament.<sup>36</sup> The decision was confirmed in 1976 yet, after an initial euphoria, many members of the European Parliament feared that such a decision represented an

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in M. Gainar, (2012), *op. cit.*, p. 363.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*; see also A. Romano, *op. cit.*

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, 'Working Document: On the Development of Political Dissent and the Human Rights Movement in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union', in British National Archives, (hereinafter NA), FCO 28/3170.

<sup>34</sup> A. Romano, 'The European Community and the Belgrade CSCE', in V. Bilandzic, D. Dahlmann, M. Kosanovic, *From Helsinki to Belgrade. The First CSCE Follow-up Meeting and the Crisis of Détente* (Bonn University Press, 2012), pp. 205-225.

<sup>35</sup> 'Telegram COREU Emanant des Autorités Allemandes' (enclosed to a Note from 13 May 1977), in HAEU, Accession EN 1989.

<sup>36</sup> 'Final Communiqué of the Paris Summit (9-10 December 1974)', in Archives of European Integration, University of Pittsburgh, Accession 420. European Integration – Summit Meeting.

illusory counterweight to the creation of the European Council. A working document from the European Parliament's Political Affairs Committee explained that 'the essential decisions will be taken by an intergovernmental Council, in which the large states' political weight and government stability will set the tone.' As a consequence, the Parliament seemed doomed to a marginal role. For this reason, it was essential to 'substantially strengthen the European Parliament's powers', because 'it will be directly elected, but its powers will be reduced'.<sup>37</sup>

To avoid such an evolution, the European Parliament immediately developed a firmer stance on all European issues. This trend was deeply rooted on the European Parliament's attempt to obtain the right to be directly elected. Yet, once Member States committed themselves to direct elections, the European Parliament continued its campaign to keep an important role within the community. It also tried to affirm its own interpretation of the CSCE process, an interpretation that was in opposition to the one assumed by Member States. To members of the European Parliament, the human rights provisions of the Final Act were the most important component of the agreements and a set of principles that reflected those values which informed European identity. In addition to this, the European Parliament found in the promotion of human rights in East-West negotiations a legitimizing strategy to increase its role in the EC decision-making machinery. In this sense, historian Aurelie Gfeller argued that the introduction of the vote in 1979 gave members of the European Parliament the right to speak for EC countries' citizens and 'by extension, they framed the EP as the voice of all Europeans. Human rights were ideally suited to serve the MEPs' quest for authority and legitimacy; it was an essential political topic'.<sup>38</sup> Yet, the European Parliament's involvement began before the elections took place: MEPs urged the Council to involve the Assembly in CSCE negotiations already in 1974.<sup>39</sup> The fact that the Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro signed the 1975 CSCE Final Act on behalf of both the Italian government and the European Community gave the European Parliament a strong point in favour of its involvement in any future negotiations. Indeed, according to the Italian MEP Luigi Granelli, the European Parliament had a special responsibility in the CSCE process because the EC had signed the Helsinki Final Act 'in its own right'.<sup>40</sup> Although it was not yet directly elected by European citizens, the European Parliament claimed of being the only institutions which could provide the Community with the required legitimation and oversight on any EC initiative toward the CSCE.

On the eve of the opening of the Belgrade Summit, parliamentary activities concerning the human rights provisions of the CSCE increased. The Parliament adopted resolutions condemning the Soviet Union and its allies for the failure to comply with the Final Act and its blatant violations of human rights.<sup>41</sup> The Political Affairs Committee of the European Parliament adopted a resolution which urged member states, inter alia,

to reaffirm that the principle of human rights [...] must be applied with the same rigour as that used to ensure the proper application of the other principles referred to; to strive in particular for the free dissemination of opinions both through organized contact and through the free movement of persons; [...] to reaffirm the need for a coherent action by the Nine to safeguard the potentials of European integration.<sup>42</sup>

In illustrating the resolution to the plenary Assembly, rapporteur Radoux explained that a coherent action by the Nine should be based on continuity and an adequate democratic legitimation – a point that could be assured only by the direct involvement of the European Parliament in the negotiations.<sup>43</sup> Another

<sup>37</sup> 'Les Perspectives Institutionnelles Apres La Réunion Informelle des Chefs d'Etat et de Gouvernement à Paris', CARDOC, PE1 273/GRPO GSOC-1953-0500130.

<sup>38</sup> A. E. Gfeller, 'Champion of Human Rights. The European Parliament and the Helsinki Process', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol49(2), 2014, pp.390-409 ; M. Gainar, *Aux Origines de la diplomatie européenne*, p. 391.

<sup>39</sup> T. Beamish in European Parliament *Debates*, 16 January 1974, CARDOC, document: PE0 AP/DE1973 DE19740116-02.

<sup>40</sup> L. Granelli, in European Parliament, *Debates*, 11 May 1977, 168, CARDOC PE0 AP/DE/1977 DE19770511-06.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, the resolutions contained in HAEU, PE02566; PE0 2567; PE02572; PE02574, PE02829.

<sup>42</sup> 'Document 90/77: Report drawn up on behalf of the Political Affairs Committee on the preparatory meeting of the 15 June 1977 in Belgrade as provided for by the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, by M. Lucien Radoux, 10 May 1977, CARDOC, PE0 AP RP/POLI.1961 A0-0090/770010.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*.

resolution called the ambassadors of member states to 'name the names' of jailed Soviet dissidents. Matching the renewed American commitment to denounce Soviet violations of human rights, the European Parliament's firm stance contributed to a more balanced approach to the Conference. While member states prioritized cooperation over confrontation, they nevertheless assumed a firmer stance on human rights. Months later, when the Conference closed, the European Parliament passed a resolution commending the Council and national governments of the member states for their firm stance on Eastern Countries' violations of human rights and, above all, 'for maintaining at the Belgrade meeting a very broad identity of view expressed by the Commission within its sphere of influence and by the representatives of the President-in-Office of the Council'.<sup>44</sup> The Belgrade experience, however, offered the European Parliament the opportunity to criticize the intergovernmental nature of the European Political Cooperation. In late November 1977, the Political Affairs Committee adopted by a large majority (14 votes in favour, two in opposition and two abstentions) a motion for a resolution that requested the Council of Ministers:

to ensure that the European Parliament is fully informed concerning all joint foreign policy decisions taken by the Nine; to provide Parliament's Political Affairs Committee, in an appropriate form, with substantive and up-to-date information concerning the meetings and activities of the foreign ministers of the Nine outside the quarterly meetings and subsequent colloquies; to take into account the foreign policy guidelines the European Parliament will adopt; to instruct the foreign ministers to submit a written annual report on the implementation of the European Political Cooperation to the European Parliament one month in advance of the annual debate in Parliament on European Political Cooperation; to decide to end the artificial distinction between 'Community' and 'political cooperation' issues and, in this respect, to invite the Commission to participate fully in all parts of all political cooperation meetings; to instruct the foreign ministers to seek agreement on the political and all related aspects of negotiations with third countries before the Council of Ministers gives a mandate to the Commission to open negotiations and to establish this mandate in light of an orientation debate held by the Parliament.<sup>45</sup>

This resolution was part of the European Parliament's ongoing attempt to contain the intergovernmental nature of European integration and to affirm its role in European affairs, even in those areas which did not fall into the direct competencies of the European Parliament.

## CONCLUSION

The 1970s represented a decade of difficulties and creative solutions for the European Community and its Member States. Among the new areas of common interest and action there were international relations. For this reason, in 1970, Member States adopted the Davignon report which proposed an intergovernmental attempt to define a Common foreign policy among EC member states. Since its inception in 1970, it developed outside of the EC Treaties and did not contemplate any significant role for the European Parliament. As such, it was – and remained – an intergovernmental area of harmonization among national foreign policies. However, the European Parliament tried to exert some control over – and to shape – it. To do that, it constantly recalled the need for a parliamentary scrutiny over the embryonic common foreign policy. Paradoxically, these appeals emerged even before the introduction of direct elections, which would have provided a greater political legitimation to the Parliament. In addition, the European Parliament developed some autonomous and unprecedented actions in foreign affairs, such as the creation of an inter-parliamentary mission with the American Congress and the inception of the European Community Visitors Program. Although peripheral in the development of the Community's external relations, these actions envisaged a firmer stance by the European Parliament and challenged

<sup>44</sup> 'Resolution on the outcome of the Belgrade meeting as provided for by the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 5 June 1978', CARDOC, PE0 AP RP/POLI.1961 A0-0076/780001.

<sup>45</sup> 'Relazione presentata a nome della Commissione Politica del Parlamento europeo sulla Cooperazione Politica europea (Doc. 427/77)', December 1977', HAEU, PE0 2575.

Member States' de facto monopoly over the EC foreign relations. To some extent, it was singular that the European Parliament decided to take action in an area that was outside of the EC. Yet, these actions were part of a broader attempt to increase the European Parliament's role in integration. The European Parliament was keen to increase its powers and, finally, to obtain the right to be directly elected.

With the second Davignon Report on EPC in late 1973, Member States accepted to give the Parliament a mostly symbolic and limited role in EPC, doubling the meetings between the Presidency and the EP Political Affairs Committee and pledging to present EPC annual report to the European Parliament. Once Member States committed to the principle of direct elections in 1974, many members of the European Parliament could claim that the commitment to direct elections legitimized a greater role for the European Parliament over EPC, because that was the only institution that could represent European citizens. This point was made clear by members of the European Parliament's firm stance on the CSCE process on the eve of the Belgrade Review Conference of 1977. Claiming to act on behalf of the European people, the European Parliament urged Member States to prioritize the CSCE human rights provisions in negotiations with the Soviets and to accept a greater parliamentary scrutiny over EPC.

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#### CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

Umberto Tulli, Università degli Studi di Trento, Via Tommaso Gar, 14, 38122 Trento, Italy  
[sumberto.tulli@unitn.it]

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