

Statement by the European Movement International on the empty chair crisis (Brussels, 19 July 1965)

Caption: On 19 July 1965, the European Movement International publishes a statement in which it expresses its alarm at the deadlock in the European Economic Community and calls on the Council and the Heads of State or Government to work to find a solution to the crisis as quickly as possible.

Source: Nieuwe Europa. Maandblad van de Europese Beweging in Nederland. Juli/Augustus 1965, n° 7/8. Den Haag. "De crisis in de E.E.G.", p. 140.

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THE CRISIS IN THE EEC

Declaration of the (international) European Movement (Brussels, 19 July 1965)

1. The crisis the European Economic Community is currently undergoing is particularly serious, not just for the six member states but for countries which feel called to accede at some time in the future, too. The crisis threatens, above all, to deal a fatal blow to the balanced progress of economic integration and, consequently, to prosperity.

The crisis is, furthermore, a sign of the increasing disparity in the views of the Member States on the political and democratic future of the European Community and the persistent opposition demonstrated by at least one of the Member States to the objectives, institutions, spirit and methods as defined by Robert Schuman on 9 May 1950 and, subsequently, set forth in the Treaty of Paris and the Treaty of Rome, which remain the hope of the peoples and a law for the states.

Finally, the crisis jeopardises the possibility which the peoples of Europe had created, for the first time in their history, of putting their relations once and for all on a peaceful footing and attuning their future to the federal and democratic United States of Europe.

2. Responsibility for the failure of the Council of the Community to settle the funding of Community agricultural policy for the transitional period by 1 July, as had been agreed, can be ascribed only to the Council itself.

The Commission cannot be held responsible for this failure. It had submitted a coherent and politically balanced series of proposals to the Council within the specified time, in accordance with the tasks assigned to it and with the powers vested in it by the Treaty, proposals which had the merit of drawing short-term and longer-term conclusions from previous Council decisions. These proposals, in addition, had received the broad approval of the European Parliament and of the Economic and Social Committee.

3. The abrupt abandonment of negotiations after 1 July and the dramatic conclusions immediately drawn therefrom, such as the refusal to continue the negotiations within the Community institutions, are totally disproportionate to the difference of opinion in the Council, and there is a distinct possibility that such action constitutes an infringement of the Treaty.

Neither the Council nor the representatives of any government of a Member State have the right, under any circumstances, to evade the obligation to continue to study the Commission's proposals, whether in relation to the original or amended proposals concerning the funding of Community agricultural policy in the transitional period, which ultimately establish unambiguously its duration, or concerning the proposals for the common use of revenue and the democratisation of budget control, which any substantive Community policy assumes and requires.

4. In more general terms, no single Member State of the Community can hope to force its partners to fulfil their obligations, when that is to its advantage, while it is itself trying to evade the obligations that obstruct it in the economic sphere or that it faces at institutional level.

5. In the economic sphere, the industrial Community market and the Community agricultural market which supplement each other and are mutually dependent must be completed more or less simultaneously, because the balance between the principal interests and social justice will otherwise be jeopardised. Such completion inevitably entails Community management and Community funding, as well as discipline to which the Member States and sectors must be gradually subjected without any thought of going back. The irreversibility which, to date, has nurtured the dynamics of the Community would otherwise give way to uncertainty, and that, were it to persist, would, initially, be a signal for stagnation and, subsequently, would mean relinquishing what has been achieved.

A legal basis for the funding of Community agricultural policy has not existed since 1 July. If no

Community rules are adopted in the short term, no single government will be able to prevent the serious consequences of this situation, initially for agriculture, subsequently for the various branches of industry and, ultimately, for the whole of society.

6. At institutional level, the current issue is not strengthening the independence of states, the inadequacy of which is repeatedly emphasised by their position and technology. Nor is it a matter of ensuring a form of collaboration between states which can always be terminated and which – as has been tragically proven in the past – cannot offer any answer to the demands of appropriateness and progress. The real problem at present is how to put together and increase the economic, diplomatic and defensive resources of nations in a modern entity which promotes harmony, love of one's country and peace.

In the European Communities, it is inevitable that decisions will be taken jointly and that revenue will be raised jointly, under the supervision of a directly elected Parliament. The same applies to the expansion of the role and powers of the supranational executive body. The fact that some nation states are trying to oppose this historical process can only lead to destruction of the Community and to the loss of the benefits that it offers.

Neither the role of the Commission nor the transition on 1 January 1966 to the third stage –characterised by majority decisions within the Council –or, in general, a weakening of the institutional balance in a less supranational direction, which will very quickly turn out to be insufficient, can be the object of horse-trading for anyone.

7. The peoples of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands are aware that none of their countries can conduct a national policy instead of the Community which ensures their prosperity through growth and social justice. They are aware that the economic integration of their countries is a step in the direction of the urgently needed formation of the United States of Europe.

All the citizens of the European Community should unite in taking action against the dangers which threaten the Common Market and in speeding up economic integration in order to create a federal unit in Europe.

The EUROPEAN MOVEMENT, greatly alarmed by the crisis in the Common Market yet still refusing to believe in an intentional wish to interrupt development:

1. SOLEMLY PROCLAIMS ITS BELIEF in the European Community, its trust in the principles on which it has been established, its demands that it may contribute to the speeding up of the political and democratic completion on the federal basis required by the treaties, as well as enlargement to include all European countries prepared to accept their treaty obligations. It recalls, in this connection, the declaration of the British Council of the European Movement, which, like the councils in the Six, demands a solution to the current crisis without the integrity of the Community being disrupted.

2. INVITES THE COUNCIL, rapidly and without preconditions, to continue the consideration of the whole series of Commission proposals in order to establish in the short term the terms for the funding of the common agricultural policy in the transitional phase, the principle of the common use of revenues and the democratisation of budgetary control.

3. EXPRESSES ITS CONFIDENCE IN THE COMMISSION that, in order to simplify the activities of the Council and without destroying the coherence of its proposals, it will take the necessary initiatives within the limits of its responsibility.

4. CALLS ON ALL GOVERNMENTS which have spoken in favour of expanding the powers of the European Parliament, direct elections to that Parliament and the creation of the Community's own resources, to continue steadfastly to support these demands for the establishment of a truly democratic European Community.

5. URGES EACH OF THE SIX GOVERNMENTS not, at any time, to weaken or allow any weakening of

the strict application of the rules laid down in the European treaties in general or, in particular, the transition to the third stage of the Common Market on the planned date of 1 January 1966 and recalls that no single government has the right to obstruct the regular functioning of the European Communities, in particular by means of a boycott.

6. CALLS, AS A MATTER OF URGENCY, on the general public in the six countries, on their parliaments and on the representatives of the economic sectors and social groupings to make a resolute stand in the battle for the European Community and the creation of the United States of Europe, since this is something which concerns each one of them personally.

7. CALLS ON ITS REPRESENTATIVES TO ATTEND AN EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS, to be held on 1, 2 and 3 October 1965 of all its member organisations, of the movements associated with it in many different fields and of all economic, social and cultural organisations in Europe.

Brussels, 19 July 1965.