

Document on The European Identity published by the Nine Foreign Ministers on 14 December 1973, in Copenhagen

The Nine Member Countries of the European Communities have decided that the time has come to draw up a document on the European Identity. This will enable them to achieve a better definition of their relations with other countries and of their responsibilities and the place which they occupy in world affairs. They have decided to define the European Identity with the dynamic nature of the Community in mind. They have the intention of carrying the work further in the future in the light of the progress made in the construction of a United Europe.

Defining the European Identity involves:

- reviewing the common heritage, interests and special obligations of the Nine, as well as the degree of unity so far achieved within the Community,
- assessing the extent to which the Nine are already acting together in relation to the rest of the world and the responsibilities which result from this,
- taking into consideration the dynamic nature of European unification.

I. The Unity of the Nine Member Countries of the Community

1. The Nine European States might have been pushed towards disunity by their history and by selfishly defending misjudged interests. But they have overcome their past enmities and have decided that unity is a basic European necessity to ensure the survival of the civilization which they have in common.

The Nine wish to ensure that the cherished values of their legal, political and moral order are respected, and to preserve the rich variety of their national cultures. Sharing as they do the same attitudes to life, based on a determination to build a society which measures up to the needs of the individual, they are determined to defend the principles of representative democracy, of the rule of law, of social justice — which is the ultimate goal of economic progress — and of respect for human rights. All of these are fundamental elements of the European Identity. The Nine believe that this enterprise corresponds to the deepest aspirations of their peoples who should participate in its realization, particularly through their elected representatives.

2. The Nine have the political will to succeed in the construction of a united Europe. On the basis of the Treaties of Paris and Rome setting up the European Communities and of subsequent decisions, they have created a common market, based on a customs union, and have established institutions, common policies and machinery for co-operation. All these are an essential part of the European Identity. The Nine are determined to safeguard the elements which make up the unity they have achieved so far and the fundamental objectives laid down for future development at the Summit Conferences in The Hague and Paris. On the basis of the Luxembourg and Copenhagen reports, the Nine Governments have established a system of political co-operation with a view to determining common attitudes and, where possible and desirable, common action. They propose to develop this further. In accordance with the decision taken at the Paris conference, the Nine reaffirm their intention of transforming the whole complex of their relations into a European Union before the end of the present decade.

3. The diversity of cultures within the framework of a common European civilization, the attachment to common values and principles, the increasing convergence of attitudes to life, the awareness of having specific interests in common and the determination to take part in the construction of a United Europe, all give the European Identity its originality and its own dynamism.

4. The construction of a United Europe, which the Nine Member Countries of the Community are undertaking, is open to other European nations who share the same ideals and objectives.

5. The European countries have, in the course of their history, developed close ties with many other parts of the world. These relationships, which will continue to evolve, constitute an assurance of progress and international equilibrium.

6. Although in the past the European countries were individually able to play a major rôle on the international scene, present international problems are difficult for any of the Nine to solve alone. International developments and the growing concentration of power and responsibility in the hands of a very small number of great powers mean that Europe must unite and speak increasingly with one voice if it wants to make itself heard and play its proper rôle in the world.

7. The Community, the world's largest trading group, could not be a closed economic entity. It has close links with the rest of the world as regards its supplies and market outlets. For this reason the Community, while remaining in control of its own trading policies, intends to exert a positive influence on world economic relations with a view to the greater well-being of all.

8. The Nine, one of whose essential aims is to maintain peace, will never succeed in doing so if they neglect their own security. Those of them who are members of the Atlantic Alliance consider that in present circumstances there is no alternative to the security provided by the nuclear weapons of the United States and by the presence of North American forces in Europe: and they agree that in the light of the relative military vulnerability of Europe, the Europeans should, if they wish to preserve their independence, hold to their commitments and make constant efforts to ensure that they have adequate means of defence at their disposal.

II. The European Identity in Relation to the World

9. The Europe of the Nine is aware that, as it unites, it takes on new international obligations. European unification is not directed against anyone, nor is it inspired by a desire for power. On the contrary, the Nine are convinced that their union will benefit the whole international community since it will constitute an element of equilibrium and a basis for co-operation with all countries, whatever their size, culture or social system. The Nine intend to play an active rôle in world affairs and thus to contribute, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, to ensuring that international relations have a more just basis; that the independence and equality of States are better preserved; that prosperity is more equitably shared; and that the security of each country is more effectively guaranteed. In pursuit of these objectives the Nine should progressively define common positions in the sphere of foreign policy.

10. As the Community progresses towards a common policy in relation to third countries, it will act in accordance with the following principles:

- (a) The Nine, acting as a single entity, will strive to promote harmonious and constructive relations with these countries. This should not however jeopardize, hold back or affect the will of the Nine to progress towards European Union within the time limits laid down.
- (b) In future when the Nine negotiate collectively with other countries, the institutions and procedures chosen should enable the distinct character of the European entity to be respected.
- (c) In bilateral contacts with other countries, the Member States of the Community will increasingly act on the basis of agreed common positions.

11. The Nine intend to strengthen their links, in the present institutional framework, with the Member Countries of the Council of Europe, and with other European countries with whom they already have friendly relations and close co-operation.

12. The Nine attach essential importance to the Community's policy of association. Without diminishing the advantages enjoyed by the countries with which it has special relations, the Community intends progressively to put into operation a policy for development aid on a worldwide scale in accordance with the principles and aims set out in the Paris Summit Declaration.

13. The Community will implement its undertakings towards the Mediterranean and African countries in order to reinforce its long-standing links with these countries. The Nine intend to preserve their historical links with the countries of the Middle East and to co-operate over the establishment and maintenance of peace, stability and progress in the region.

14. The close ties between the United States and Europe of the Nine — we share values and aspirations based on a common heritage — are mutually beneficial and must be preserved. These ties do not conflict with the determination of the Nine to establish themselves as a distinct and original entity. The Nine intend to maintain their constructive dialogue and to develop their co-operation with the United States on the basis of equality and in a spirit of friendship.

15. The Nine also remain determined to engage in close co-operation and to pursue a constructive dialogue with the other industrialized countries, such as Japan and Canada, which have an essential rôle in maintaining an open and balanced world economic system. They appreciate the existing fruitful co-operation with these countries, particularly within the OECD.

16. The Nine have contributed, both individually and collectively to the first results of a policy of détente and co-operation with the USSR and the East European countries. They are determined to carry this policy further forward on a reciprocal basis.

17. Conscious of the major rôle played by China in international affairs, the Nine intend to intensify their relations with the Chinese Government and to promote exchanges in various fields as well as contacts between European and Chinese leaders.

18. The Nine are also aware of the important rôle played by other Asian countries. They are determined to develop their relations with these countries as is demonstrated, as far as commercial relations are concerned, by the Declaration of Intent made by the Community at the time of its enlargement.

19. The Nine are traditionally bound to the Latin American countries by friendly links and many other contacts; they intend to develop these. In this context they attach great importance to the agreements concluded between the European Community and certain Latin American countries.

20. There can be no real peace if the developed countries do not pay more heed to the less favoured nations. Convinced of this fact, and conscious of their responsibilities and particular obligations, the Nine attach very great importance to the struggle against under-development. They are, therefore, resolved to intensify their efforts in the fields of trade and development aid and to strengthen international co-operation to these ends.

21. The Nine will participate in international negotiations in an outward-looking spirit, while preserving the fundamental elements of their unity and their basic aims. They are also resolved to contribute to international progress, both through their relations with third countries and by adopting common positions wherever possible in international organizations, notably the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

III. The Dynamic Nature of the Construction of a United Europe

22. The European identity will evolve as a function of the dynamic construction of a United Europe. In their external relations, the Nine propose progressively to undertake the definition of their identity in relation to other countries or groups of countries. They believe that in so doing they will strengthen their own cohesion and contribute to the framing of a genuinely European foreign policy. They are convinced that building up this policy will help them to tackle with confidence and realism further stages in the construction of a United Europe thus making easier the proposed transformation of the whole complex of their relations into a European Union.