

'What enlargement?' from L'Europe en formation (Winter 1992)

Caption: In its Winter 1992/1993 edition, the federalist magazine L'Europe en formation warns the Europe of the Twelve not to go for enlargement prematurely and without having made the proper preparations.

Source: L'Europe en formation. Hiver 1992-1993, n° 287. Nice. "Quel élargissement?", p. 3-6.

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What enlargement?

Editorial

Negotiations on the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden to the Community (and to the European Union once the Maastricht Treaty is ratified) began officially in Brussels on 1 February. Exceptionally, the opening meeting, attended by the foreign ministers of the Twelve and the three candidate countries, was televised. Talks will begin later with Norway, whose application for membership is the most recent of those from candidate countries accorded priority on the basis of their credibility.

In economic terms, these candidates belong to the rich man's club of competitive nations. Socially, they are among the most advanced countries of Western Europe. All have ratified their accession to the Treaty on the European Economic Area (EEA), which already provides for the establishment of a single market covering the whole of Western Europe from 1 January 1994.

Switzerland, which is also a candidate for membership of the Community, was the only one to reject participation in the (much less constraining) EEA. On 6 December the treaty was rejected by 50.3 % of the Swiss electorate and 16 cantons out of 23, despite an opposite result in the French-speaking cantons and German-speaking Basel. On the contrary, the little principality of Liechtenstein, an enclave between Switzerland and Austria, decided, also by referendum, to join the European Economic Area.

The prospect of four new States that are among Europe's most advanced societies joining the Community on 1 January 1995 as predicted, ought to be welcomed. But we should be wary for the following reasons:

- Why rush the enlargement process? It would have made more sense to begin negotiations after the Danes and British had ratified the Maastricht Treaty. Especially as the Swedes, Austrians, Finns and Norwegians have been warned that, unlike the United Kingdom and Denmark, they will not benefit from any exceptions. What was granted to Copenhagen — because that was the only way to save the project of European Union — will not be granted to Stockholm, Vienna, Helsinki and Oslo. The greatest irony of all is that the Danish presidency will be responsible, until July, for ensuring that the Community rules are respected to the letter.
- A Community of sixteen cannot work properly with the same structures as a Community of twelve. The larger the Community becomes, the greater the need to strengthen its supranational powers, if we wish to preserve the federal goal that was the aim not only of federalists but of the founding fathers and that remains more than ever the aim of the most committed supporters of European integration. That was why the European Parliament, at its sitting of 21 January 1993, called for 'limited' but substantial reform of the Community institutions and for an intergovernmental conference to be convened for that purpose *before* 1996. Yet the Twelve have already decided that the debate on the future and the deepening of the Community will take place in 1996 and not before. That is to say, *after* enlargement and on humiliating terms imposed not only by the British and Danes but also by the new arrivals who, as everyone knows, have, except for the Austrians, so far proved wholly allergic to the federalist approach.
- Austria, Finland and Sweden are neutral countries. Yet all the countries of the European Community except Ireland are members of the Atlantic Alliance, ten belong to the Western European Union, and the Maastricht Treaty includes the following provisions, to which the candidate countries must subscribe: 'Article J (Title V): A common foreign and security policy is hereby established ...'; 'Article J4: The common foreign and security policy shall include all questions related to the security of the Union, *including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence.*' Finally: 'The Union requests the Western European Union (WEU), which is an integral part of the development of the Union, to elaborate and implement decisions and actions of the Union which have defence implications.'

While the statements by Ulf Dinkelspiel, the Swedish foreign minister, and Pertti Solalainen, the minister representing the Finnish government at the opening of negotiations on 1 February, were rather reassuring,

that was not the case for Austria, which is intent on maintaining the policy of neutrality imposed by the Soviets at the end of the Second World War. 'Austria,' Chancellor Vranitzky declared on 27 January, 'applied for membership as a neutral State and we shall join the Community as a neutral State.' All remaining doubts regarding neutrality must be cleared up: the future European Union, if it is to come into being, can have only one foreign and defence policy, a policy that it will formulate in the light of events. But the European Union's foreign and security/defence policy will not be 'neutral' since, as the case of Yugoslavia shows, there is a general expectation that Europe should contribute actively to the settlement of international conflicts and the preservation of world peace.

Enlargement of the Community at any cost makes no sense. The time has come to make matters clear, so that we avoid in future the same misunderstandings as those that are now holding back Community progress in Denmark and the United Kingdom.

- One last point. Public opinion polls in all the Scandinavian candidate countries are scarcely favourable to their governments' pro-European policy. That trend will have to be reversed if we are to avoid future referendums, undesirable in all respects following the Danish 'no' in 1992 — even if that 'no' is transformed on 18 May into a 'yes' to a Maastricht Treaty emptied of its substance. Nor should we forget that the Norwegian people rejected membership of the European Community once before, in the early 1970s, and that only recently the Swiss refusal to ratify accession to the European Economic Area was a hard blow.

Europe will not be built on misunderstandings. There will be no Europe without clear popular support. When that support is found lacking, the reasons must be clearly analysed so that the situation can be remedied by means of better information and explanatory campaigns. The dynamics of European construction make this essential.

L'Europe en formation