

Address given by Egon Klepsch (Corfu, 24 June 1994)

Caption: On 24 June 1994, at the Corfu European Council, Egon Klepsch, President of the European Parliament, emphasises the importance of compliance with the timetable for the appointment and investiture of the new European Commission.

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Address by the President of the European Parliament, Dr Egon A. Klepsch, on the occasion of the meeting of the European Council in Corfu on Friday, 24 June 1994

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank the President of the Council very warmly for his invitation to this beautiful Greek island. The programme for this meeting of the European Council and the setting in which it is taking place illustrate the considerable progress that European integration is making.

[...]

My task here is to comment on the subjects designated by the Presidency of the Council.

But let me begin by pointing out that we are now at the end of the very turbulent third term of the directly elected European Parliament.

It was characterized by a number of outstanding events. The historic upheavals of 1989/90 marked the beginning of a new era. On the whole, the third term can be described as having been positive for our Parliament, for the whole of the European Union and for its citizens.

[...]

I would particularly like to thank Prime Minister Papandreou, who is representing Greece, our host today. My thanks also to Minister Pangalos, the President-in-Office of the Council. I personally found the dialogue - the meetings of the Presidents of the Council, the Commission and Parliament - particularly pleasant, objective and successful. In the six months since the Maastricht Treaty entered into force the dialogue has resolved some difficult situations.

Appointment of the President and other Members of the Commission

This close cooperation between the Council, Commission and Parliament is an important element in the implementation of the Maastricht Treaty, which gives the European Parliament the right to be involved in numerous processes. One of the more important of these processes is the approval of the appointment of the President and other Members of the Commission. Your nominee for the office of President of the Commission requires the approval of an absolute majority of the Members of the European Parliament.

I would not like anyone to be in any doubt that the European Parliament expects a decision to be taken at this summit meeting, so that the timetable for the appointment of the new Commission is not upset in any way. Any delay would cause a serious institutional crisis and might prevent the new Commission from taking up its duties in January 1995.

Parliament also insists that the decision on the new President of the Commission be taken on the basis of criteria aimed at guaranteeing the Commission's total independence of the governments of the Member States and a lasting commitment to a more democratic Union, with particular regard to the next reform planned for 1996. The European Parliament can give its approval only if the nominees satisfy these conditions.

We also expect the nominee for the office of President of the Commission to undertake before the European Parliament in July to arrange for the new nominee Commissioners to appear before the appropriate parliamentary committees according to their prospective fields of responsibility, this being the procedure the European Parliament has prescribed in its Rules of Procedure.

[...]