

Decision adopted by the Foreign Ministers (Luxembourg, 17 February 1986)

Caption: On 17 February 1986, on the occasion of the signing of the Single European Act in Luxembourg, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, meeting in the framework of European political cooperation, adopt provisions concerning the practical application of certain aspects of Title III of the Act.

Source: Bulletin of the European Communities. February 1986, No 2. Luxembourg: Office for official publications of the European Communities.

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URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/decision_adopted_by_the_foreign_ministers_luxembourg_17_february_1986-en-1584aeaa-bb6c-42e7-9902-6040bd134bdb.html

Publication date: 25/10/2012

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I — Relations between European political cooperation and the European Parliament

With a view to ensuring the close association of the European Parliament with European political cooperation contacts with the European Parliament shall take place as follows.

1. The Presidency shall regularly inform the European Parliament of foreign policy topics discussed in the context of European political cooperation.
2. The Presidency shall address the European Parliament at the start of its period in office and present its programme. At the end of this period, it shall present a report to the European Parliament on progress made.
3. Once a year, the Presidency shall send a written communication to the European Parliament on progress in the field of European political cooperation and take part at ministerial level in the general European Parliament debate on foreign policy.
4. The Presidency-in-Office of European political cooperation and the members of the Political Affairs Committee of the European Parliament shall hold an informal colloquy four times a year to discuss the most important recent developments in European political cooperation.

In order to prepare these colloquies, the Political Committee shall draw the Ministers' attention to the positions adopted by the European Parliament on foreign policy matters.

In order to make these discussions more fruitful, the Presidency and the Political Affairs Committee of the European Parliament shall communicate to each other in advance the main possible topics for discussion.

5. By joint agreement, special information sessions at ministerial level on specific European political cooperation topics may be organized as required.
6. The Presidency shall reply to parliamentary questions on European political cooperation activities and take part in European Parliament question time according to the approved customary procedures.
7. The Presidency shall ensure that the views of the European Parliament, as expressed in its resolutions, shall be duly taken into consideration in European political cooperation work.

It shall reply to resolutions on matters of major importance and general concern on which the European Parliament requests its comments.

8. The Presidency shall transmit to the European Parliament as soon as possible declarations adopted within the framework of European political cooperation.

II — Cooperation of Member States' missions and Commission delegations in third countries and international organizations

1. Member States' missions and Commission delegations shall intensify their cooperation in third countries and international organizations in the following areas:

- (a) exchange of political and economic information;
- (b) pooling of information on administrative and practical problems;
- (c) mutual assistance in the material and practical sphere;
- (d) communications;

- (e) exchange of information and drawing up of joint plans in case of local crises;
- (f) security measures;
- (g) consular matters;
- (h) Health, particularly in the field of health and medical facilities;
- (i) educational matters (schooling);
- (j) information;
- (k) cultural affairs;
- (l) development aid. The relevant Council provisions should be noted here.

2. The Member States' Heads of Mission and the Commission's Representative in third countries shall meet regularly in order to coordinate their views and prepare joint reports, either at the request of the Political Committee or on their own initiative when the situation requires.

3. With a view to strengthening the cooperation of missions in third countries, this topic shall be examined periodically by the Political Committee on the basis of reports drawn up for this purpose by the missions.

4. The Member States shall examine the possibility of providing help and assistance in third countries to nationals of Member States which have no representation there.

III — European political cooperation Secretariat: responsibilities and organization

The Secretariat of European political cooperation shall act under the authority of the Presidency. It shall assist the Presidency in preparing and implementing European political cooperation activities and in administrative matters.

It shall assist the Presidency in ensuring the continuity of European political cooperation and its consistency with Community positions.

The Secretariat shall:

- (a) assist the Presidency in the organization of European political cooperation meetings, including the preparation and circulation of documents and the drawing up of minutes;
- (b) work with the European Correspondents Group in the preparation of conclusions and guidelines and in carrying out any other task entrusted to the Group by the Political Committee;
- (c) assist the chairmen of working groups as regards procedures and precedents and the drafting of oral reports and studies;
- (d) assist the Presidency in the preparation of texts to be published on behalf of the Member States, including replies to parliamentary questions and resolutions as defined in item 7, paragraph 2 of Chapter 1 on relations between European political cooperation and the European Parliament;
- (e) maintain the European political cooperation archives and assist the Presidency in preparing the six-monthly compilation of European political cooperation texts;
- (f) keep up to date the body of European political cooperation working practices;

(g) assist the Presidency, where appropriate, in contacts with third countries.

2. The Secretariat shall make the necessary arrangements to provide interpretation into all the official languages of the Community at meetings of Heads of State or Government as well as ministerial meetings. It shall ensure that all European political cooperation texts submitted to or adopted at these meetings are immediately translated into all the official Community languages.

3. The Secretariat shall be composed of five officials. Following on from the support team arrangement, the Presidency-in-Office of European political cooperation together with the two preceding and the two following Presidencies shall each second an official for a period covering five presidencies. The status of the officials of the Foreign Ministries on temporary secondment to the Secretariat shall be identical to that of members of the diplomatic missions in Brussels, to which they shall be administratively attached.

The Head of the Secretariat shall be appointed by the Foreign Ministers under arrangements to be agreed between them.

4. Matters concerning administrative staff, infrastructure, equipment and operating expenses will be the subject of a further decision.

IV — Venues for European political cooperation meetings

European political cooperation meetings shall normally be held at the seat of the Secretariat. Ministerial-level and Political Committee meetings may take place in the capital city of the Presidency.

V — Use of languages in European political cooperation

Use of languages shall be in accordance with the rules of the European Communities.

For meetings of officials and Coreu communications, the current practice of European political cooperation will serve as a guide for the time being.