Deborah Cuccia, Michael Gehler,
Markus Kotzur (eds.)

50 Years of The Copenhagen Declaration 1973–2023

Questions on European Identity Policies

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I. Introduction with Paving the Ways

Deborah Cuccia, Michael Gehler

The Copenhagen Declaration of 14 December 1973 – Forgotten Document, Missed Opportunity, Neglected Legacy or Something More?

Results of a Research Conference[1]

1. Preliminary Remarks

If we look back on the history of Western European integration to pan-European unification, key moments come to mind, with the 1950s and the 1990s being of particular importance. The following dates and events should be mentioned:

- 1945: The end of the Second World War with the capitulation of the German Wehrmacht;
- 1950: The Schuman Declaration;
- 1955: The Messina Conference;
- 1960: The founding of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA);
- 1975: The CSCE Helsinki Final Act;
- 1985: The Delors Commission's White Paper on the creation of a single market;
- 1992: The Treaty of Maastricht creating a European Union (EU);
- 1995: The enlargement of the EU to include the EFTA states of Finland, Sweden and Austria;
- 1999: The introduction of a common currency;
- 2005: The non-ratification of the Constitutional Treaty following negative referendums in France and the Netherlands;
- 2015: The year of the so-called refugee crisis;
- 2020: The Recovery Fund to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic.

Interestingly, the "seven" and the "three" years seem to be associated with events of specific relevance. For the "seven" years, we would like to draw your attention to

- 1947: The announcement of the Marshall Plan;
- 1957: The Treaty of Rome and its signing on the Capitoline Hill;
- 1967: The Merger Treaty of the Community institutions;

1 This introduction was drafted jointly by Deborah Cuccia and Michael Gehler. Deborah Cuccia is responsible for the wording of parts 2, 2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 3, 4.2, and 4.4, while Michael Gehler is responsible for the wording of parts 1, 2.2, 2.3, 4, 4.1, 4.3, 4.5. Markus Kotzur wrote a separate contribution with the final remarks.

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- 1987: The Single European Act;
- 1997: The Treaty of Amsterdam;
- 2007: The Treaty of Lisbon.

The following years stand out in association with the number three:
- 1943: The Casablanca Conference of the anti-Hitler coalition and the demand for the unconditional surrender of the German Wehrmacht, but also the radio address by wartime Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill on the formation of a Council of Europe;
- 1953: The death of Stalin and the paralysing of Western European integration;
- 1963: De Gaulle's veto against the continuation of British EEC accession negotiations and the United Kingdom's membership;
- 1973: The Copenhagen Declaration on European Identity;
- 1983: The Stuttgart Declaration, which paved the way for the Single European Act;
- 1993: The Maastricht Treaty on European Union.

In publications on European integration, the 1973 Copenhagen Declaration on European Identity is either briefly mentioned, overlooked or even ignored and forgotten. Why this has been the case so far will be explored and explained in more detail in this introductory essay.

2. The Document

Firstly, we will approach this unique document based on five main questions:
1. What was the purpose of the European Communities?
2. What were their tasks?
3. What challenges did they face and how did they respond to them?
4. What was the relationship between the Communities and the rest of the world?
5. How did the Communities define themselves in relation to the world and what characterised their self-image?

These five questions are closely related to a European Identity and to an EU identity,[2] which are not one and the same. They were analysed and discussed at our international conference. A remarkable historical document, the "Declaration on European Identity" of the Council of the European Communities, signed in Copenhagen on 14 December

2 Rudolf Weiler, Zur Identität Europas, Erbe und Zukunft der Europaidee, in: *Wiener Blätter zur Friedensforschung* (1986), 48/49, 69–72; Rémi Brague, Europa. Eine exzentrische Identität, Frankfurt am Main – New York 1993; Jörg A. Schlumberger/Peter Segl (eds.), Europa – Aber was ist es? Aspekte seiner Iden-

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1973,[3] provides ample food for thought, inspiration and insight into how identities can be constructed and – in this case – created "from above", top down and not bottom up.

By 1973, due to the current global, international, and European circumstances (end of the Bretton Woods system, Dollar Crisis, Oil Crisis, Far-East Crisis, Kissinger Speech, first EC Enlargement etc.), the Heads of State or Government of the nine EC Member States (Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Ireland) felt that the time had come for a clear statement of intent. Why that particular year? What for? In the next section possible motives will be discussed.

2.1 Background and Possible Motives

Firstly, through this declaration of intent, the Nine defined their relations with other countries, their responsibilities towards them and their place in world politics.

Secondly, according to the Declaration, European identity was to be placed in a dynamic context. The intention was to strengthen and deepen it at a later date "in the light of progress in European integration". The procedure was strengthening in order to deepen.

Thirdly, an obvious pre-condition for issuing this declaration was the Northern Enlargement of the EC to Denmark, the United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland on 1 January 1973. With the accession of the UK, the horizons of continental Europeans expanded to include global challenges and problems as well as the associated need to assume global political responsibilities. It seemed therefore necessary to define European identity and,

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tität in interdisziplinärer Sicht (Bayreuther Historische Kolloquien 8), Köln – Weimar – Wien 1994; Marek J. Siemek, Vernunft und Intersubjektivität. Zur philosophisch-politischen Identität der europäischen Moderne (Schriften des Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung/Center for European Integration Studies der Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn 13), Baden-Baden 2000; Hartmut Wagner, Bezugspunkte europäischer Identität – Territorium, Geschichte, Sprache, Werte, Symbole, Öffentlichkeit – Worauf kann sich das Wir-Gefühl der Europäer beziehen? (Region – Nation – Europa 40), Münster – Hamburg – London 2006; Julian Nida-Rümelin/Werner Weidenfeld (eds.), Europäische Identität: Voraussetzungen und Strategien (Reihe Münchner Beiträge zur europäischen Einigung), Baden-Baden 2007; Achim Trunk, Europa, ein Ausweg. Politische Eliten und europäische Identität in den 1950er Jahren, München 2007; Thomas Meyer/Udo Vorholt (eds.), Identität in Europa, Bochum 2008; Wolfgang Schmale, Geschichte und Zukunft der Europäischen Identität, Stuttgart 2008.

3 *Bulletin der Europäischen Gemeinschaften*, December 1973, Nr. 12, 131–134, see also https://www.cvce.eu/obj/declaration_on_european_identity_copenhagen_14_december_1973-en-02798dc9-9c69-4b7d-b2c9-f03a8db7da32.html (called up 19.07.2025); Michael Gehler, Die EU und ihr weltordnungspolitischer Auftrag – der weltgesellschaftliche Anspruch und eine Auseinandersetzung mit sozialwissenschaftlichen Thesen, in: ibid./Silvio Vietta/Sanne Ziethen (eds.), Dimensionen einer Weltgesellschaft. Fragen, Probleme, Erkenntnisse, Forschungsansätze und Theorien (Institut für Geschichte der Universität Hildesheim, Arbeitskreis Europäische Integration, Historische Forschungen, Veröffentlichungen 11), Wien – Köln – Weimar 2018, 375–404.

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accordingly, the common heritage, interests and special obligations of the Nine, as well as the level of cooperation reached in the unification process and the degree of cohesion already achieved vis-à-vis the rest of the world.

Finally, all these steps should prepare the groundwork for strengthening the dynamic nature of the European project.

2.2 Part one: A Community of Values

For the first time, in 1973 the EC issued a declaration on European identity and thus also a commitment to a community of values. For the first time in the Community's history, an official document emphasised that the EC had a mission, that it bore responsibilities and that it pursued specific objectives. Its ultimate purpose though was not clearly defined. In the spirit of Jean Monnet's approach, the question of finality had to remain open.

The document was divided into three main sections. The first dealt with the "cohesion of the community", which saw itself as a "civilisation project" with a mission to be accomplished. The nine European States – whose burdened past as well as egoistic defence of misunderstood self-interest could push to disunity – had overcome their antagonism and, by recognising the existence of fundamental European necessities, had decided to unite to ensure the "survival of a [European] civilisation shared among them". The Nine defined themselves for the first time explicitly as a "community of values", thus highlighting the following aspects.

It was a matter of safeguarding the legal, political and spiritual values they professed, *firstly* by "preserving the rich diversity of their national cultures" and, *secondly*, in the awareness of a common outlook on life, to strive for a social order that would serve mankind. *Thirdly*, they also wanted to uphold, as basic elements of a European identity, the principles of representative democracy, the rule of law, social justice as a goal of economic progress, and, last but not least, respect for human rights. Gender equality and the protection of minorities were still missing concerns.[4]

Initially, the EC had to transition into a community of self-discovery. A community of values and responsibility was thus to emerge from the community of peace and law that had existed up to that point, but had neither been named nor defined as such. And from this, a community of mission would in turn take shape.

4 https://www.cvce.eu/obj/declaration_on_european_identity_copenhagen_14_december_1973-en-02798dc9-9c69-4b7d-b2c9-f03a8db7da32.html (called up 19.08.2025)

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2.3 Working Methods and Principles

The member states thus expressed their political will to make European integration a success. In doing so, they invoked a series of working methods and principles that served as a means to an end: the Community Treaties of Paris (Coal and Steel Union) and Rome (EEC), the resale right, the "common market" established on the basis of the customs union, the institutions and common policies so far created as well as mechanisms for political cooperation to develop coordinated attitudes and, "insofar as possible and desirable, to act jointly". This cooperation among the member states should be further developed and, before the end of the decade, transformed into a "European Union".

The "diversity of cultures" within the framework of "a common European civilisation", the commitment to common values and principles, "the convergence of views of life", "the awareness of their own common interests" as well as "the determination to participate in European integration" would give to European identity its "distinctive character" and its own dynamic. There was a readiness to accept the idea that European integration should be open to other European nations sharing the values and goals of the Nine. The connection with the rest of the world was emphasised, especially since the countries of Europe had built up very close ties with many other parts of the world. These ties should be subject to constant natural development as a "pledge of progress and international balance".

However, the nine EC Members had to face global political problems that they could hardly solve on their own. The changes in the world and the growing concentration of power and responsibilities in the hands of a very few great powers – namely the USA and the USSR – made it necessary "for Europe to unite and speak more and more with a single voice if it wanted to make itself heard and play the global political role it deserves".[5]

To understand these remarks better, it is useful to make a short digression of topical relevance. In 2025 – more than 50 years after the Copenhagen Declaration – a new declaration on European identity seems to be necessary. At present, more powers command the stage. While Brazil, India and South Africa could – without meaning to be disparaging – be described as new regional powers, the People's Republic of China and the United States can be addressed as the current leading powers. In between them are the European Union and the Russian Federation, both of which want to assert themselves in their own way. The EU appears to be a junior partner of the USA, while the Russian Federation could be seen as a second-order empire in the context of a growing dependence on the People's Republic of China as a first-order empire. Added to this is the combination of the BRICS states, which, with a view to Brazil, India and South Africa, appear to be a revival of the non-aligned movement from the mid-1950s.

5 Ibid.

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How could and should a declaration on European identity be conceived in 2025? There should be no doubt that such a need exists, but who will take the floor and redefine European identity?

Back to our topic. By 1973, the nine EC states were concerned with maintaining peace as a security community through the transatlantic alliance. A rejection of isolationism and protectionism was clearly expressed: The Community occupying first place in world trade could not be "an economic unit closed off to the outside world". The EC was to be defined as a trading community that would improve welfare for the rest of the world in terms of its supplies and markets; the Community was to "retain control of its trade policy decisions, while at the same time exerting a positive influence on world economic relations, with a view to improving the welfare of all".

The essential objective of the Nine was "the preservation of peace", which could never be achieved if security was neglected. NATO was seen as the only instrument of European security policy. There was no alternative to the Atlantic Alliance, which would guarantee the nuclear weapons of the United States and the presence of North American forces in Europe. The Nine agreed that, in view of its inherent military vulnerability, Europe had to honour its commitments in the transatlantic alliance and make a constant effort to have an "adequate defence" if it wanted to preserve its "independence".[6]

2.4 Part two: Narrower Definition of European Identity through Rejection of Power Politics and an Active Role in International Affairs

The second part of the document was dedicated to a closer definition of European identity in the world. A clear rejection of power politics (military policy) was expressed: The (European) unification was "directed against no one" and did not arise from "any striving for power". The common union would benefit the entire community of nations because it was "an element of balance" and "a pole of cooperation with all nations" regardless of their size, culture and social system. The Nine expressed their will "to play an active role in world politics". While respecting the objectives of the United Nations Charter, a contribution had to be made to ensure that international relations were based on greater justice. The independence and equality of states had to be better safeguarded, prosperity better distributed and security better guaranteed. This was to lead to the development of common positions in the field of foreign policy among the Nine[7] to finally evolve into European Political Cooperation (EPC).[8] Here, however, one can already see a precursor of the "Common Foreign and Security Policy" (CFSP), which was to be envisaged with the Treaty of Maastricht.

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6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 For the EPC see, among others, Maria Gainar, Aux origines de la diplomatie européenne : les neuf et la coopération politique européenne de 1973 a 1980, Brussels 2012.

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With regard to third countries, the Community was to act as an "autonomous whole", promoting "harmonious and constructive relations", without jeopardising, delaying or impairing its will to "progress towards the European Union according to the timetable envisaged" (i. e. towards the end of the 1970s). This also meant that in future accession negotiations the framework and procedures would have to be chosen "in such a way as to preserve the independent character of this European whole". In the bilateral contacts of the EC states with other countries, the common positions established by the Community should apply as well. Relations with the Council of Europe as well as with European countries outside the Communities should be strengthened. "Essential importance" was attached to the EC's association policy with third countries, whereby "a comprehensive, worldwide policy of development aid should gradually be realised". Community commitments to countries of the Mediterranean basin and Africa were envisaged "in order to strengthen the long-standing ties with these states". The same applied to all countries in the Middle East, with the Community wanting to "assist in the establishment and maintenance of peace, stability and progress in that region".[9]

"True peace" could not exist if the "developed countries did not devote more attention to the less favoured peoples". In this certainty and "conscious of their special responsibilities and obligations", the Nine attached "decisive importance to the fight against underdevelopment in the world". They underlined their determination to intensify relations in the field of trade and development aid and "to strengthen international cooperation to this end".[10]

The "close bond" between the USA and the "Europe of Nine" consisted of values and goals, which, according to the Declaration, grew out of "a common heritage" and benefited both sides; therefore, they had to be preserved. However, it was stated that this transatlantic relationship did not affect the determination of the Nine to act as "an independent, distinctive whole". It was soberly stated that the Nine wanted to "maintain a constructive dialogue with the United States" and to "further develop cooperation on the basis of equality and in a spirit of friendship". Other industrialised countries, such as Japan and Canada, were also considered essential for the preservation of an open and balanced world economic order and, therefore, "relations of close cooperation" were to be maintained and a constructive dialogue conducted.[11]

The Nine had contributed to the initial results of the policy of détente and cooperation with the Soviet Union as well as with other Eastern European countries. They were eager to "develop this policy further on the basis of reciprocity". The existing "awareness of China's important role in international relations" contributed to the willingness to intensify relations with Beijing and to promote "exchanges in the various fields and

9 https://www.cvce.eu/obj/declaration_on_european_identity_copenhagen_14_december_1973-en-02798dc9-9c69-4b7d-b2c9-f03a8db7da32.html (called up 19.08.2025)

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

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contacts between European and Chinese leaders". Relations with other Asian countries should also be developed, especially in the field of trade. Reference was made to the Memorandum of Understanding on this subject, which the Community had endorsed at the time of its enlargement. Exchanges of various kinds and friendly relations with Latin America were also envisaged. Finally, the agreements so far concluded were considered to be of the "upmost importance".[12]

While "preserving the essential elements of their unity and their fundamental objectives", the Nine also expressed their intention to "participate in international negotiations in a spirit of openness to the world". Once again, the determination was expressed "to contribute to international progress not only in the framework of their relations with third countries but also through the common positions they intended to adopt whenever possible in international organisations, in particular the United Nations and specialised agencies".[13]

2.5 Part three: Linkage between the Development of a European Identity and the Dynamics of European Integration

The third and shortest section of this declaration mentioned the linkage between the development of a European identity and the "dynamics of European integration". In external relations, the Nine should be driven by efforts to "progressively define their identity in relation to the other political entities"; thereby consciously strengthening their internal cohesion and contributing to the "formulation of a truly European policy". They expressed their conviction that "the progressive realisation of this policy [of an ever closer union] will be an essential factor" in allowing them to "tackle the further stages of European integration with realism and confidence". This policy would also facilitate "the envisaged transformation of the totality of their relations into a European Union".[14]

3. Tasks and Goals

The Copenhagen Declaration on European Identity is unique in the history of the Community. It was, therefore, analysed in detail and from different points of view in the context of our conference in commemoration of its adoption 50 years ago. In the first section, the subject was introduced by dealing with Europe, the EU and questions of identity as well as with the document and its interpretation. In the second part, the

12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.

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Declaration was approached from the perspective of the large founding states (Germany, France and Italy) and in the third section from the perspective of the Benelux countries. In the fourth panel, the Copenhagen Declaration was examined in the light of the Northern Enlargement (United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland). A fifth part was dedicated to the role of the European institutions and their contribution and reactions to the Copenhagen Declaration. Finally, the conference's outcomes were summarised. We will address hereinafter the main results of the symposium. We will also consider and discuss why the Declaration is a forgotten document, whether it was a missed opportunity and to what extent its neglected legacy can be revisited and revitalised.

4. Outcomes of the Conference

Firstly, Hamburg law expert *Markus Kotzur* remarked that identities in Europe exist on different levels and that they form multiple constructs of thought. The European unification process was not about overcoming different local, regional and national identities, but about recognising their right to exist and bringing them together as constructively and productively as possible, so that they could coexist and remain fragmented while working together. Article 4, paragraph 2 of the Lisbon Treaty contains the EU's obligation to respect the national identity of its member states. Kotzur characterised it as an expression of the union between the Communities and the member states and as a key norm in the relationship between Union law and constitutional law of the member states.[15] The Treaty of Maastricht was however more concerned with the issue of taking regional identities into account by emphasising the principle of subsidiarity and strengthening local and regional self-government, including through the establishment of a separate Committee of the Regions.[16]

In his introductory lecture (not delivered to the editors) on *Europe, the European Union and the question of European identity*, British historian *Martin Conway* was highly critical. He began by highlighting the international and global context of the Copenhagen Declaration. In the same year, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Mao Zedong had met.[17] There had already been a first indictment in connection

15 https://dejure.org/gesetze/EUV/4.html (called up 19.03.2025); Armin von Bogdandy/Stephan Schill, Die Achtung der nationalen Identität unter dem reformierten Unionsvertrag. Zur unionsrechtlichen Rolle nationalen Verfassungsrechts und zur Überwindung des absoluten Vorrangs, in: *Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht* (ZaöRV) 70 (2010), 701–734.

16 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/DE/legal-content/glossary/european-committee-of-the-regions.html (called up 19.03.2025).

17 On 17 February 1973, a two-hour meeting took place between the Chinese Communist Party leader Mao Zedong and Henry Kissinger, Special Advisor to US President Nixon. The visit was organised in the context of the rapprochement between the USA and the People's Republic of China.

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with the Watergate affair against US President Richard Nixon. In September 1973, the Conference of Non-Aligned and Neutral States took place in Algiers and in December the Congolese dictator Mobutu paid a state visit to the United Kingdom. From 6 to 25 October 1973, Egypt, Syria and other Arab states fought the Yom Kippur War against Israel. In November 1973, there were riots at the Polytechnic in Athens (Greece) and in December Luis Carrero Blanco, the grey eminence of the Spanish regime and right-hand man of dictator Francisco Franco, was murdered in an ETA attack. Conway also referred to the deployment of British troops in Northern Ireland and the meeting between Czech President Gustáv Husák and CPSU leader Leonid Brezhnev.

The events mentioned were fundamentally unaffected by the Copenhagen Declaration: the growing role of the non-aligned countries, the Middle East conflict and international terrorism were neither explicitly nor implicitly mentioned. Conway was thus attempting to brand the self-centred perspective of this EC-9 document. According to him, the Declaration made no attempt whatsoever to work towards the liberalisation and opening up of the states in Central and Eastern Europe. On the other hand, it should be remarked here that the CSCE détente process advocated by the Declaration was aimed precisely at this.

Conway also criticised the complacency and self-satisfaction of the EC, which had attempted to redefine Europe's role on the continent and in the world with only a brief mention of the enlargement. He then addressed the lack of references to the history of Europe in the first half of the 20th century. There was no mention in the Declaration of totalitarian dictatorships, be it the Bolshevik one of Josef V. Stalin, the fascist one of Benito Mussolini or the National Socialist one under Adolf Hitler. The mass murder of people of Jewish faith remained unmentioned as well. We must agree with Conway that there was no reference in the Declaration to the two world wars, which were, after all, started by Europe in 1914 and 1939/41. However, we must also note that the term 'Holocaust' had not yet been introduced into public debate by 1973. It would only emerge at the end of the decade.

Furthermore, there was also no reference whatsoever to God in this declaration, an aspect that only emerged in the context of the debate on the Constitutional Treaty in 2003 and the Lisbon Treaty in 2007. Accordingly, the Copenhagen Declaration was progressive and secularised and, therefore, neither a backward-looking nor a past-oriented text. The emphasis was clearly placed on modernisation, modernity, openness and future orientations.

Basically, Conway's criticism can be agreed with, even if it seems too harsh in some respects, as it takes too little account of the historical moods and circumstances of the time. A historicising approach would be better suited in order to fully understand the contents of the Copenhagen Declaration. This approach should explain motives and the background of the text by looking at the perspective of its authors and the respective member states, as these were at best only superficially concerned with questions of identity, rather with national interests and ultimately with power and realpolitik.

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During the debate, Austrian historian *Brigitte Leucht* mentioned the importance of environmental policy, which had already become the focus of the European Communities in 1972 as a result of the Paris Declaration. It declared the need for a common environmental policy to accompany economic policy and called for an action programme to preserve the environment, improve its condition and combat pollution.[18] Remarkably, the keyword 'environment' does not appear in the Copenhagen Declaration.

4.1 Precursor and Late Comer

In her essay *Paving the Way towards the Copenhagen Declaration 1973. The Contribution of Portugal, Spain and Greece: From the End of World War II until the 1967 Coup in Greece*, historian *Deborah Cuccia* focused on one specific aspect of the Copenhagen Declaration, namely the references to democracy and human rights, and tried to retrace the long-term history of the debate on these issues. Specific attention was devoted to "outside" inputs, first and foremost those coming from Southern European countries trying to join the ranks of the Communities. She remarked that in the mid-1960s the EEC, together with the Council of Europe, was the only Western organisation to consider the issue of democratic conditionality. This led to the EEC and later the EU rejecting the accession of non-democratic states. The Birkelbach Report,[19] which took a critical approach to the question of association in the sense of 'cherry-picking', emphasised that EEC association should only be an option for countries that did not have the necessary conditions or were not prepared to join the Community. Candidate countries did not only have to promote their integration process by noticeably aligning their economies with those of the member states, but they also had to be ruled by a democratic regime. The document, though void of any legally binding value, was unique in the broader context of the debate of the time. The many other reports issued by EC institutions, such as the report of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Trade (Blaisse Report), mainly – if not exclusively – focused on the geographical criterion expressed in the Treaty of Rome and on the necessity for associated countries to align their economies with those of the member states.

18 Environmental policy: general principles and basic framework: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/de/sheet/71/umweltpolitik-allgemeine-grundsatze-und-grundlegender-rahmen (called up 19.03.2025).

19 Rapport fait au nom de la commission politique sur les aspects politiques et institutionnels de l'adhésion ou de l'association à la Communauté par M. Willi Birkelbach Rapporteur. [s.l.] : Services des publications des Communautés européennes, 15.01.1962 (Assemblée parlementaire européenne, Documents de séance 1961- 1962, Document 122), in : http://www.cvce.eu/obj/rapport_de_willi_birkelbach_sur_les_aspects_politiques_et_institutionnels_de_l_adhesion_ou_d e_l_association_a_la_communaute_19_decembre_1961-fr-2d53201e-09db-43ee-9f80–552812d39c03.html (called up 13.12.2024).

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Due to the democratic condition, Spain was excluded from the first phase of Western European integration, while the same did not apply to Portugal and Greece (both were members of NATO). Greece was also part of the Council of Europe and had signed an association agreement with the EEC in 1961,[20] while Portugal had joined EFTA as a founding member.

In her second essay, *Paving the Way towards the Copenhagen Declaration 1973. The Contribution of Portugal, Spain and Greece: From the 1967 Coup in Athens to Copenhagen 1973*, *Deborah Cuccia* draws attention to how, after a rather cautious reaction, the EC adopted a stance commonly known as 'freezing' the Greek association, while the Council of Europe exerted pressure on the new regime, forcing Athens to withdraw from the Strasbourg organisation in December 1969. Cuccia focuses on Greece and Portugal by discussing the way in which the Greek and the Portuguese cases in the late 1960s were at the heart of a debate on the value of democracy and human rights. This debate is considered an integral part of the broader debate on a European and Community identity that paved the way for the Copenhagen Declaration of December 1973.

To summarise, the issue of democracy was not an easy 'place' for the authors of the Copenhagen Declaration. There was no coherent vision of a European identity; indeed, there were many different approaches to the value of democracy and human rights versus the importance of strategic and economic interests. According to Cuccia, the Copenhagen Declaration was both a declaration and a document in search of a common platform for shared values and goals. It should, therefore, come as no surprise that many were dissatisfied with the final outcomes of the negotiations at the time. Governments such as that of the Netherlands had more than once expressed their annoyance at the rather lenient American attitude towards authoritarian regimes in Southern Europe. Still, even the staunchest supporters of democracy and human rights as common European foundations hesitated when the defence of these values could compromise essential economic and strategic national interests.[21]

4.2 The Major Founding States

The Düsseldorf historian *Guido Thiemeyer* analysed the topic from the German perspective and above all from the perspective of the *Auswärtiges Amt* (German Foreign

20 See the first paper in this volume by Deborah Cuccia: Paving the Way towards the Copenhagen Declaration 1973. The Contribution of Portugal, Spain and Greece: From the End of World War II until the 1967 Coup in Greece, 43–60.

21 See the paper in this volume by Deborah Cuccia: Paving the Way towards the Copenhagen Declaration 1973. The contribution of Portugal, Spain and Greece: From the 1967 Coup in Athens to Copenhagen 1973, 61–76.

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Ministry), which was primarily involved in the issue.[22] The Copenhagen Declaration was directly linked to a speech by Henry Kissinger, who had proclaimed 1973 to be the "Year of Europe". In April 1973, the American national security adviser Kissinger had proposed redefining Atlantic relations. He had urged the drafting of a new Atlantic Charter that would take account of the changes in Europe and worldwide. In particular, he had the conditions of détente and the growing economic power of the EEC in mind and he urged the Europeans to take on a greater share of the defence burden.[23]

The Kissinger speech was the starting point for the German debate in which a dual strategy is discernible. On the one hand, this strategy consisted in initiating a common EC foreign policy at the diplomatic level by supporting European Political Cooperation (EPC). On the other hand, it aimed at enabling stronger network formation through institutionalisation. The latter went hand in hand with an approach based on common values, with national interests playing a role in the way this approach was pursued. Thiemeyer refers to a letter from German Chancellor Willy Brandt to British Prime Minister Edward Heath dated 7 August 1973, in which these aspects are expressed. Two top diplomats, namely Sir Thomas Brimelow, Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London, and the State Secretary at the Foreign Office, Paul Frank, played a key role in discussing joint cooperation with the United States of America in order to strengthen transatlantic relations. On 15 August 1973, German Chancellor Willy Brandt addressed French President Georges Pompidou and spoke out in favour of closer cooperation with the United States of America.[24] By contrast, French Foreign Minister Michel Jobert was in favour of further emancipation of Europe from the USA. Thus, France and the United Kingdom disagreed on the issue of the degree of independence from the USA, which is why the discussions centred on the question of whether the European Communities could form an "unambiguous" whole. On the other hand, through German-British contacts, a plea for closer cooperation with the United States was taking shape. Still, the Federal Republic did not intend to push forward with the issue of European identity; rather, to strengthen the EPC and thus ultimately the integration process.

According to Thiemeyer, the Copenhagen Declaration was drawn up against the backdrop of a situation of crisis and change in the European and transatlantic area.

22 See the contribution in this volume by Guido Thiemeyer: (National) European Discourse(s) and the Copenhagen Declaration: The Federal Republic of Germany, 79–94.

23 Daniel Möckli, Asserting Europe's Distinct Identity. The EC Nine and Kissinger's Year of Europe, in: Matthias Schultz/Thomas A. Schartz (eds.), U.S.-European Relations from Nixon to Carter, New York – Melbourne – Madrid – Cape Down – Singapore – Sao Pauli – Delhi – Dubai – Tokyo 2010, 195–220.

24 Letter from Willy Brandt to Georges Pompidou (15 August 1973): https://www.cvce.eu/obj/schreiben_von_willy_brandt_an_georges_pompidou_15_august_1973-de-070e2612–7e0e-4e5b-ada4–6df8072edc70.html (called up 19.03.2025).

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Copenhagen was the immediate reaction of the EC member states to Kissinger's initiative. In the summer of 1973, the West German government had taken the diplomatic initiative to organise a common European position in the upcoming negotiations with the USA. Two objectives were pursued. Firstly, West Germany wanted to develop the EPC into a common European foreign policy. Kissinger's initiative was seen as a welcome instrument for this purpose. Secondly, European integration was to be deepened through the identification of common values. From the German perspective, the European identity was to be developed in close cooperation with the USA. Close ties with the United States were indeed important for Bonn because, firstly, this was the only way to ensure Western Europe's military security against the USSR and, secondly, the USA was an important EC trading partner.

The motives of the Federal Republic of Germany are to be explained in light of its special role in security policy in the context of the Cold War and with regard to the division of the country, as well as in economic terms due to the export-orientated German economy. The German ideas were largely identical to the British ones. They faced resistance from the French government. In Paris, European identity was not seen as complementary to the values and interests represented by the USA, but as something distinct from them. At the beginning of the 1970s, this dissent threatened to plunge Franco-German relations into a crisis. A compromise between the Germans and the British on the one side and France on the other was therefore necessary. As a result, both Europe's independence and its close ties to the USA were emphasised in the Declaration. Existing relations with the USA were to be maintained, as they resulted from an alleged 'common heritage' and brought mutual benefits. But it was also stated that the Nine would form an independent and distinctive whole. Bonn agreed with this compromise and regarded the Declaration as a foreign policy success. For once a joint document had been produced which could be regarded as proof of the success of the EPC.

According to Thiemeyer, the document was by no means as insignificant as usually portrayed in research. On the contrary, it was part of a discourse on fundamental rights and values in the Community, which paved the way for the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union of 7 December 2000. The latter is by now an integral part of the Treaty of Lisbon and thus of the common body of laws.[25]

Strasbourg historian *Sylvain Schirmann* focused on the strong French affirmation of the idea of a European foreign policy identity as justification for the existence of the EC as an expression of its raison d'être.

The French approach was based on a specific reading of the international context and the challenges it presented for France and Europe.[26] For the French President, the

25 Thiemeyer, (National) European Discourse(s) and the Copenhagen Declaration.

26 Eric Bussière, Un projet pour l'Europe. Georges Pompidou et la construction européenne, Bruxelles 2010.

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end of the Vietnam War in January 1973 had freed up the Americans and opened new international perspectives for them. He feared that they would deepen the dialogue with Moscow and leave little space of manoeuvre for France and, more broadly, for its European partners. The conditions for security were met for Paris if American troops remained in Europe. But President Pompidou and his advisors were not ready to pay for this presence with further economic and political concessions. With a view to the Mediterranean dimension of the EC, the omnipresence of the USA was being questioned, but a declaration with a specific European history narrative was still missing in the early 1970s.[27]

By then, the French leitmotif was to position the Community of the Nine in global affairs as a "sovereign and independent" body. This French insistence on the necessity of a "powerful Europe" was in line with the Gaullist tradition. With this in mind, the Élysée Palace and the Quai d'Orsay had been trying since the summer of 1973 to steer the discussions of the political directors of the foreign ministries of the EC Nine towards the finalisation of a declaration. Once again in line with the Gaullist tradition, France had emphasised the assertion of Europe in international issues. But, unlike his predecessor, President Pompidou did not seek open confrontation with the USA. Schirmann argues that, in Pompidou's vision, an organised and independent Europe should be an ally of the United States, though not in a subordinate position.[28]

It is under these premises that the speaker analysed the French position in the autumn of 1973. The French President worked to maintain and further develop privileged cooperation with the United Kingdom, a new member of the EC, and Germany, with which good relations had already been established at the bilateral and EC level. In other words, the approach pursued was mainly of intergovernmental nature centred around the three most powerful states of the EC at the time. The Copenhagen conference can be seen as an excellent forum for France to present its ideas regarding European security and political cooperation as well as the starting point for fostering the emergence of a European foreign policy. However, Paris did not intend to give up bilateral dialogue with Moscow. Pompidou thus followed into the footsteps of General de Gaulle, who had initiated a dialogue with the USSR as early as the 1960s.

The path to the Declaration was fraught with obstacles. Firstly, Schirmann addressed the poor state of the European monetary union. The French President had accepted the Werner project, but without agreeing to the loss of independence of central banks. He was comfortable with the monetary stabilisation outlined through the European Monetary Cooperation Fund (FECOM). This was in a poor state though in 1972/1973.

27 See the contribution in this volume by Sylvain Schirmann: France and the Copenhagen Declaration (1973), 95–104.

28 Ibid.

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