

## 'Twelve Stingy Ladies' from Crocodile (February 1992)

**Caption:** In its February–March 1992 edition, the monthly journal Crocodile publishes a letter to Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission, calling on him to mobilise public opinion so that the Treaty of Maastricht may be regarded as a solemn commitment to union.

**Source:** Crocodile. Letter to the Parliaments of Europe. February-March 1992. Brussels.

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## Twelve Stingy Ladies

Dear President Delors,

We are convinced that the national parliaments must ratify the Treaty of Maastricht provided that this decision be taken as a solemn commitment to union. This expression of faith will be manifest if ratification is flanked by two precise commitments:

- \* observance of the deadlines laid down in the Treaty of Maastricht, in particular in regard to European citizenship and economic and monetary union
- \* giving the Community the means to realize its ambitions.

The first important decisions concerning citizenship and EMU are scheduled only from next year and any commitment made today could easily be dishonoured in 1993. On the other hand the financial proposals submitted by the Commission to the national governments and to the European Parliament - The second Delors Package - require as to their entirety formal decisions by the end of this year, because the system of own resources and the inter-institutional agreement expire on 31 December 1992. If a compromise is signed at the European Council in Lisbon, the national parliaments will be called upon to state their positions - within the limits of their powers - virtually simultaneously with ratification of the Maastricht Treaty.

All the national governments have accused you of demanding too much at a time when they are busy convincing public opinion of the benefits of Maastricht. It has been said that it would be better not to create difficulties by talking of the financial consequences of political, economic and monetary union. Such is the way in which democratic transparency is conceived!

Every national government has reacted to your proposals by carefully calculating the balance between their contribution to the Community budget and the benefits to be derived from the common expenditure. No government, not even if obviously benefiting from your proposals on economic and social cohesion has bothered to help by adopting the notion of a global economic balance. Could one not assess the advantages which the Twelve will gain from the growth of trade and investment and the benefits of economic development?

Every government has criticised the increase in the Community budget by referring to the financial constraints imposed upon national budgets. No government has invoked the fact that:

- a. the Community budget is largely a budget of redistribution whereas national budgets are largely concerned with managing the economy, and
- b. the increase of certain Community expenses leads to economies of scale at national level.

Dear President,

Just as in 1987 you are faced with twelve stingy ladies who refuse to honour the commitments of which they were more than aware when they signed the Treaty of Maastricht. You risk yet again receiving inadequate means for achieving the goals of the process commenced at Maastricht and being choked by the straight jacket which the Council will force you to wear. The debate simultaneously opening on enlargement will enable you to mobilise public opinion by saying - loud and clear - that these means are urgently needed, but that the efficient and democratic nature of forthcoming decisions must be ensured whilst also strengthening the fiscal capacity of the Community (without changing the burden borne by our citizens), strengthening the governmental role of the Commission and control by the European Parliament.

Who dares wins, Mr President. Following that motto public opinion will be with you.