

A People's Europe

Source: CVCE. European Navigator. Étienne Deschamps.

Copyright: (c) CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/a_people_s_europe-en-c853bbef-a767-4dde-b8ba-f575b738188f.html

Last updated: 08/07/2016



A People's Europe

The concept of a 'People's Europe', often talked about in the 1970s, acquired official status in the early 1980s, particularly in reaction to the older concept of a 'Traders' Europe' directly connected with the Common Market. As early as the Copenhagen Summit of 14–15 December 1973, the Heads of State or Government of the Nine had submitted a paper on a European identity in the European Community's external relations. Following the publication of that paper, the Nine agreed at the Paris Summit of 9–10 December 1974 to commission a study into the type of special civic and political rights which might be granted to citizens of the Community's Member States in order to bring them closer to Community institutions and policies. The principle of direct elections to the European Parliament was endorsed, and a working party was established to draw up proposals for the standardisation of passports. On 3 July 1975, the Commission submitted a detailed report to the Council that proposed the removal of controls on persons at the Community's internal borders and the conferring of identical rights to vote and to stand as a candidate in elections throughout the Community. In his report on the European Union of 29 December 1975, Leo Tindemans, the Belgian Prime Minister, made an unsuccessful plea for greater protection of the rights of Europeans and emphasised the importance of a more actual awareness of European solidarity through tangible signs in everyday life. The Draft Treaty Establishing the European Union, also known as the Spinelli Plan, adopted on 14 February 1984 by the European Parliament, also granted EU citizenship to Member States' citizens connected with citizenship of their own country.

At the close of the European Council meeting on 25–26 June in Fontainebleau, the Heads of State or Government of the Ten declared that they wanted to strengthen Europe's identity and image amongst its citizens and throughout the world, and an *ad hoc* working party on a People's Europe was set up. The working party was chaired by the former Italian MEP, Pietro Adonnino, and its task was to propose measures likely to strengthen the Community's identity and promote a Europe without internal frontiers. It looked in particular at ways to enhance the free movement of goods and the free movement and the freedom of establishment of persons within the Community. The Adonnino Committee submitted its first report to the European Council in Brussels on 29–30 March 1985. Its main proposals included measures to improve the free movement of persons, mutual recognition of higher education diplomas and even the introduction of a European vocational training certificate for all qualified workers. The Ten invited the Adonnino Committee to continue its work, and a second report was submitted to the European Council in Milan on 28–29 June 1985. This report raised the issues of a uniform procedure for elections to the European Parliament, a right of petition for European citizens, cooperation between universities and student exchange programmes. However, its main emphasis was on the use of common European symbols: the blue flag with gold stars, a European anthem, postage stamps with European emblems, standardised postal rates within the Community and the removal of the 'Customs' signs at internal frontiers. The European flag with twelve stars which had been the symbol of the Council of Europe since 1955 was officially adopted in Brussels on 29 May 1986. The first European driving licences were issued by Member States as of 1 January 1986. On 30 March 1985, the Council adopted the principle of mutual recognition of higher education diplomas. Measures were also introduced to facilitate the free movement of economically inactive persons (students, retired people, etc.) and access to employment in national civil services for all citizens who were nationals of a Community Member State.