The European Parliamentary Assembly

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Once Europe had been built from the top down, the idea of democratising the European institutions began to gain ground. The European Parliamentary Assembly, consisting of delegates from the national parliaments, made clear its desire to be elected by universal suffrage and called for the right to appoint the new Single Commission. On 30 March 1962, the European Parliamentary Assembly adopted a resolution whereby its own name would be changed to the European Parliament. Before that, in May 1960, its Members had adopted a convention on the election of the Assembly by universal suffrage. In June 1963, Parliament adopted a resolution calling for a strengthening of its powers through the direct election of its Members.

The French Government was, a priori, hostile to this development of the European institutions and categorically opposed to an Assembly directly elected by the citizens of the Member States. It took the view that the Assembly did not possess legislative power, which, moreover, it refused to grant it. The other European governments, with the exception of Italy and the Netherlands, had similar reservations with regard to universal suffrage.