

London Statement: excerpt on the organisation of European Council meetings (30 June 1977)

Caption: The London European Council on 29 and 30 June 1977 led to an agreement on the organisation of European Council meetings.

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London Statement (30 June 1977)

[...]

Organization of European Council meetings

‘1. Prior to the European Council meeting in Rome at the end of March, the Presidency circulated a paper which sought to establish points of agreement which had emerged from the correspondence between Heads of Government about the ways in which the organization of European Council meetings might be improved. In the light of the discussion at that meeting, which was followed up by Foreign Ministers on 5 April, the following points are understood to represent a generally acceptable framework for the organization of future meetings:

(a) Types of discussion

There is general agreement that the European Council should have both:

- (i) informal exchanges of view of a wide-ranging nature held in the greatest privacy and not designed to lead to formal decisions or public statements;
- (ii) discussions which are designed to produce decisions, settle guidelines for future action or lead to the issue of public statements expressing the agreed view of the European Council.

It is also recognized that the European Council will sometimes need to fulfil a third function, namely to settle issues outstanding from discussions at a lower level. In dealing with matters of Community competence the European Council will conform to the appropriate procedures laid down in the Community Treaties and other agreements.

(b) Advance preparation of the agenda

For informal exchanges of view, it is generally agreed that little preparation is necessary, although some limited prior clarification of the questions is not to be excluded if it would facilitate discussion. Heads of Government should inform each other or the Presidency, a few days beforehand, of the subjects which they will wish to discuss. There is general agreement that there should be adequate preparation of those discussions which are aimed at reaching decisions or issuing statements. Foreign Ministers should have responsibility for such preparation, which could take place in the Council or the Political Cooperation machinery as appropriate, and will wish to meet at an appropriate time, and if necessary to hold a special meeting before the European Council, for this purpose.

(c) The issuing of statements

It is generally agreed that the European Council will wish to make public its decisions on some subjects or sometimes to issue a statement registering a concerted Community opinion on a topic of international concern. Such statements should not, other than in exceptional circumstances, be issued without advance preparation. A list of the subjects on which it is proposed statements should be issued should be drawn up two to three weeks in advance.

(d) The recording of conclusions

There should be no record of the informal exchanges of view between Heads of Government. For the discussions aimed at reaching decisions or issuing statements there should be a written record of conclusions, which should be issued on the authority of the Presidency.

(e) Attendance of officials

There is general agreement that the exchanges of views should be as intimate as possible and that attendance should be restricted as at present.'