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THE DANES, THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE FORTHCOMING PRESIDENCY

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FOREWORD

Denmark, which is set to embark on its sixth presidency of the European Union on 1 July 2002, is often regarded as a special and somewhat unpredictable Member State. Because of its democratic practices, this strong-willed country – a proud "small State" – is the one whose population has most frequently been asked to vote on European matters. On two occasions which sent shock waves through the Union, the Danes refused to follow their political elite – first regarding the ratification of the Maastricht treaty, and a second time regarding participation in the third phase of EMU – thus establishing a certain "Danish exception".

Søren Dosenrode delivers a clear insight into this "Danish paradox", whereby a genuine feeling of belonging to the European Union mingles with deep reluctance to engage in any form of debate on political integration. In so doing, he uncovers another one: the pro-European elite is tending to limit European integration to the single market, thus fuelling the opposition of part of Danish public opinion to a process perceived as exclusively mercantilistic and capitalistic. These paradoxes, which have an unfortunate tendency to feed on themselves, are rooted in the complex history of the Danish nation State and in a respectable concern for preserving the specific features of an original welfare State model. However, according to the author, they should not make us doubt the Danes' support for the Union, which is in line with the Community average.

The timing of this presidency is ideal: Denmark will need to take a decisive part in pushing through the enlargement negotiations – an area where, despite its traditional neutralism, this small country is clearly determined to play a major political role. Dosenrode's prediction that this coincidence could result in both a success for Europe and greater support of the Danish people for political integration thus has every chance of coming true.

This favourable context is all the more welcome since the agenda of the Danish presidency is particularly full and will require a lot of determination and know-how. I am grateful to the author for outlining this agenda's main thrusts… before they were made public! The Danish government, while preparing to fulfil its duties with its customary diligence, has refused to announce any programme before the end of the Spanish presidency so as not to interfere with the work of its Spanish counterparts.

In the period of doubt currently affecting the European integration process – one which has notably seen worrying results at the polls –, irrepressible optimists such as myself will find much to rejoice about in this remarkable study.

Jacques Delors

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INTRODUCTION

On 1 July 2002, Denmark will be taking over the presidency of the European Union (EU). Denmark: a foot-dragging, half-member of the EU? No – a full Member State, no better and no worse than the others. Membership itself is no longer an issue for the majority of the population.

The purpose of this report is to analyse Denmark's relations with the EU in general and, against that background, take a look at the forthcoming Danish presidency. To this end, the analysis will be divided into three chapters, each focusing on a central aspect of the issue. The first chapter examines the Danes' attitude to European integration. To understand Denmark's relations with the EU, you have to know about its history. Europe brought it cultural enrichment… but also war and conflict. The multicultural entity formed by Denmark, Norway and Schleswig-Holstein was reduced to today's Denmark in the space of 50 years during the 19th century, and the small State found itself at the mercy of great powers. One consequence was that it turned away from central Europe towards Scandinavia. Our review of the practical attitude towards the EC and EU reveals a Danish paradox: support for the EU that is significant and growing (the Danes are above the EU average in terms of positive opinions), but reluctance to embarking on projects that aim to create an ever closer Union.

Denmark's policy towards Europe and its policy-shaping process are briefly analysed in the second chapter. The policy is presented as being cautious, owing to the attitude of the population described in the previous chapter. The Folketing (the Danish parliament), although overwhelmingly in favour of enhanced European cooperation, thus basically has its hands tied in terms of discussing visionary plans for Europe's future. As a consequence, the potentially strong and democratically elected European affairs committee of the Folketing has the power but not the will to steer Denmark's EU policy, which is conducted by an alliance formed by the civil service and interest groups.

Chapter 3 considers the forthcoming presidency in the light of some observations on small States and the presidency and on the past experience of Danish presidencies. Owing to a number of circumstances, the Danish presidency is facing an unusually large number of daunting tasks, and will have to live up to the expectations from outside that "they will do a good job, as always" and its own aspirations to do well and prove that Denmark is a reliable and loyal member of the Union.

Our analysis is rounded off by a short summary of some of the conclusions.

The first-hand material used for this study includes interviews with Danish and other European diplomats in office between 1988 and 2002, systematically collected newspaper articles, the reports of the Danish parliamentary debates, official and semi-official reports of the central government, and internal working papers.

I am most grateful to the many officials, in particular from the Danish ministry of foreign affairs, the European Commission and the Council of the European Union, who helped me with this project. Heartfelt thanks are also due to Vibeke Brissons, research librarian at the Aalborg University Library, and Julie Larsen MA, research secretary at the Institute for History, International and Social Studies. Last but not least, I would like to express my

gratitude to the *Association Notre Europe* and Jean Monnet Professor Renaud Dehousse for their invitation to write this study.

I - THE DANES' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE EU[1]

This chapter will begin by giving the reader a short introduction to the historical and cultural background of the Danes' attitude towards "Europe", arguing that, while the Danish realm had for centuries been open to and a part of a common pan-European culture, a series of events in the 19th century made it turn towards a Scandinavian culture that was perceived as distinct (from the Germanic element of European culture in particular). This change of outlook was strengthened by the events of the first half of the 20th century, and has shaped the Danes' view of European integration. After this presentation, we will discuss the motivations and debates surrounding the Danish referendums on the EC and EU. Our point will be that the Danes are just as "good" Europeans as the people of most other EU Member States, but also that the Danish debate on further European integration is at a standstill on account of a number of circumstances – notably the elite's mantra that the EU will never develop into a State.

1.1 Background

Denmark is one of the few countries where State and nation practically coincide[2]. This was not always so. For centuries, the Danish king was also king of Norway and duke of Holstein (a duchy belonging to the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation), just to mention the main territorial entities. Still, it has been argued that a distinct Danish identity existed at least in Jutland, the islands and the southern part of Sweden (in particular Scania) as early as the Middle Ages. Within the Danish realm, the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein[3] in particular had a separate culture, since Holstein was a primarily German-speaking entity with its own laws and governance. But that was not to be a problem for centuries, during which many of the king's officers and civil servants came from the noble families of Holstein[4]. The wealthy part of the nobility sent their sons on educational trips throughout Europe, as was customary in most European States of the day. This elite was a part of a common European (noble) culture: for instance the Danish special envoy, Count Christian Scheel, a Dane, used French to write to the Danish foreign minister, J. H. E. Bernstorff, himself of German origin, between 1768 and 1771.

But it was not only the nobility which associated with "foreign" cultures. The 18th century in particular was a period of trade which brought Danish[5] merchants, seafarers and soldiers in contact with the rest of the world[6]. And the peasant boys from Northern Jutland also encountered a different culture when driving cows to Husum, in the southern, German-speaking part of Schleswig, for export. The Danish realm was thus open to and participated in

[1] A major part of the data used in this analysis was collected during the drafting of the author's doctoral work in 1993 and has been updated since.

[2] This is particularly true if we looks only at the "core" or "southern" Denmark, excluding the self-governed parts of the kingdom in the North Atlantic (Greenland and the Faroe Islands).

[3] The Danish king, Christian I, was elected duke of Schleswig and Holstein. The treaty of Ribe, which confirmed the fact on 5 March 1460, provided that "Danish" Schleswig and "German" Holstein should be together, forever undivided (Gregersen 1981/178).

[4] Owing to the low density of population, Norway never was able to make a substantial contribution to the government and administration of the kingdom. However, there are several notable exceptions such as admiral Peder Wessel, general Olaf Rye, and professor Ludvig Holberg.

[5] Understood as subjects of the Danish king.

[6] As any "real" State of those days, Denmark had – small – possessions in India (Tranquebar), Africa (on the Gold Coast) and in the West Indies (the islands of St John, St Croix and St Thomas).

cultural exchange for centuries, although it must be remembered that only a minority of the Danish population was actually involved.

The administrative language was Danish in the kingdoms of Denmark and Norway and German in the two duchies.

The first blow to this fairly harmonious whole was delivered at the Congress of Vienna in 1814-1815. As a result of bad luck and poor British diplomacy, Denmark had sided with Napoleon and therefore found itself among the losers in 1814. The price was handing over Norway to Sweden, which took over the country after a short military uprising among the Norwegians. This increased the proportion of German-speakers subject to the Danish crown.

The relatively peaceful coexistence in the region was upset by the surge in nationalism of the first part of the 19th century, culminating in the unfortunate Schleswig wars (1848-1859 and 1864). The outcome was that both duchies, including large Danish-speaking areas in Schleswig, were occupied by united Austrian and Prussian forces and later annexed by Prussia.

In the space of 50 years, Denmark thus lost its status as an intermediate – even great – power in which several languages were spoken to become a small State in which only one language prevailed.

By the time the first Schleswig war broke out in 1848, a large number of Holstein officers and civil servants had already returned to Holstein, thus leaving a "Danish" civil service and army. The Danish self-perception came to be very much defined or redefined by opposition to the German one (although the two resembled one another on many points, and Danish culture had drawn on the German one for years). Danish cultural life in a broader sense turned towards Scandinavia, and the cultural elite also looked towards France and Italy[7]. This "Scandinavian orientation" was cemented and transmitted to the population as a whole through the institution of "high schools", where young people – mainly from a rural background – were taught Danish and Nordic literature and songs.

Danish foreign policy was governed by two important parameters: imperial Germany and imperial Russia, both located on the Baltic controlled by Denmark. And of those two powers, Germany was perceived as the overriding threat (Dosenrode 1993/251). The Danish policy was to try to keep neutral and remain on reasonable terms with Germany. The Prussian/German attempts to Germanise the Danish minority in Schleswig gave rise to strong feelings against everything German[8], making an open rapprochement next to impossible for the Danish government. The first world war, then the Nazi regime and the occupation of Denmark by Germany between 1940 and 1945 (an occupation which was much "easier" than that of Norway, Belgium or the Netherlands, for instance) did nothing to allay this anti-German sentiment, which lasted at least until the 1970s when Denmark joined the EC.

At the risk of oversimplification, we would therefore suggest that the historical developments briefly outlined above are the underlying factor in understanding the attitude of the Danish people towards the EU. If we were to sum up the above analysis in a few keywords they

[7] Although some still travelled to Germany with pleasure, like the author Hans Christian Andersen (Bloch's diaries (1872), 1999).

[8] An internal note by German chancellor von Bülow, written on 29 January 1906 and classified "*Ganz geheim!*", testifies to this policy of Germanification.

would be: a traditional Nordic orientation[9]; wariness about initiatives from the continent (particularly if they give Germany a dominant role); a strong preference for free trade; and more fundamentally the small State's typical desire to be left alone.

1.2 The Danes and the European Communities (1970-1991)

Preparing for EC membership

The road to Danish membership of the European Communities, then generally referred to as the "European Community" (EC), was a long one. The attempts at European cooperation in the 1920s and 1930s (Count Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-European Movement and the 1930 Briand Plan) had, already then, met with scepticism, as can be noted from the answer to the memorandum delivered to the French foreign minister Aristide Briand in 1930. Economic cooperation was welcome, but not political cooperation, particularly if it interfered with Danish sovereignty or neutrality (*Europa-Dokument 1*, 1930/24-25). Likewise, the writings of Denmark's Dr Heerfordt on creating a "new Europe" (1926) were read abroad but ignored in his home country.

After the war, Denmark, like the United Kingdom, was disinclined to create a federal structure in Europe, and opted for a purely intergovernmental Council of Europe (Dosenrode 1993/294). Danish foreign minister Per Hækkerup later explained the decision by referring to the fear of getting dragged into a foreign culture, whose political aims were not clear and whose ways of thinking were distinct from the Nordic approach (1965/118).

The successful creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was looked at with reluctant suspicion by the Danish government and Folketing, as were the subsequent plans for a European Economic Community. Denmark accordingly fully supported the British counter-proposal made in 1956 to found a large free-trade area for all members of the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), and Denmark joined the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) after France torpedoed the British initiative[10]. This membership was not ideal for Denmark, insofar as one of its two main export markets (Germany) was not included in the agreement, whereas the other one (the United Kingdom) was. The best solution would of course have been to have had an agreement with both countries, while the nightmare scenario would have been a situation where both Germany and the United Kingdom were members of an organisation without Denmark. These economic calculations are important to understand the shaping of Denmark's subsequent EC policy.

In the latter part of the 1950s, the agricultural sector in particular came to the conclusion that the only way to prevent economic discrimination on the part of the EC was to join it, and they accordingly issued a recommendation to do so (*De Samvirkende Danske Landboforeninger*, 1957). The British rapprochement with the EC in 1960 was therefore monitored with interest. And when Harold Macmillan, the British prime minister, declared that Britain would apply for membership, Denmark did the same on 1 August 1961 (*Politiken*, 1 August 1961).

[9] This Nordic orientation seems to have given way to a generally more cosmopolitan attitude, in particular among the younger population, from the beginning of the 1990s.

[10] Other reasons for joining EFTA included the fact that the plans for creating a Nordic tax union had been overtaken by developments in Europe and the EFTA plan was seen as an attempt to avoid dividing western Europe into two blocs (parliamentary debates, 11 February 1958).

In the parliamentary debate following the Danish application, the Social Democratic foreign minister Jens Otto Krag presented the government's arguments for joining the EC. The British decision had been the trigger. To preserve its exports, Denmark could not afford to stand aloof if Britain joined. The only way to maintain the standard of living, full employment, etc., was to join the EC. The arguments presented were strictly economic in nature. The political, supranational aim of the EC was played down insofar as the foreign minister declared that: 1) all forms of international cooperation implied a limitation of the countries' freedom of action; 2) the difference between intergovernmental and supranational cooperation should not be exaggerated; 3) the powers handed over to the institutions were exercised very carefully; and 4) France was working to strengthen the role of the governments. The foreign minister summed up his presentation with the statement that the political aspect was less important than the trade and economic aspects (parliamentary debates, 3 August 1961).

The analysis of the ensuing Folketing debate shows that the most pro-EC party was the Conservative Party, which argued both politically and economically for joining the EC. Then came the Liberals, who firmly called for membership on account of its economic benefits. The Social Democrats were less enthusiastic, accepting the economic arguments but stressing that there should be no discrimination against the other Nordic states. The Social-Liberal Party expressed many doubts, but came down in favour for economic reasons. The Socialist People's Party was clearly against membership; it believed there were neither economic nor political advantages in joining. This debate was important, for it established the main arguments and stances towards the EC that were to be adopted in the following decades. When president de Gaulle vetoed British membership in 1963, Denmark decided to remain outside as well. The debate on Danish membership was by and large restricted to an elite, comprising the political parties, the media and interest groups[11], which was mostly in favour.

When the United Kingdom launched a second application for EC membership in 1967, Denmark followed suit. The debate in the Folketing in May 1966 followed the same pattern as in 1961. Basically, the arguments were of an economic nature, although all parties briefly mentioned that there were also some – unspecified – political implications. Only the Conservative Party (in favour of membership) and the Socialist People's Party (against membership) discussed the political implications as a substantial component of their attitude towards the EC. Thus, the main argument for joining was economic. President de Gaulle again vetoed the British application and nothing happened.

President de Gaulle's resignation in 1969 cleared the way for British – and Danish, Irish and Norwegian – membership. In 1971, a centre-right government headed by prime minister Hilmar Baunsgaard led the negotiations. The progress was discussed several times in the Danish parliament and reported in the media.

The attitudes towards the EC of the parties represented in the Folketing had not changed much since the debates in 1961 and 1967. The Conservative Party and the Liberal Party both supported membership. Originally, the Conservatives had been the most enthusiastic but on this occasion they were overtaken by the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party was happy to take on board the suggestions of both the Werner Report and the Davignon Report and to develop a foreign and security policy, while the Conservatives were reluctant to question NATO as the place to discuss security policy. Both parties were in favour of further developing the EC in the direction of increased supranationality. For the Social Democrats – the largest party in the

[11] There was no larger public debate in the form of hearings, mass meetings, grassroots movements, etc. The general public still considered the EC to be a foreign political phenomenon.

Folketing – and for the Socialist-Liberal Party, the EC remained a primarily economic entity, which they wanted to develop in a pragmatic, non-supranational way. If the EC were to implement the Werner Report, it would breach the Community treaties. The Social Democrats vowed to counter any such attempt, although most would have seen it as fitting the inherent logic of the treaties. Given this perception of the EC, it is understandable that no visions or ideas should have developed as to its future. The preferences of the two parties can be briefly outlined as follows: a preference for intergovernmental cooperation, openness towards non-EC States, a priority on economic cooperation, and an aversion to political cooperation.

The Socialist People's Party and the newly founded left-wing Socialist Party continued to oppose Danish membership of the EC. In their view, the EC was a creation of the large western European companies and had to be seen as an attempt to establish a new State, in the form of a federation, where Denmark would have a say equal to that of the State of Mississippi in the US (parliamentary debates, 18 May 1971).

To sum up the parliamentary debates on Danish EC membership, we can say that both the right and the extreme left had views on how the EC would or should develop politically as well as economically, although the economic points were discussed mainly by the Liberals and the Conservatives in the 1970-1971 debates. The Centre Democrats and the Social Democrats regarded the EC as a intergovernmental body which had to be joined for economic reasons; they had no views on its further development. The population's support for Danish membership had been fairly stable between 1961 and 1971, with a healthy majority in favour (over 50%) and a minority against (around 10%). Thus, Worre rightly describes the period as one of consensus (1995/212).

The referendum on EC membership (1972)

According to the Danish constitution (Article 20), it is possible to delegate a specific part of Danish sovereignty if either five-sixths of the members of the Folketing are in favour or a majority of citizens with a right to vote is in favour. But the Social Democratic Party called for a referendum on membership at the beginning of 1971 irrespective of the result of the parliamentary vote. The reason was simple. The base of the Social Democratic Party (i.e. the party itself, the trade union movement, etc.) had rather unexpectedly split in two (*Politiken*, 10, 11 and 12 September 1971). Until 1971, a comfortable majority of the Social Democrats had been in favour of Danish membership of the EC, but that changed during 1971[12]. To avoid dividing the party and – more importantly – to prevent the Socialist People's Party from gaining a huge advantage in the forthcoming parliamentary election, the Social Democrats pressed for a referendum. Their demand did not get an enthusiastic welcome from the other parties in the Folketing but a refusal would have looked authoritarian and anti-democratic, so the principle of a referendum was accepted[13].

[12] Until 1970, surveys had shown a majority of 50-60% of the electorate in favour of Danish EC membership. Around 5% to 10% were opponents. From 1971, only 40% were in favour, and the percentage of opponents had risen to 30%. Hansen *et al.* (1976-77/103) explain this shift by the change in the likelihood of membership. During the 1960s, membership seemed unlikely owing to France's veto, so it was easy to say that one was in favour of membership. Then membership became a possibility, and that changed the situation from "vision" to "reality". Worre adds that the resistance reflects the divergence from traditional politics of the time, quoting the distrust of politicians, the green wave, the youth rebellion, electoral volatility, etc. (1995/213).

[13] The five-sixths quota was not reached on 8 September 1972; 141 were in favour, 34 against.

The ensuing public debate was very intense by Danish standards. Both proponents and opponents used one-sided information (i.e. propaganda), and the debate lost the nuances it had had in parliament[14]. In simple terms, we might say that the EC proponents insisted on the economic arguments – joining would mean huge economic advantages, staying out would mean huge economic disadvantages – while the opponents used ideological and nationalistic arguments. Worre notes that, in spite of the differences between supporters and opponents, they had common aims insofar as they all wanted to secure wealth, growth, employment, security, détente, etc. The fundamental bone of contention was whether these aims were best served by joining or remaining outside the EC (1995/215).

A study conducted by Kasper Vilstrup's survey company in the days before the referendum on 2 October 1972 showed that 60% of the pro-EC camp had only economic motives for joining. Only 13% said they would vote "yes" out of a belief in the European ideal and 5% put forward a "small-State" argument (Denmark is too small to stand alone). Among the EC opponents, the arguments were more diverse. Twenty-six percent mentioned some kind of fear (fear of the future in general, fear of the Germans, fear of the power of capital and international monopolies, fear of foreign guest-workers, etc.) and 23% were against delegating Danish sovereignty (*Politiken*, 1 October 1972). Haagerup & Thune summed up the opponents' attitudes as follows (in Hill 1983/107):

> "[...] [membership] reduces Denmark's Nordic identity, diminishes the possibilities of expanding Nordic cooperation, and involves Denmark in great power politics."

The referendum was held on 2 October 1972. 90.1% of the electorate turned out to vote. 63.3% voted in favour of EC membership and 36.7% against. Seventy-one percent voted against membership in Greenland, thus paving the way for the subsequent suspension of Greenland's EC membership.

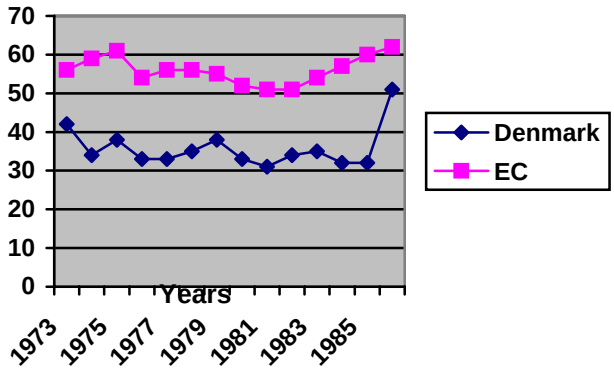
A special feature of the referendum campaign was the creation of the Popular Movement Against the EC, which was founded at the end of 1971. The Movement was never intended to be a traditional political party. Its aim was to unite people from all parties in organised resistance against Danish EC membership. When the European Parliament was directly elected for the first time, the Movement decided to run for seats as well, and was successful. The Movement has never tried to run for the Danish Folketing, and is thus a fairly unique actor on the European political stage.

Disappointed members (1973-1985)?

The first ten years of the Danish EC membership featured two oil crises and the Community budget crisis. The development of the EC therefore proceeded only slowly during those years and gave the Danes no cause for alarm with respect to political integration; the EC seemed to be a purely intergovernmental entity. Then Jacques Delors launched the internal market and the Single European Act (SEA), thus reviving the integration process. We can get a picture of the Danish attitude towards the EC through the *Eurobarometer* surveys, and in particular those showing satisfaction with EC membership in general.

[14] The EC opponents published a famous advertisement beginning "We accuse! [...] We accuse the members of Parliament of violating our constitution, of forcing Denmark into the EC. [...]". The proponents had an equally seductive ad asking "Can you afford to vote 'no'?", showing prices for, for instance, a pair of shoes in case of a "yes" (DKK 128) and in case of a "no" (DKK 160).

Fig. 1 – Attitude towards EC membership ("Membership is a good thing")



(Source: Eurobarometer *No. 27, 187)*

Looking at Fig. 1, it is immediately apparent that Denmark is approximately 15% below the EC average in terms of satisfaction with membership. This is a constant feature from 1973 to 1990. One important explanation is that Denmark joined at a time when the EC was going through a troubled period. As mentioned above, an oil crisis struck in 1973 and the EC was unable to put up a united front. Clever Arab diplomacy managed to divide it into nine selfish States protecting their national interests. And the ensuing economic crisis, with high rates of unemployment and inflation, along with the crisis over the United Kingdom's contribution to the Community budget, did little for the EC's image. This began to change when it became clear that the internal market was going to be completed. Another important factor was that the EC was not really a topic for public debate during the first years of Danish membership, and did not become one until the launch of the internal market programme in 1984-1985.

But when looking at the Danish attitude towards the EC during the first years of membership, it is striking that with respect to specific issues – as opposed to the general attitude – Denmark is less critical than the EC average: in response to questions such as "how do you consider the effort of the EC concerning the two most important questions" (*Eurobarometer* No. 1, page 11, 1974), 69% of the Danes answer that they are "dissatisfied" compared with an EC average of 74%.

The main explanation for Denmark's critical attitude was the basic perception of the EC as an economic body that was not delivering as promised – or rather, as expected. The great difference between the older Member States and the newcomers was that the former knew that they were embarking on a political project with considerable additional economic advantages, whereas the newcomers basically opted for an economic project of an intergovernmental nature. In the case of Denmark, this attitude was to last for the next 20 years. Twenty years until the European project was recognised as political and involving more than just "bacon prices" (see Goul Andersen *in* Dosenrode 2000/111).

Given the above attitudes, it is not surprising that the Danes were fairly reluctant towards further European integration. Added to which we have the underlying factor discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

Consolidating membership (1985-1991)

The Single European Act: The budget crisis was eventually resolved, but economic pressure from Japan and the US nonetheless led to a political process culminating in the SEA in 1986. The SEA had three aims: to establish a legal base for the (re)launch of the internal market programme, to give the European Parliament more influence, and to codify European political cooperation (EPC).

The Danish government at the time was a Conservative-Liberal minority government, headed by prime minister Schlüter, which was fundamentally pro-EC. When debating the SEA, both after the Luxembourg summit in December 1985 and again in January 1986, the – by now traditional – pattern of Danish party-political attitudes reemerged. The Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, the Centre Democrats, the Christian People's Party and the Progress Party – i.e. the middle-class political spectrum – were in favour of the outcome of the negotiations. The Socialist People's Party and the Left-Socialist Party were strongly against, and the Social Democrats – by then in the opposition – and the Radical Liberal Party were both ambivalent: both parties welcomed the internal market but had considerable reservations about the institutional implications of the SEA[15].

To overcome the deadlock and avoid parliamentary elections, the prime minister made the bold move to call for a consultative referendum. It was bold for two reasons. First, it was only the second time in Danish history that such a referendum was being held (the first time was in 1916), and second, because of the low level of support for the EC at the time. The arguments of the proponents can be summed up under three headlines: 1) the SEA would create no new obligations for Denmark; 2) the internal market programme would be a huge advantage for Danish economy; and 3) a "no" would in the long run lead to Denmark leaving the EC (Dosenrode 1993/333). The opponents' arguments were as follows: 1) the SEA is a step towards a union in which Denmark would be a small participant without influence; 2) the economic costs of voting "no" were negligible; and 3) intensified cooperation with the Nordic countries and the rest of Europe would be an alternative to the EC (Dosenrode 1993/334). The electorate decided on 27 February to approve the ratification of the SEA, with 56.2% in favour and 43.8% against (Dosenrode 1993/335).

Considering that the Social Democrat Party, the Radical Liberal Party and the Socialist People's Party had called for a "no", it is worth stopping to look at why the result turned out to be "yes". Tonsgaard concludes that the result would have been different had the Social Democrats and Radical Liberals sent out clearer messages (1987/137f). Worre agrees, and adds that the Social Democratic electorate did not unanimously apply its party's recommendation (1995/220). But it seems as if the prospect of moving towards leaving the EC had a great impact on the electorate, and the outcome was a sign that the Danes wanted to stay within the Community. This was accepted by the Social Democratic Party, which in July 1986 published a report called "An Open Europe". In it, they adopted the position "now that we are here for good, how can we shape future developments?", thus reestablishing the old consensus among Conservatives, Liberals and Social Democrats on a positive attitude to EC membership.

[15] The Social Democrats had initially been in favour of the entire SEA, but we must also take into account their calculation that a defeat of the government could lead to a general election that might bring them back to power. The negative Social Democrat attitude was therefore also deeply rooted in domestic politics (Dosenrode 1993/330).

The years from 1986 to 1992 were characterised by a slowly increasing awareness of the ongoing integration process "down in Europe" and rising support for EC membership, from around 40% in 1986 to an unquestioned "all-time high" of nearly 70% in 1992 (*Eurobarometer* No. 55, 2001). The reasons for this rise in popularity can be found in a variety of factors. As we have mentioned, a majority of Danish parties reverted to a pro-EC attitude. Among the external factors, we should mention the end of the cold war, which paved the way for German unification and possible enlargement of the EC to certain eastern European States. Within the Community, the internal market seemed to be starting to work. All these factors encouraged people to look at the EC in a positive light.

1.3 The Danes and the European Union (1992-2002)

Too much of a good thing?

Between 1992 and 2002, the Danes had to vote six times on European matters. In 1992 on the Maastricht treaty, in 1993 on the Maastricht treaty again, in 1994 in the European Parliament elections, in 1997 on the Amsterdam treaty, in 1999 in the European Parliament elections again, and in 2000 on Danish participation in the third phase of economic and monetary union (EMU). "Europe" was therefore very much on the political agenda during that decade. The positive overall attitude of the electorate towards EC membership declined steadily from nearly 70% to around 48%, but this trend reflected the EC average (and the Danes are now even a few percentage points above the EC average in this respect! *Eurobarometer* No. 55, 2001). The overall trend thus shows a "normalisation" of the Danes' general attitude towards the EC; since 1991 there is a correlation between diffuse or general support for EC membership in Denmark and the EC average, and as regards perceptions of whether one's country was benefiting from membership, the Danes' answers were significantly above the average. Still, when it came to practical initiatives to further European integration, the Danes proved to be very reluctant. This section will analyse the referendums, concentrating on the two "nos" in 1992 and 2000.

The Danes, Maastricht and Edinburgh: from "no" to "yes"

At the December summit in 1989, it was decided to call two intergovernmental conferences (IGCs); one on economic and monetary union and one on political union. The resulting treaty was signed by the governments of the Member States in February 1992 in Maastricht (Netherlands). The Treaty on European Union was a considerable step forward in the integration process, which involved the delegation of sovereignty to the EU. It therefore had to be ratified either by five-sixths of the Danish parliament or via a referendum. As the Socialist People's Party and the Progress Party both voted against in the Folketing, a referendum had to be organised. The parliamentary debate very much followed the traditional pattern, and only the Socialist People's Party voted against (parliamentary debates, 12 May 1992). The only difference compared with the previous debates was that the Socialist People's Party had adopted a basically positive attitude towards EC membership but was against further development of the Community.

During the debate, the supporters of the Maastricht treaty outlined five advantages of a "yes": 1) Denmark would be able to influence the future development of the EC; 2) Germany would be tied to the EC; 3) there would be better environmental protection; 4) there would be a more scope for helping eastern Europe and the third world; and 5) there would be great economic advantages. On the other hand, according to those in favour, a "no" would mean growing unemployment, and Denmark would lose all influence (Dosenrode 1993/433). The opponents

of the treaty claimed that a "yes" would imply that: 1) powers would be transferred to the undemocratic institutions in Brussels; 2) the Danish language would disappear; 3) the welfare State would be dismantled; and 4) the other Nordic States would be gravely disappointed (Dosenrode 1993/433).

On the day of the referendum the turnout was 83%; 50.7% of voters turned the treaty down, while 49.3% voted in favour.

In a survey carried out by Gallup the week before the referendum, voters were asked why they would vote for or against the treaty. The arguments for voting yes were the following: 1) Denmark cannot stand alone outside the EC (32%); 2) the treaty is a logical step in the integration process (11%); 3) the economy will benefit (10%); the Union is an advantage for Denmark (8%); 5) it will give Denmark influence (6%); and 6) voting "yes" is a sign of solidarity and goodwill (6%). The main arguments for voting "no" were as follows: 1) a "yes" would mean loss of sovereignty (19%); 2) a general dislike of the EC/Union (13%); 3) the information was insufficient (10%); 4) the EC was sufficiently developed as it was (7%); and 5) the treaty was a threat against democracy (5%). The arguments thus reflected the traditional Danish divisions on the EC.

> **The masses versus the elite:** The debate revolved around the traditional opposition between losing democratic rights and potentially losing influence by remaining outside. But the political aspect of European integration was now established as a fact; for the time being the Union was not dead.
>
> The result was a grave rebuke to the elite, and in particular to the members of the Folketing, where 130 members had voted in favour of the treaty, and only 25 against it in May 1992. All parties, except the Socialist People's Party and the Progress Party, had voted in favour and the media coverage was also pro-EU, but still a majority of voters had turned the treaty down! The result reflected, *inter alia*, that the Danes did not like the idea of a budding supranational federation but were still happy to belong to the EC as it was. But it also showed a wide gap between the political establishment (the Folketing and media) and the population.
>
> According to Hedetoft (in Branner & Kelstrup 2000), it used to be characteristic of the Danish political culture that the elite and masses shared a "middle of the road" perception of EC membership. This had led to a minimalist, pragmatic approach to European integration. But Hedetoft argues that the increased pace of integration put that consensus under pressure since it was perceived as threatening the Danish national identity. The gap therefore widened between a pro-European elite and a sceptical population. As was to become clear, the elite was unable to bridge this gap in the following years although it did try by several means. The main attempt was to establish a consensus on Danish EU policy (see below) – an aim achieved through the "national compromise". Another was to create a forum for discussion of Danish EU policy, along the lines of the Advisory Council on European Politics which brought together EU supporters, sceptics and opponents between 1993 and 2002[16].

[16] Ironically, the Council was dissolved just before the Convention on the Future of Europe was launched, leaving Denmark without a forum for broader debate where all groups could engage in discussion. It is as if the present government and the Social Democrats, instead of giving the Euro-reluctant half of the Danish population somewhere to exchange views with the Euro-positive half, just decided to ignore the split of the electorate on this question. This could well turn out to have been a fatal move.

The "national compromise" and the Edinburgh opt-outs: The "no" to Maastricht not only surprised the rest of Europe, it also put the Danish elite under pressure, both from the population and its European partners. Relatively quickly, those in favour of the treaty and the Socialist People's Party negotiated what was called the "national compromise". To be able to secure a "yes" to the Maastricht treaty, it was deemed essential to a) present "something new", so as to be able to justify a new referendum; and b) get the support of the now pro-EC but anti-Maastricht Socialist People's Party.

Under the pressure of expectations from "all sides", it was possible to negotiate a platform for negotiation which prime minister Schlüter could bring to the summit in Edinburgh. According to the "national compromise", Denmark was to avoid taking part in: future military co-operation (and not be forced into the WEU); 2) the third phase of economic and monetary union; 3) the EU citizenship provisions; 4) cooperation on justice and home affairs; and 5) unification *per se*. In Edinburgh, the first four Danish wishes were accepted by the other Member States. The substance of the opt-outs did reflect something new but also comprised a lot of rhetoric[17]. The real political constraint in the "opt-outs" is the provision that Danish politicians cannot initiate closer cooperation without first holding a referendum in Denmark. The elite's room for manoeuvre has therefore been restricted (see Dosenrode & Hansen 2001/33).

The acceptance of the "national compromise" by the Member States in Edinburgh in December was declared a victory for Denmark (*Politiken*, 13 December 1992), and allowed a new referendum to be held on 18 May 1993.

As Worre writes, the debate up to May 1993 mainly revolved around whether the Edinburgh agreement was a genuine change or not, and its main purpose was to calm the Social Democratic electorate, of which only 33% had followed the recommendation of its leaders in the first referendum on the Maastricht treaty (1995/225-226). The Conservatives and Liberals warned that a second "no" would mean *de facto* exit from the EC, while the Social Democrats, now back in government, stated that the time had come to join the other States in combating unemployment. The Progress Party, the June Movement and the People's Movement Against the Union[18] all argued that the Edinburgh agreement did not give Denmark any real opt-outs from the treaty and that the "slide towards the Union" had not been stopped. On referendum day, 86.2% of the potential voters turned out (3% more than in 1992); 56.8% voted in favour of the treaty and 43.2% voted against (Dosenrode & Hansen 2001/34). The decisive factor seemed to have been that the Social Democratic Party was in government and that it was able to convince a number of its supporters that the Edinburgh agreement was a genuine step forward. The other parties' core voters voted as they did in 1992 (Worre 1995/225-226).

The overall result of the Maastricht I & II referendums was to tie the hands of the Danish elite with respect to EU policy, both in the media and in the Folketing. Any

[17] Firstly, the Maastricht treaty contained no obligation for Denmark to participate in the WEU – but the opt-out has real content in other defence policy contexts. Secondly, in a protocol to the original Maastricht treaty Denmark already had an opt-out from participating in the third phase of EMU. Thirdly, the Edinburgh agreement did not exempt Denmark from the provisions on EU citizenship, it merely specified that EU citizenship should be regarded as supplementing national citizenship, and as a substitute. Fourthly, Denmark was granted the right to participate in justice and home affairs on an intergovernmental basis as it wanted (see Dosenrode & Hansen 2002/33).

[18] The People's Movement Against the EC had split into the People's Movement Against the European Union, which argued for Denmark leaving the EC, and the June Movement which wanted Denmark to stay in the EC but also the EC to remain as it was before Maastricht.

scope for visions and ideas had vanished. As a result, the initiative in Danish EU policy-making was to a large degree transferred to a coalition formed by the central administration and interest groups[19].

Amsterdam

The Maastricht treaty included a provision that it should be reviewed and an IGC was accordingly convened in 1996. A senior Danish diplomat once said[20] that the problem about the IGC was that there was no particular crisis raging at that time and the preparation period was much to long, thus leaving time for an accumulation of details that eventually bogged down the treaty. This seems a harsh verdict but it was typical of the period that immediately followed the end of the negotiations in Amsterdam in June 1997. The verdict of history will be somewhat more flattering, since Amsterdam was the treaty that "streamlined" the Maastricht treaty and carried the integration process forward.

The debate and campaign before the referendum were tough for both proponents and opponents. The treaty did not "give" the supporting parties any economic arguments to put to the electorate, nor did the strengthening of the European Parliament and Commission alter the overall balance of power between the institutions – a fact that the opponents could have used in their campaign. The arguments thus revolved around the environment and employment. In spite of the lean content of the treaty, the referendum campaign was vigorous on both sides and the outcome remained uncertain. On 28 May 1997, 74.5% of the electorate voted: 55.1% in favour and 44.9% against (Dosenrode & Hansen 2001/35). The turnout was thus 10% lower than in 1993.

The referendum on economic and monetary union

The positive outcome of the referendum on the Amsterdam treaty did not encourage the political elite to conduct a more pro-active European policy in the following years, but as the second phase of EMU was implemented and began to draw to a close, the question of Danish participation in the third phase became more acute. Under a protocol added to the Maastricht treaty, Denmark was not obliged to take part in the third phase of EMU. Furthermore, in accordance with the "national compromise", Danish participation would require a referendum. In the spring 2000, prime minister Nyrup Rasmussen accordingly announced that a referendum would be held on 28 September that same year.

In the Folketing, the majority of parties were in favour of taking part in the third, final phase of EMU, but the very left-wing "Unity List", the Socialist People's Party, the Christian People's Party and the right-wing Danish People's Party were against. During the parliamentary and public debates in the spring and summer 2000, the rift widened between these opponents and the supporters led by Marianne Jelved, the minister for economic affairs. She started out by claiming that the EMU was a purely economic initiative without significant political aspects. Joining would provide influence and economic advantages that would otherwise be lost. The opponents claimed that EMU was a very important stone in the federal European building, and that the limited economic advantages did not outweigh the political costs. Experts were divided on the question and did not offer much help, apart from emphasising the political aspects (Dosenrode & Hansen 2001/158-162). The Danish trade unions were also divided; the leaders tended to be in favour and grassroots members against,

[19] See Dosenrode in Hanf & Soetendorp 1998, and Dosenrode in Branner & Kelstrup 2000.
[20] In a conversation with the author.

thus sending out an unclear signal[21]. The Danes eventually voted "no" to participation in the third phase of EMU on 28 September 2000. The turnout was 87.6%; 53.3% voted "no", 46.7% voted "yes".

What can explain this outcome? Jakobsen, Reinert & Thomsen (2001/84) mention a number of trends, including one we noted in the previous referendums: the Danes are torn between, on the one hand, reaping the economic benefits of full EMU membership and, on the other hand, maintaining Danish sovereignty. Gender still matters: Danish women have been less enthusiastic about European integration since the beginning (see *Eurobarometer* Nos 1 and 2). However, the positive correlation between age and support for Europe seems to have disappeared owing *inter alia* to the international outlook of the younger voters. Generally speaking, younger left-wing voters are more in favour of the EU as a bulwark against globalisation, whereas the traditionally pro-EU right-wing voters are increasingly sceptical.

But when it comes to the concrete result of the referendum, Jakobsen, Reinert & Thomsen (2001/84) stress that the underlying factors pointed to a "yes" but a number of basically irrelevant factors led to the negative outcome. They mention the poor exchange rate of the euro against the US dollar; the EU's sanctions against Austria; and the prime minister's guarantees on the pension scheme. In a situation where voters were nearly split down the middle, this turned out to be decisive. We could add that the supporters' attempt to "depoliticise" EMU also weakened their position.

The Danish elite therefore once again demonstrated that it was not unable to move the population. As a result, the government and Folketing are – again – conducting a defensive EU policy. And this will of course have an influence on the Danish presidency, as we shall see below[22].

2.4 Conclusion: The Danes and Europe today – Europeanisation without vision

Analysing how the values of the Danes have developed over the past 20 years, Peter Gundelach identifies three important features: first, identification with Denmark as a "State" has declined, and continues to do so; second, identification with the local environment has grown, and third, the pride of being Danish has risen (2001/50-52). There is therefore openness to the world outside Denmark, including the EU. A form of openness that may be interpreted as a return to cosmopolitanism based on a strong national (but not nationalistic!) feeling.

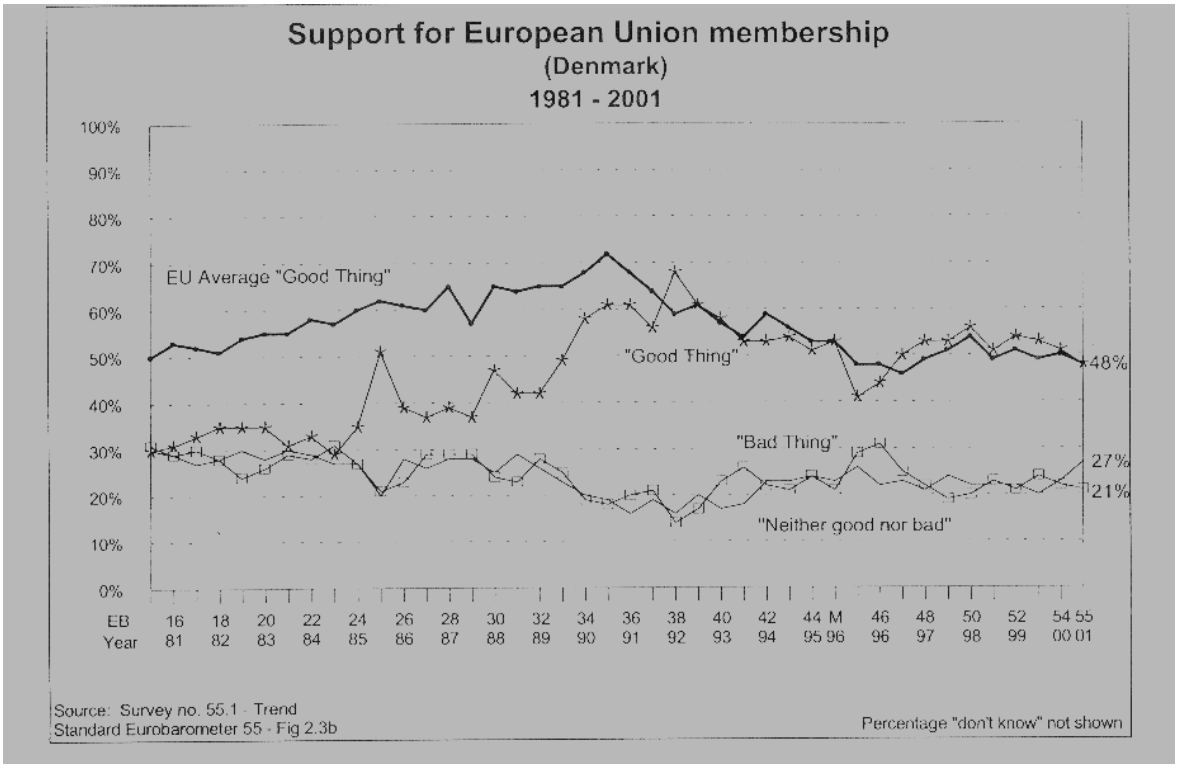
As mentioned above, any general conclusion on the Danish attitude to the EU today must be that the Danes are "good Europeans", in the sense that 48% of the Danes find that EU membership is a "good thing" – a figure which corresponds exactly to the EU average in 2001 (*Eurobarometer* 2001/11). And this has been the trend since 1992, the year when the Danes turned down the Maastricht treaty *and* support for the EC reached an all-time high, with 69% of the Danish respondents saying that EC membership was a "good thing". This also indicates

[21] The largest trade union in Denmark (LO) was typical in this respect. It tried to conduct a "yes" campaign while letting the opponents have a say as well.

[22] The treaty of Nice was marketed in Denmark as a mere cosmetic operation that implied no delegation of sovereignty. The elite was thus able to brush aside demands for a referendum, in particular since the population was somewhat weary of EU matters at the time.

that the Danes started following the EU average even before the less enthusiastic States such as Sweden, Finland and Austria became members of the Union. It can therefore be claimed that the Danes have grown accustomed to the EU and regard membership as a fact that can no longer be challenged. But this general approval for EU membership cannot be extrapolated to general approval of progress of the Union towards becoming a federal State, as was clearly shown in the referendum on participation in the third phase of EMU in September 2000.

Fig. 2 – Support for European Union membership between 1981 and 2001



The general approval of EU membership can be explained by the "Community feeling", by the belief that membership is beneficial (in 2001, 61% of the Danes questioned felt that Denmark was benefiting from membership, compared with an EU average of 45%), and by the fact that the older generation's pro-Nordic, anti-German attitude (the underlying factor discussed at the beginning of the chapter), is slowly fading.

The European debate – where it exists – focuses on the issue of loss of influence to "Brussels" versus the advantages of being part of the European integration process.

Goul Andersen (2001/9) sums up the Danes' attitude towards Europe and looks at the future as follows:

> "As a matter of fact, the Danes' attitudes towards Europe are also ambivalent: [...], Danes express increasingly positive attitudes towards the standard question of support for the Union; they range high on indicators of European solidarity; they have generally been among the most positive towards the enlargement of the EU; and they are not particularly concerned about nationalist issues such as protection of the national language, etc. Basic orientations are becoming more and more European, and there is a strong increase in feelings of European identity. It is only when it comes to matters of national vs. European

decision-making that the Danes stand out as significantly more nation-orientated than most other nationalities on most (but not all) issues [...]. The reluctance to accept EU or joint decision-making is likely to remain strong even in the years to come. But as far as the more diffuse support for Europe is concerned, there is a long-term trend towards more European orientations."

The opposition to further concrete integration, as mentioned above by Goul Andersen and illustrated by the low turnout in the European Parliament elections (around 50%) and the rejection of EMU, has something to do with the underlying factor as well as with learning. An increasing number of the Danes now consider the EU as a political construct, but a majority of Danish politicians – in particular Social Democrats – still refuse to consider or discuss the EU in terms of "State" or "federation" (it was not until the change of government in September 2001 that anyone dared to use the word "constitution" in connection with the Convention)[23]. It goes without saying that the political elite carries a great responsibility for not having encouraged more debate on the future of the EU, and that the emergence of a more positive attitude towards the EU will take time. You cannot spend 30 years saying that the EU is not a State and never will be, then change overnight and expect the population to do the same. But first and foremost, a bit of honesty in the debate would help a lot. Still, Hedetoft has a crucial point, when he stresses that:

"Danish political culture is tying the hands of the government in European affairs and the government is therefore keeping tabs on developments in popular attitudes on these crucial issues, since it has solemnly promised not to rescind the opt-outs [from Edinburgh] except through new referendums and cannot afford to lose again"[24] (in Branner & Kelstrup 2000/301).

Hedetoft was writing before the EMU referendum but his argument still holds true and is supported by the previous statement by Goul Andersen. The new Liberal-Conservative coalition government (elected in 2001) is basically more pro-EU than the former Social Democrat-Radical Liberal government was, but because of the "national compromise" and the promise of a referendum in the event of changes to the Edinburgh opt-outs, the elite's fear of discussing the future of the EU and the population's generally negative attitude towards supranationality, the starting point for a more pro-active Danish EU policy will not be the presidency. If any initiative is taken at all, it will occur within the Convention.

In conclusion, we can say first of all, that the Danes have grown accustomed to Europe and are today as "good" Europeans as the others; secondly, that a historically conditioned period of 150 years of deliberate isolation from Europe seems to have ended; thirdly, that the Danes are developing a dual loyalty; loyalty towards Europe and – stronger – loyalty towards Denmark (it so happens that this was one of the preconditions the founding fathers of the American federation considered very important in building a federation – see Madison,

[23] In 1986, the conservative prime minister Schlüter told the population that voting "yes" to the SEA would imply that "the Union would be stone dead". Prime Minister Nyrup Rasmussen used nearly the same words in the campaign for the treaty of Amsterdam.
[24] See also Dosenrode in Hanf & Soetendorp 1998/65-66.

Hamilton & Jay (1788) 1987); and fourthly, that the debate on the Europe of tomorrow is largely non-existent in Denmark, and that may be the largest difficulty for its EU policy in the times to come[25].

[25] The Danish opinion-makers – who are basically pro-EC – sometimes give the impression that they have very shortsighted aims, seeking to win the next referendum at all costs and forgetting Abraham Lincoln's famous saying: "You may fool all the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all the time; but you can't fool all of the people all the time".

II - DENMARK'S EU POLICY AND HOW IT IS FORMULATED

The purpose of this chapter is to give a short introduction to some of the main lines of Denmark's EU policy and how it is formulated.

2.1 Overview

Denmark's main foreign policy approach until it joined NATO in 1949 can be described as neutralist, as is typical of a small State. And its tendency to neutralism or passivity remained strong until the end of the Cold War[26]. The end of the cold war marked a new era, insofar as Denmark engaged in a very active foreign policy, in particular in the Baltic region, as well as in the areas covered by the UN and NATO[27].

As we have mentioned above, the Danes and their government joined the EC in 1973 because the British did – i.e. to a large degree for economic reasons. And the Danish attitude was "to help make things work", as was clear from the working programme of the first Danish presidency in 1973[28]. The Danish EC policy, in the context of the EC of those days – i.e. an organisation with strong intergovernmental features –, was therefore constructive and active.

As for Denmark's policy with respect to European political cooperation (EPC), it was characterised by reluctance towards any development that could be interpreted as a move in the direction of a common security or defence policy, let alone a Union. But as developments regarding EPC were fairly slow until 1981, it was not a concern for the Danes (see Dosenrode & Stubkjaer 2002, chapter 1). Basically, the EC and EPC were not issues in Denmark between 1973 and 1984.

When did "Europe" become a topic of Danish domestic policy? Although this is a moot point, the May 1984 debate in the Folketing on the European Parliament's "Draft Treaty on European Union" – also known as the Spinelli Report, after its main architect – is as good a landmark as any. A broad majority in the Folketing (134 against 30) turned the proposal down.

Since the initial Spinelli Report was not taken very seriously by the other Member States either, the Danish rejection did not cause any problems. However, more trouble lay ahead since other political challenges emerged. The budget crisis was resolved in 1984, economic pressure from third countries increased, and thus the heads of State and government and the Commission felt they had to act. At the Luxemburg Council meeting in December 1985, the Dooge report[29] was amended to become the SEA.

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[26] The so-called "footnote policy" of the 1980s is a good example (see Dosenrode 1993/282-287).

[27] Denmark sent troops to the Gulf, the Balkans and Afghanistan. It has also engaged in military cooperation with the three Baltic States as well as Poland, to an extent which made Mouritzen describe the Danish Baltic policy as very active (1997).

[28] A Dutch ambassador once told the author that there had been high hopes regarding the Danes' accession to the EC (the Nordic concept of democracy, tradition of openness, etc.) but, he added, "the only thing we discovered was that the Danes were extremely fast in calculating the economic consequences of new proposals, and that was a bit disappointing".

[29] Named after the Irish senator Dooge, who chaired the working group responsible for drafting the report.

The Danish government told the Folketing that Danish wishes had been accommodated in line with the Folketing's May 1984 resolution. As we have indicated above, the government had to put the question of ratification to the electorate, which accepted the SEA in February 1986.

The period from 1984 to 1986 foreshadows the domestic discussions and disputes over the EC that were to come in 1992. During that period, the basically unproblematic consensus on Danish EC policy broke down.

For the very pro-EC foreign minister Elleman-Jensen, and the slightly less enthusiastic prime minister Schlüter, Denmark engaged between 1986 and 1991 in what was perhaps its most active period within the EC until the present day (2002). The internal market was about to be successfully implemented, and the cold war was obviously almost over, thus assigning a new role to the EC in the time to come. It was not as if Denmark was playing a leading role within the EC, but it did graduate from the group of hesitant members to at least the middle group of Member States, if not higher up[30]. For the Social Democratic Party, these years were a period of reflection, before it returned to its slightly hesitant pro-EC attitude and began supporting the government's policy (Dosenrode 1993/433).

As we have already noted, 1992 saw an all-time high in Danish support for the EC with nearly 70% in favour. An abrupt change came with the population's rejection of the Maastricht treaty in June 1992, returning Denmark to the group of timid Member States and taking the foreign minister totally by surprise. The Edinburgh opt-outs, based on the "national compromise", and the hard work of prime minister Schlüter, secured a less than overwhelming "yes" to the Treaty on European Union the second time around, as well as a longer period of paralysis of the Folketing's EU policy. It then fell upon the incoming Social Democrat-Radical Liberal government (1993-2001) to shape Denmark's EU policy without ruffling the feathers of the large Eurosceptic component of the electorate.

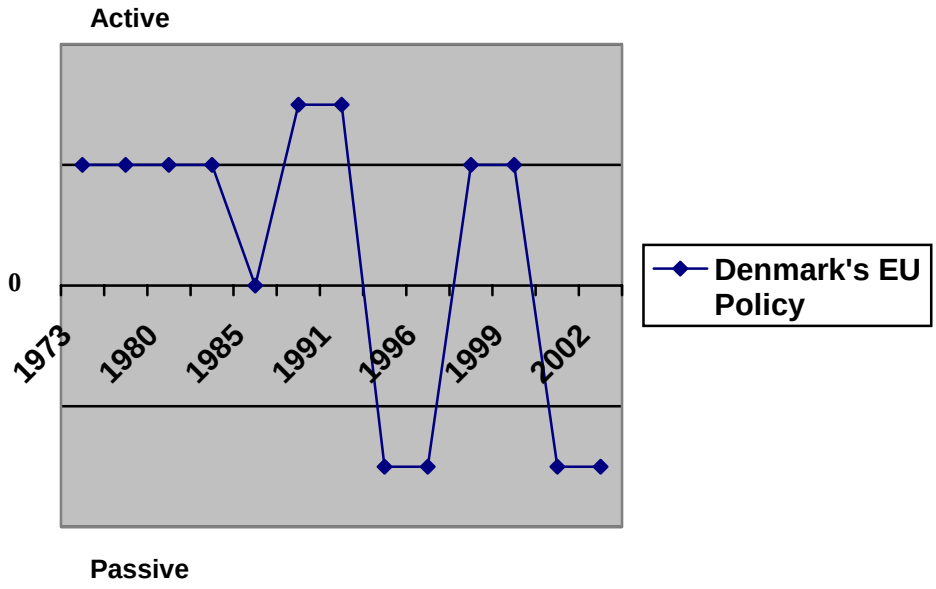
Denmark's EU policy briefly moved out of deadlock at the end of the 1990s, when the Danes said "yes" to the Amsterdam treaty and the European Parliament sacked the Santer Commission (1999). It began to look as if the EU was gaining acceptance among the population – which it was, as described above. The third phase of EMU was drawing near, and in spring 2000, prime minister Nyrup Rasmussen decided to call a referendum on Danish participation. The result was devastating for the Danish elite. A majority of the electorate rejected Danish participation in September 2000, again signalling scepticism not towards the EC as such but towards a genuine European Union and confirming the paradox in Denmark's EU policy. As a result, Danish governments since 1993 have had little room for manoeuvre. The Edinburgh opt-outs had already caused some minor problems before then, but after the September 2000 "no" and the September 2001 arrival of a Liberal-Conservative coalition in government, these obstacles seemed to become more widely felt. Participation in EU-led peacekeeping operations or in the "euro-group" meetings became a more conspicuous issue, for instance. And on 30 April, the president of the Commission recommended that Denmark should not be allowed to join the discussions on two issues covered by the Danish opt-outs (issues concerning family law and tax fraud), arguing that it was not to the advantage of the other 14 Member States (a highly debatable argument, but a clear political signal that the EU is not an *à la carte* organisation).

[30] That was the period when Denmark also developed a very pro-active policy towards the Baltic region.

A basic trend between 1973 and 2002 is that being in government has encouraged the Conservatives and Liberals to restrain their pro-EU attitude in an attempt to include the Social Democrats in a broad Danish policy. Conversely, when the Social Democrats are in government they tend to be more pro-European than when they are in the opposition, in an effort to establish a wide-ranging consensus on EU policy. Such a consensus is, of cause, the only means of ensuring that the Danish electorate does not "veto" the further progress these three parties are in favour of.

Despite the risk of oversimplification and misinterpretation, Fig. 3 attempts to summarise Denmark's EC and EU policy from 1973 to 2002 in terms of being "active" or "reactive" with respect to the activity and visions of the other Member States *at a given time*. This is why Denmark can, for instance, be regarded as conducting an "active" EC policy in the 1970s, when it was contributing to making the EC work more smoothly, cutting red tape etc.

Fig. 3 – Denmark's EC and EU policy (1973-2002)



Denmark is today facing substantial challenges as regards its future within the Union. The major change which is taking – or rather has taken – place in recent years is that EU policy now seems to be a part of domestic, not foreign, policy. As a consequence, EU policy is becoming more federal in nature, and most areas of domestic politics are in some way influenced by the Union. But the trend is not having much of an impact on Denmark's EU policy and public debate, since talking of the EU in terms of a State or State-like entity is taboo. We cannot therefore hope for many constructive Danish contributions to the Convention on the future of the EU.

In short, the main characteristic of Danish EU policy from 1992 to 2002 is that, with a few exceptions, it has been pragmatic, matter-of-fact and low-key[31].

[31] For another analysis of Danish EU policy, see Kelstrup in Branner & Kelstrup (2000), as well as the whole volume.

2.2 The formulation of Danish EU policy[32]

The formal Danish EU decision-making system

The formal part of the Danish EU coordination and decision-making procedure is built around coordination and consultation committees at various levels, with various players. At the lowest level are the "EC special committees" (*EF special-udvalgene*). There were 34 such committees in 2002. Their task is to coordinate the viewpoints of the relevant ministries regarding a particular issue or policy, such as agriculture or the internal market. Work at this level is assumed to be of a specific and technical nature, but it includes strong political elements as well. The next level is the EC committee (*EF-udvalget*), a senior officials coordination committee, which according to Thygesen has three tasks (in Haagerup & Thune 1986/58): a) to resolve the (rare) disputes arising in the special committees, in accordance with the general rules of Danish EU policy; b) to filter political from administrative issues; and c) to pass the former on to the government. In addition, it has to monitor the development of the EU in general. But we should also stress the coordination function of the EC committee, which Haagerup & Thune omitted to mention. One of the EC committee's most important tasks is to secure that the recommendations of the 34 special committees are not contradictory. The highest administrative level in the Danish EU decision-making system is the government, and more specifically its foreign policy committee (*Regeringens Udenrigspolitiske Udvalg*). Its main task is to determine the Danish position on issues negotiated at EU level (in all three pillars). Before the government can participate in the meetings of the Council in Brussels, it must secure the acceptance of the Folketing, or rather ensure that there is not a majority against its stance. That is the task of the European affairs committee (*Europa-udvalget*). In terms of Denmark's traditional administrative tradition, the EU coordination process can be described as strongly centralised. It is also flexible, however, and many questions are solved informally (see Dosenrode 1993).

We will now look at the bodies mentioned above in more detail.

The special committees

The *function* of the special committees has always been to coordinate the viewpoints of the ministries involved and to issue recommendations on the Danish position. As early as 1972, it had been established that the ministries were responsible for knowing the opinion of the major interest groups. The purpose of the special committees is therefore to a) liaise between the civil service and interest groups; b) exchange information; c) coordinate measures vis-à-vis the Commission; d) cooperate on policy formulation, implementation and subsequent legitimation.

An issue that has been through the Folketing's European affairs committee and has been negotiated and decided in Brussels usually results in a directive. This directive has to be implemented, and the interest groups contribute to this stage as well. They are traditionally involved in preparing the implementation of Danish laws and the same now applies to EU laws. The civil servants, together with the interest groups, are those who establish the framework of the directive.

Each special committee should be regarded as an interdependent network with a high degree of autonomy. *Structurally*, it has a core network consisting of the main players revolving

[32] For an in-depth discussion, see Dosenrode 1997 and 2000. The following points follow, to some extent, that analysis.

around the relevant special committee, and a broader network in which other important actors are active: ministers, the EC committee and the ministry of foreign affairs. Despite the general horizontal, or egalitarian, structure of the networks, the central unit is clearly the chairperson and his or her ministry. Normally that person (or the ministry) formulates the proposed Danish position and coaches it through the process.

The special committees and their contacts are tied together by both formal and informal links at several levels. A 1995 survey indicated that, with respect to EU matters, 55% of the civil service have contacts with interest groups either daily or monthly (Pedersen & Pedersen 1995/19). We can therefore talk about a generally high density of relations. Pedersen & Pedersen's analysis of corporatism in Denmark shows the rising importance of informal routine contacts, taking different forms, between the civil service and the interest groups. They also point out that there has been an increase in contacts since the SEA came into force (1995/17-20). But the findings of Pedersen & Pedersen indirectly point out a potential problem within the civil service. If 55% of the ministries have close contacts, it follows that the remaining 45% do not have them. This could lead to tension and conflicts between "European" and "national" ministries.

The tradition of decision by consensus gives the recommendations of the special committee a great authority vis-à-vis peripheral actors and the Folketing, but this tradition has its exceptions, too.

The EC committee

The EC committee's main *function* is to coordinate the recommendations issued by the special committees network, i.e. to ensure that there is a single Danish stance. This function is important, owing to the fragmented character of the coordination network with its 34 committees. Its members are civil servants. A group of permanent members represent ministries that are closely involved in EU affairs; other ministries participate on ad hoc basis.

The minister and government

The minister's main *function* is to prepare the proposal in political and administrative terms and "sell" it to the foreign policy committee of the Government, the parliamentary European affairs committee, and later Denmark's European partners in Brussels. The minister is the official link between the Folketing and the central administration. Secondly, the minister confers political legitimacy. Neither the interest organisations nor the civil service are entitled to suggest new bills; that is the prerogative of the government (and, of course, of members of parliament). Thirdly, the minister and the government's foreign policy committee serve as troubleshooters. In the rare cases where conflicting interests are not resolved in the special committee network (or the EC committee), the relevant ministers – or the Government – have to make the final decision. Fourthly, the minister or the government may lay down guidelines for Denmark's overall EU policy. Fifthly, the minister may serve as an important contact point. Only the minister can call a minister from a foreign country. No Danish permanent secretary, no matter how senior, can pick up the phone and call the German chancellor or the British prime minister. Schlüter could and did, and we can assume his successors do the same. These functions give the minister and government an important role in the Danish EU decision-making process.

The Folketing's European affairs committee

As in most other countries, foreign policy is considered a governmental prerogative (Danish constitution, Article 19). But the Folketing established a "market committee" (*Markedsudvalget*) even before Denmark joined the EC. The European affairs committee, as the market committee is called today, has been the most successful of the "foreign policy committees" of the Folketing in terms of gaining power over time. Its *functions* until 2001 were 1) to inform the Folketing of EU developments in general, and of Danish stances in particular; 2) to give the Folketing a possibility to influence Danish EU policy in order to give it greater legitimacy; and 3) to be the final coordination body. The meetings of the committee also 4) serve as a rehearsal for the minister before his "performance" in Brussels. The committee's report of May 2001 added new tasks, the most important of which were to coordinate the EU-related work of all the standing parliamentary committees (such as the environment and industry committees), and to stimulate public debate on the EU. The committee's task is therefore to control and influence Danish EU policy in the name of the electorate and to generate public debate on EU affairs.

The 17 members of the committee meet on Fridays to discuss the issues on the agenda of the Council for the following week. The minister – or ministers – who will be negotiating in Brussels go through all points on the agenda. The members of the committee may ask questions and make suggestions concerning *all* points on the agenda. Each minister must to be certain there is no majority against his or her proposal. Once this is secured, the minister has a "mandate". The mandate has three aspects: 1) agreement on substance; 2) agreement on which allies to search for; and 3) the "rubber band", i.e. the freedom of action for the negotiator.

The "Danish model", meaning potentially effective parliamentary control of the government's stance before the negotiations in Brussels, rests on two interrelated conditions: 1) the tradition of constructive cooperation between government and opposition; and 2) minority governments, i.e. situations when the Folketing can bring down the government if it does not stick to what was agreed. In Western Europe, only Norway, Sweden and – to a certain extent – Spain have the same tradition of minority governments. The parliamentary culture, in particular the tradition of "constructive opposition", is also rare outside Scandinavia.

The power of the committee is increased by 1) the high standard of the members; and 2) the time pressure, since there must be a Danish position, a mandate, by the time the meeting is over. In daily business, the committee seldom gives the minister a mandate that does not correspond to his or her position. Any changes are usually minor. As ministers know the opinions they must contend with, they do not present anything they know will be unacceptable to the majority.

The structural frame of the committee therefore gives it a central position with potentially strong powers (such as the right to give a mandate, and the potential to bring down the government). Although it is informed at a fairly early stage, there are severe restrictions to the real power of the committee: 1) There are only 17 members to look at all the proposals, and the fact that they are members of different parties prevents very close cooperation and specialisation. The workload is therefore huge, in particular for the representatives of minor parties; 2) The committee may be informed early, but it is excluded from the important stage of policy-shaping that takes place at the European Commission in Brussels. Its options are therefore limited to changing details in a proposal or turning it down; it is hard if not impossible to change proposals substantially; 3) The power of the European affairs committee is further weakened by the influence of the administration and the business community. The

support of the interest groups and recommendations of the civil service can make it hard to oppose the government's stance; 4) The parties the members of the committee belong to are often related to interest groups. This limits the freedom of action of the members of parliament. The memo sent to the committee by the Government includes a survey of the opinions of the interest groups. If the latter are in favour, the members of parliament will not turn down the proposal; 5) Parliament is not in tune with the majority of the population, who are very sceptical towards the EU. This tends to paralyse the committee and the Folketing. This last reason is perhaps the most important one. As it is not allowed to be visionary, the committee can examine proposals at leisure and be critical of minor details. This leaves the initiative to the civil service and the interest groups[33].

At the risk of oversimplification, we can answer the question of "who decides" in the formulation of Danish EU policy as follows: by and large, the civil servants in cooperation with interest groups. They decide on the *daily* EU affairs. The European affairs committee could potentially influence the Danish stance concerning major policy decisions such as those related to the IGCs leading to Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice. But because of the parliamentary paralysis mentioned above, the Danish contribution to this conference has been meagre.

Strategies and procedures of the European affairs committee

The strategies of the MPs as members of the committee in their interactions with the government (and civil service and interest groups) have been incremental. The process has been ongoing, beginning with the law on accession to the EC. This law stipulated, 1) that the Folketing had to be informed on an annual basis about developments in the EC; and 2) that the government had to inform a parliamentary committee on the EC legislation to be adopted by the Council (§ 6). Thus the starting point was a right to be informed, nothing more. After just one month of membership, the majority of the Folketing imposed on the minority government always to check that there was no majority in the Danish parliament against the government's position on an initiative to be voted on by the Council (*Folketingstidende* 1972/73 column 3355). The aim of the committee was to make the Danish part of the EU decision-making process more democratic. There has been a process leading to the right to give mandates, to be informed earlier, to be informed better, etc.[34]

However, the committee continues to be criticised by some of its members for its lack of efficiency. Often it boils down to manpower: 17 persons cannot monitor all the proposals coming in. The 1995 memorandum (*Beretning om regeringens orientering af Folketinget om EU-sager*, 20 May 1995) created the possibility to use the Folketing's other standing committees for hearings. This initiative has been consolidated and further developed (see *Beretning om Europaudvalgets fremtidige arbejde*, 10 May 2001). Its effectiveness differs depending on the committee and minister. The step did seem natural since EU affairs were permeating all or most of the legislative work. Now the European affairs committee endeavours to act as coordinator for EU affairs in all the standing parliamentary committees. This seems reasonable both given the manpower problem and because it is the members of, for instance, the standing committee on environmental questions who possess the factual knowledge needed.

[33] The intention to hold open hearings, joint public meetings between Danish MEPs and the members of the committee, etc. – i.e. the aim to generate public debate – did not materialise.

[34] For a practical and impressive display of this strategy, see the memos of the market committee/European affairs committee between 1972 and 2001.

But implementing this solution with the European affairs committee as coordinating committee – or "super committee" – has not been that easy both because the other standing committees have not been interested in creating a hierarchy in which they would answer to the European affairs committee and because it has been hard for the European affairs committee to delegate some of its work to others. Yet it looks as if the process of cooperating, using each other's expertise, is beginning to work now (2002). This is of course particularly important before and during the presidency, both owing to the need to prepare more cases than usual, and because the European affairs committee will host several meetings as part of the cooperation within the Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees (COSAC).

Another old, unused possibility to coordinate, monitor and influence the decision-making process is the closer contact with Danish MEPs that we have already mentioned – a possibility which is exploited in other EU Member States such as Germany. The reports of the European affairs committee mention this as an important instrument, but it has not been taken seriously to date.

Two innovations relating to the European affairs committee further to its 1996 agreement with the government have strengthened its influence. The first has to do with the implementation of EC directives. Of the 127 incorporated into Danish legislation between 1994 and 1995, only 27 were transposed by law, i.e. through the Folketing. The others were transposed administratively, i.e. without the Folketing knowing in which form the often very broadly formulated directive was transposed and then implemented. Since 1997, the ministry responsible for implementation has to inform the European affairs committee on the progress made. This is a major step in controlling whether the intentions behind the legislation have been complied with.

The second innovation concerns the directives adopted by the European Commission and other "administrative" rules passed in Brussels without direct involvement of the Council. The European affairs committee is now informed about them, but the 2001 report notes that there is ample room for improvement in this area. A remark by a Danish official reflects the urgency of this need: "as soon as I have agreed to the new regulation in Brussels, it is law in Denmark" (1995 interview). This new procedure is unfortunately not yet complete.

The main problem is that the Folketing seems to be building a strong and efficient means of control over the Danish part of the EU decision-making process, but it is very reluctant to use it. The Folketing is paralysed because of fear of the electorate, and is spending all its energy on matters of detail within the European affairs committee. The initiative has therefore been taken over by other, more active actors. Civil servants – backed up by interest groups – feel obliged to act on behalf of an elite they also belong to[35].

[35] An account in English on the European affairs committee of the Danish Folketing can be found on www.ft.dk.

III - DENMARK'S FORTHCOMING PRESIDENCY

In the second half of 2002, Denmark will take over the presidency of the EU for the sixth time. Every State tends to consider its presidency as unique and particularly challenging, with a broad agenda, too little time, etc. The Danish presidency will be no exception. Negotiations leading to enlargement need to be completed, a fairly large number of leftovers from the Spanish presidency will have to be dealt with[36], and the agenda will be tight since a number of policy decisions have to be made before the next two presidencies (both because it will be easier to reach agreement before enlargement and because it is rumoured in Brussels that the next two presidencies, under Greece and Italy, may not as efficient as one might hope for). In addition, the number of working days available to the presidency in the autumn is considerably smaller than during the spring presidency (90 instead of approximately 140). On the other hand, the presidency gives the government in charge an opportunity to gain a higher profile at national, European and global level. Interest in EU affairs is also likely to rise in the country holding the presidency.

This chapter begins with a few considerations on small States and the EU presidency, then analyses the previous Danish presidencies before turning to the one beginning on 1 July 2002.

3.1 Small States and the EU presidency

To be a small State and hold the presidency of the EU is a challenge. Effective planning and strategic resource allocation are crucial if the presidency is to be a success. And of course most States are anxious to do a good job while in office. The presidency is a source of prestige and goodwill, which are necessary commodities in the ongoing bargaining within the EU. Not to mention the international spotlight turned on the presidency and the prestige of leading the EU on the world stage. In short, the presidency is of considerable importance for the small States as well as for the larger ones.

Employing the term "small State" in contrast to "large State" implies that there are two "kinds" of State and that they act differently within the EU framework. Without going into a long discussion of small State approaches[37], we might stress the following differences between large and small States acting as presidents-in-office of the EU:

1. Small States tend to be rather unambitious in their handling of the presidency. Their main aim is to make it work and achieve results[38]. The larger States with proud foreign political traditions as world powers do not share this modest attitude. They tend to be ambitious, wanting to set an EU – and if possible world – agenda that will set them apart from the previous presidencies. This ambitious approach is fascinating and, if successful, can bring lasting results, but often the large State is not able to live up to its own ambitions. By and large, therefore, small State presidencies are more often considered successful. Another

[36] In the field of the environment alone, Spain will pass on some 20 issues which should have been resolved before the Danish presidency.
[37] This has been developed further in Dosenrode 1993, and Klöti and Dosenrode 1994.
[38] When addressing this question, a German diplomat, in conversation with the author, said half in jest that in a way he found it quite appropriate to let the larger States handle the "high politics" and leave the "low politics" to the small States.

reason, in addition to excessive ambition, is the large States' clear tendency to press their national agenda on top of the EU one. A president-in-office who cannot resist attempting to further national interests must expect resistance from the other Member States, thus lowering the likelihood of a successful presidency. The reason they do may vary over time, but one explanation may be a tradition as an active foreign political power and insufficient "Community spirit", and another could be the domestic pressure to promote one's own interests[39]. Without wishing to suggest that small States are morally better, they do tend not to pursue national interests to the same degree. They probably would if they could, but a number of factors prevent them from doing so. First they do not have the resources both to make the presidency work and to promote national interests. Often a substantial amount of resources is taken up by ensuring that the presidency is a success, as well as taking care of domestic affairs. Second, small States tend to support the rule of law as this protects them better than a state of anarchy.

2. As a consequence of the small States' less ambitious approach, they often keep closer contact with the EU institutions, thereby ensuring a tighter and more constructive working relationship. It is not seen as humiliating to draw on the experience of the institutions, thus preventing serious errors. Often the great powers get round to this too late.
3. The small States also tend to be less ambitious when it comes to foreign politics and often have a tradition of neutrality, so they do not have the urge to behave as a great power. Lastly, small States tend to see the EU *per se* as their primary frame of reference, and thus aim to develop it and make it work.

But as we have already pointed out, most EU Member States take pride in doing a good job, not only for the honour of doing it, but also because it reflects how serious they are about their membership and it yields goodwill which can be translated into bargaining power later on.

All of the above also applies to Denmark, and we can expect a serious effort to make a success of the presidency in the second half of 2002 in spite of the obvious difficulties which characterise the Danish relationship with the EU (as reflected in the Edinburgh opt-outs as well as the recent "no" to joining the third phase of EMU).

3.2 The Danish presidencies between 1973 and 1993

Holding the presidency is a fascinating challenge for a country. The powers involved are *de facto* large. Niels Ersbøll, the former Secretary-General of the Council, once wrote that (1985/ix):

> "[...] for a determined presidency, with a clear vision of what it wishes to obtain, the armoury is considerable. It can virtually decide the timing of meetings, the length of time to be given to each topic, the way in which each topic is treated and (perhaps most importantly) whether or when a vote should be taken"

The "hour of truth" for every presidency is the summit of heads of State and government, held at least once – and often twice – per period. These summits have steadily become more

[39] The embarrassing case of the Spanish prime minister, Mr Aznar, trying to delay the reform of the common fisheries policy (April 2002) and even pressing the Commission to remove a director-general who was in favour of the reform, is the latest example of nationalist "large State" attitudes and apparent abuse of powers at the expense of the Union's general interests.

important over the years and hardly have any rules of procedure, thus leaving a lot of the initiative to the presidency... and the other Member States. These occasions are when differences between large and small States are most obvious in the EU context.

Denmark became a member of the EC on 1 January 1973 and took over the presidency on 1 July the same year. That was a challenge. Denmark found itself having to adapt its central administration to EC membership and prepare and conduct a presidency at the same time. Overall, things went well, as Denmark's Grønnegaard Christen tells us (1985/53):

> "After all this, 1 July 1973 arrived with Danish ministers and bureaucrats in the chair. They handled their six months in the presidential chair without causing any scandals or breakdowns which could have been attributed to poor planning, simple inexperience or inadequate resources"

Between 1971 and 1973 and again between 1975 and 1977, Denmark had a foreign affairs minister (K. B. Andersen) and a foreign economic affairs minister (Ivar Nørgaard). Where the EC and the Danish presidency were concerned, they had agreed that Andersen would be in charge of the political aspects and Nørgaard of the economic aspects. The problem was that it was not obvious who had overall responsibility for coordination. The system therefore did not work very well. Politically and personally, the two ministers were at odds and a number of contradictory signals were sent (see Andersen 1983/98).

If we take a look at the Danish working program for its first presidency[40], it is not surprising that the tone should be "matter-of-fact", referring to previous decisions setting the framework[41], etc. And no particular priority can be detected in the issues mentioned. Events during the presidency – the Arab attack on Israel in October 1973 and the "oil crisis"[42] – changed things considerably.

The next presidency followed in the spring 1978, during the economic difficulties that followed the oil crisis. By then, the central administration had implemented the EC coordination system (described in Chapter 2), and had the experience of one previous presidency and five years of membership. The keywords of the new presidency were "efficiency", along with very clear priorities this time around: first, economic and political cooperation, then the energy situation. These priorities were to remain unchanged during the third presidency in the second half of 1982, along with the concepts of coordination and cooperation.

A concern for efficiency and a priority on economic matters – in this case the reform of the Community finances – are also reflected in the working program for the fourth presidency in the second half of 1987. No change occurred until the fifth presidency, when enlargement (Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden) was on the agenda, as well as closer cooperation with the central and eastern European countries. Also, the environment, which had been on the agenda of all Danish presidencies, had moved up the list of priorities, and so had subsidiarity and openness – not surprisingly after the Danish "no" to Maastricht barely a year before.

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[40] A tentative survey of the priorities of the first five Danish presidencies can be found in Appendix 1.

[41] In particular the Paris summit of October 1972.

[42] A Danish senior diplomat told the author about an episode from the Copenhagen summit in the autumn of 1973: "All of a sudden, some Arab sheiks turned up and demanded to meet the heads of State and government. What on earth were we to do? We offered them a cup of coffee and spoke to the minister". This episode shows that the president-in-office cannot prepare for all contingencies.

While the second, third and fourth presidency had posed no particular problem – in spite of the hard work involved –, conditions before the fifth presidency were by no means ideal. Denmark changed government just before taking its turn in the chair and had voted "no" to Maastricht six months earlier. However, a fairly broad consensus between the outgoing and the incoming government ensured that the presidency worked. In this context, it is not surprising that the presidency should have worked towards more openness and subsidiarity, enlargement to the four candidate States – three of which were Nordic ones –, and closer and better relations with central and eastern Europe. The general message was a transparent, democratic EC, open to the outside world.

If we were to identify a few characteristics of the Danish presidencies, they would be as follows: first, Denmark takes pride in being a "safe pair of hands" rather than a "visionary" (this, of course, is related to the general Danish EU attitude analysed above). To be well-prepared and to want to do a good job are basic attitudes in the central administration and among – some – politicians. The political emphasis has been 1) on economic affairs (hardly surprising, since Denmark joined the EC for economic reasons); 2) on making the institutions work (same reasoning as above); 3) on working for enlargement (an old favourite in Danish foreign policy, dating back to the 1930s), and on a number of more idealistic "soft" issues such as the environment, consumer protection, working conditions, etc, and openness in EU decision-making.

3.3 The Danish presidency in 2002

On 1 July, Denmark take over the six-month EU presidency in a period featuring substantial internal tasks and external problems. In this chapter, we will address three topics: the key issues, the expectations facing the presidency, and the preparations.

Key issues – and tasks ahead

When he mentioned the working programme of the forthcoming Danish presidency in April 2002, a senior Danish diplomat made it clear that the draft program has been ready for quite some time but also that the "in-house orders" are quite clear: until 1 July, Spain has the presidency, and until then Denmark will not interfere by publishing its programme. In spite of this clear – and loyal – position, the key issue(s) for the presidency are not very hard to identify: first, because many unresolved questions are already on the agenda and the Danes are not ones to reinvent the wheel[43], and second, because Danish ministers have taken part in the EU policy process and have expressed opinions on a number of points. But we should bear in mind that the EU policy process is dynamic and everything cannot be settled in advance.

The key issue for the Danish presidency will be the enlargement negotiations. Bertel Haarder, the Danish minister for European affairs, has made this clear on a number of occasions. At a public hearing in the Folketing on 3 May, he stated that enlargement to the 10 applicant States will be given absolute priority (*Kristeligt Dagblad*, 4 May 2002):

[43] According to one senior diplomat, the number of points on the Danish presidency agenda is the largest since the internal market programme; the pressure is further accentuated by the fact that many issues have a deadline attached.

"We will work on all fronts, but we will not let the other issues disturb the enlargement. It has to ride on its own track. If the willingness is there to discuss agriculture, fine, but it will have to ride on its own track as well".

Enlargement is, and always has been, a Danish priority. A majority of politicians, in particular politicians from the Social Democratic Party, have been stressing the importance of creating an "open" Europe and working against any kind of "blocs" since before Denmark joined the EC. The minister's statements will therefore be welcome at home and uncontroversial abroad, where enlargement is also regarded as a key issue. The aim is to complete negotiations with 10 of the 12 applicant countries to get the approval of the European Council in Copenhagen at the end of the presidency, thus paving the way for the treaties of accession to be signed in the beginning of 2003 (perhaps in March?).

The fact that enlargement is also a key issue for the other Member States demonstrates a very important point regarding any presidency: most of the agenda is set before the presidency begins.

Denmark's efforts towards greater "transparency" in the EU – whether within the Commission or the Council – has also been a hallmark of its EU policy. If there is a particular "Danish" cause, it could well be this one. On this issue, however, Denmark must contend with the traditions of many other EU Member States, even though northern Europeans see the EU's opaqueness, making it remote and "mysterious", as one of its main faults.

If we were to name but a few of the issues facing the Danish presidency, they would be the following:

- The regulation governing the common fisheries policy will expire at the end of 2002. Since it is intended that the EU should continue to have such a policy, the Commission has prepared a reform which should have been launched in the middle of the Spanish presidency. This initiative was notoriously delayed in a way that cast a shadow on both the Spanish presidency and the Commission, whose independence was undermined. The Danish presidency will have to try to bring the reform through[44].
- The Commission will present a midterm evaluation of the CAP in July. This should hopefully be completed before the end of the Danish presidency.
- Environmental questions will be high on the agenda. The Danish prime minister will head the EU delegation at the world summit on sustainable development in Johannesburg, which will demand very careful preparation. Expectations are high, since Denmark traditionally conducts a "progressive" environmental policy (see below). As we have indicated, the Spanish presidency is lagging in this area and will leave around 20 proposals for the Danish presidency.
- The Commission is supposed to submit a proposal to bring the some 200 current rules and regulations on food safety down to 84. However, since these proposals have been delayed in the Commission it may not be possible for the Danish presidency to see them through.

[44] Speculations in the Danish media suggest that Spain wanted to delay the process and pass it on the Danish presidency in order to prevent Denmark – a country which has as many interests at stake as Spain – from concentrating on its national preoccupations while it is in the chair. Out of office, Spain will again be able to look after its interests. In addition, should things turn out badly, Greece – a country which, like Spain, is dependent on fisheries – is next in line to hold the presidency. At the time of writing, it looks as if this plan – if it ever existed – was not successful (*Jyllandsposten*, 4 May 2002).

- The tax question is also on the agenda and the hope was expressed in Barcelona to resolve it before the end of 2002; it includes the carbon dioxyde issue, liberalisation of electricity and gas, etc.
- Transport: the "Single European Sky" program is expected to be ready at the end of the presidency and the question of a railway reform is also on the agenda, but with no deadline.
- Employment: in Barcelona, the decision was taken to strive for simplification and efficiency (another favourite Danish theme). And this has to be seen in the context of revising the Union's social policies.
- The Spanish presidency should carry through the new research programme but is uncertain whether it will be able to do so[45].

Then there is the Community action plan on e-commerce and the financial package. The latter in particular is a "tough" issue.

In addition to this "internal" agenda, there is the external agenda. It is, of course, harder to predict since we do not know what will happen on the world stage, but it will no doubt address the fight against terrorism and the ongoing violence in the Middle East, as well as the development of an EU military capacity[46] and the question of Macedonia.

Given that expectations for the following two presidencies are muted, that there will be quite a few leftovers from the Spanish presidency, that a number of States want to complete the changes to the Community *acquis* before the new Member States join (perhaps in May) since this will be more easily done with 15 instead of 25 Member States, the pressure on the Danish presidency is considerable.

External expectations

The general expectations are, as we have mentioned, quite high. A senior diplomat in Brussels said that Denmark could very well become a victim of its own success. The previous Danish presidencies were well managed, and there is therefore the expectation that Denmark will again do a good job, in spite of the unusually large agenda.

The pressure is increased by what some diplomats in Brussels have referred to as Denmark's "not 100%" membership. This will lay a general pressure on Denmark to perform well, simply to show that it is a loyal and constructive member that does not try to leave unpleasant tasks to others.

For both the General Secretariat of the Council and the Commission[47], the key issue is to complete the accession negotiations before the next presidency. From a "structural" point of view, Denmark will inherit some of the Spanish presidency's difficulties with respect to six

[45] In this study, we have often noted that the Spanish presidency has *not* been living up to expectations. But we should remember that this is partly – but only partly – explained by the fact that some six elections took place during this presidency, including the French presidential and general elections and the German general elections. That does not make things easier for any presidency.

[46] Further to the Edinburgh opt-outs, Denmark has handed over the chairmanship for these issues to the next – Greek – presidency.

[47] Since some of the names of the Commission departments are very specific and the officials wish to preserve their anonymity, I will simply refer to "the Commission", while stressing that no interviews – for this study – were conducted with commissioners.

governments that may or may not have changed. The Council is also aware that the Danish government itself took office quite recently. This implies two things: the government is relatively inexperienced, but does not have to fight for its political survival.

The Danish opt-outs are regarded as established facts by both the Council's General Secretariat and the Commission. They will not make things easier, but the Danish government has had time to think it over what it intends to do. Several Community officials have pointed out that the opt-outs did introduce a feeling of "disjointedness" of the presidency. But the general attitude is that the Council General Secretariat and the Commission will try to be as helpful and accommodating as possible, not only to help Denmark but also in the interest of the Union (the latter is of course an advantage for Denmark).

The Commission expects that the Danish presidency will take its priorities into account. For 2002 they include:

- security
- full implementation of EMU/euro
- sustainable development
- new European governance
- enlargement
- the southern Mediterranean rim

In the Commission in particular, there has been a certain disappointment with Spain's downgrading of the proposal of sustainable development (the broad concept encompassing social, environmental and economic development). To the Commission, the high profile of these objectives is very important, and it expects the Danish government to see to it, particularly with a view to the Johannesburg summit. But since the "new" Danish government is less concerned with environment and sustainability in general, some disagreement can be expected in this area. We can see that these issues only partly correspond to the incoming presidencies' priorities.

As regards "good governance", the Commission has several ideas on, for instance:

- better preparation of regulations
- compulsory assessment (what does this regulation imply?)
- better consultation
- regulatory impact assessment, and
- involvement of stakeholders

These are points that are very close to Denmark's traditional values and hopes for the EU.
Denmark will of course try to do a good job. Why? Because a good presidency gives the relevant State valuable goodwill once it has passed on the chair. And this goodwill is a very necessary currency in the hard-nosed Brussels negotiations. Lastly, it would show that Denmark is as good a member as any.

The preparations

How is Denmark preparing for presidency? As we have mentioned, a presidency can be a challenge for a small State and needs careful planning. This presidency is the sixth, so the civil service – and the ministry of foreign affairs in particular – have some experience to rely on. While the quantitative burden has risen, the qualitative demands are much the same.

The administrative planning began two years ago in 2000, when the needs for resources were assessed[48]. How many extra – temporary – civil servants are required[49], extra office space, etc.? The mainstay of administrative planning is the ministry of foreign affairs, through the ordinary coordination system described in Chapter 2.

A year before taking office, the officials began studying the issues and establishing close contacts with the Commission, the European Parliament and the General Secretariat of the Council. That was very much the role of the permanent representation in Brussels. Basically, it is the nerve centre of the presidency, both in the preparation phase and during the presidency[50].

Being a member of the Troika helps the incoming presidency a lot; in the six months beforehand they can get accustomed to the potential issues coming onto the agenda. The incoming Danish presidency has devoted considerable time to visiting the institutions in Brussels. Being a small State, the Danish approach has been to establish a close relationship with the institutions, and in particular the Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council[51]. The General Secretariat plays some very useful roles for all presidencies:

1. It provides continuity. A civil servant once described a presidency as a "short, energetic sprint", and that only works if there is an "institutional memory", particularly since most legislative acts last more than six months.
2. It provides coherence, since it has – or is supposed to have – a bird's eye view of legislation and other matters in progress.
3. Presidencies "come and go". This means that the General Secretariat often has suggestions on how to solve a problem which perhaps resembles one that occurred five or ten years ago.

The expertise and power of the institutions therefore makes them valuable partners for the presidency. Danish ambassadors have accordingly opted to visit every Commission directorate general to hear what their plans were for the second half of 2002, instead of suddenly taking office and ordering the administrations to do this or that[52].

With respect to day-to-day policy, the presidency is to a large degree managed by the permanent representation in Brussels rather than from Copenhagen. This is not unusual. The last time a country tried to control the presidency completely from the capital (in this case Vienna), it was not very successful. The delegation of power requires sound preparation and

[48] Beyond the advantage of being "in good time", the Danish budget also has to be considered, since expenses naturally have to be financed through the ordinary State budget.

[49] This goes for the ministry of foreign affairs as well as for other ministries. As regards the ministry of foreign affairs, we should remember that Denmark also represents the Union in the UN and therefore needs extra staff in New York and Geneva, and of course in Brussels.

[50] During the last three months or so before taking office, the Danish ministers begin "travelling around" to get to know relevant colleagues. They also, of course, receive visits from colleagues wishing to meet the incoming team.

[51] Although there is an honest intention to cooperate with both the Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council, there are a few differences. The Commission helps and assists the president-in-office, but is also a player in its own right. When negotiations take place around the rectangular table, the presidency sits at one end, with the General Secretariat, and the Commission at the other end. It is the General Secretariat which advises the presidency, should it require such advice. Basically, the Commission has presented the "final proposal" and therefore defends it, while the presidency seeks to find a good compromise by making amendments, etc.

[52] One Danish senior diplomat told the author that some directors general had looked baffled when asked what their plans were for the second half of 2002. However, once they realised it was not a joke in poor taste, they enthusiastically accepted the idea of collaboration.

communication between Copenhagen and Brussels, but business is so fast that it cannot be dealt with if the Danish ambassadors have to call home for every trifle.

While the daily presidency is run from Brussels, the political aspects are handled in Copenhagen. The government has set up an "EU presidency committee" very similar to the government's foreign policy committee. That is where overall political coordination will take place. This committee is monitored by a parallel committee of civil servants, who handle the administrative coordination and preparations.

As we have said, Denmark had a minister for foreign affairs and another for foreign economic affairs during its first presidency in 1973. The presidency was a success *in spite* of this arrangement. Bad "personal chemistry" and the fairly impossible idea of dividing economics and politics weighed it down.

Later presidencies have shown that leaving all tasks to one minister is increasingly hard[53]; more work has to be done and the rising influence of the European Parliament – which now expects a minister rather than a civil servant to attend question time –, has further increased ministers' workloads. The current Danish government therefore assigned the post of European affairs minister to the minister for integration when it took office. The post is temporary and will end after the Danish presidency.

In terms of organisational theory, the chosen solution (the minister for foreign affairs as president-in-office alongside a minister for European affairs) may seem dubious. The risk of shortcuts, communication breakdowns, etc. is not negligible and the question of whether they belong to the same party, get on well and have established a clear division of responsibilities are important factors. In practice and with respect to the division of tasks, the solution looks less questionable. The country holding the presidency sends two delegations to all meetings: the president-in-office and the national head of the delegation. During the Danish presidency, the minister for foreign affairs will be the acting president and the minister for European affairs will be the head of the Danish delegation. In addition, the minister for European affairs is a senior member of the European Parliament, and he will be closely involved in the presidency's relations with the European Parliament. Denmark's presidency has thus introduced a new feature in the central administration. Its success will very much depend on the ability of the two ministers to cooperate. But in case it works out – and only time will tell – it may well prove to be an elegant way of avoiding the appointment of "junior ministers" while ensuring the efficient handling of the presidency. Another point in favour of the solution is that both ministers are highly professional, and have a clear interest in making the solution work. Who wants to carry the responsibility for a failed Danish presidency?

Overall, it seems as if the incoming presidency is well prepared and ready to take office.

[53] In the Danish tradition, there are no "junior ministers" or "Staatssekretäre" as there are in some other States.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this report has been to analyse the Danish relations with the EU in general, and against this background take a look at the forthcoming Danish EU presidency. To this end, the analysis was divided into three chapters, each focusing on a central aspect of the issue.

One central conclusion from the first chapter on the Danes and the EU is that a change of attitude has taken place: Danish support for the EU is now "above average". The times are over when the Danes saw the EC/EU only as an economic entity. Today, its political aspects are acknowledged as well. But therein lies what could be termed the Danish paradox: in spite of the generally very positive attitude towards the EU, there is hardly any debate on its future and the Danes are very reluctant to consider steps leading towards an "ever closer union"[54].

In this context, Chapter 2 gave a broad analysis of Danish EC/EU policy and explained the reactive policy as a result, *inter alia*, of this "paradox". The Danish elite has been disowned twice in referendums on European matters (Maastricht and participation in the third phase of EMU) within the past eight years. This has paralysed the Danish parliament in terms of any real vision of Europe and has prevented genuine public debate on the future of the EU.

The domestic background having been outlined in the first two chapters, Chapter 3 turned to the forthcoming presidency. Given the above analysis, the Danish presidency can hardly be expected to be visionary. However, that is not in itself a handicap since the tradition within the Union is that the small Member States concentrate on making the Union work and resolve the tasks on the agenda instead of trying to "change the world". In the Folketing, the minister for foreign affairs was asked to present the outline of the next presidency. It was "matter-of-fact", without any hint of vision, and symbolically made no mention of the ongoing Convention (*Folketinget*, 25 April 2002). The priority will be given to enlargement, in accordance with the tradition of Danish presidencies and with public opinion in Denmark and the other Member States.

Another Danish – and Nordic – favourite is transparency in the EU policy-making process, both as a matter of principle, as good governance, but also to demystify EU policy-making and increase its legitimacy[55].

As mentioned, are there some anomalies which will not make the task easier. The transfer of the military aspects of the presidency to Greece is likely to create some "disruption" and will not be looked upon with enthusiasm, *inter alia* by the General Secretariat of the Council. Nonetheless, these issues will be resolved, as will the issues passed on by Spain.

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[54] The European debate naturally has its highs and lows in all the Member States, but Denmark seems to be even more reluctant than most to create a vision of the European future.

[55] One senior official from one of the institutions remarked on the "Nordic approach" that the Danish presidency in 1993, and the Swedish and the Finnish ones, had brought a "breath of fresh air" but that the concepts of "transparency" and "intelligible language" had now lost some of their original appeal since they had been taken on board in the Union's workings. Seen from a purely Danish perspective, this is a fairly questionable statement. Still, other Community officials stated that they expected a more egalitarian approach, attention to sustainable development and a general "new way of doing things".

Real problems may arise if the Danish government, having started to involve the Council and the Commission in its presidency, is unable to get their support for the modifications in policy since the change of power (such as the lower priority on environmental policy). Senior Commission officials betrayed some astonishment when told of the new policies. This could give rise to problems.

And what will be the domestic benefits of the presidency? Will the Danes have to vote on the Edinburgh opt-outs if they are amended, as provided for under the "national compromise"? Unlikely; but the wishes expressed by Bertel Haarder, the minister for European affairs, in the public meeting in the Folketing on 3 May 2002, may make that necessary. He hopes that the presidency will have a positive influence on the Danes' perception of the EU, as it had in Sweden and Finland when they were in the chair.

The Danish government and civil service have spent two years preparing for a six-month presidency. Is that not too much? The answer is clearly no. The Danish presidency will be tough. Owing to circumstances, the burden will be considerably heavier than usual and the presumption of the institutions and other Member States are that "the Danes will pull it off as always". But those with the highest aspirations are perhaps the Danes themselves. For many Danish politicians and civil servants, the presidency is some kind of "litmus test" of full EU membership – and that creates great expectations.

APPENDIX

Tentative survey of priorities of the Danish EC/EU presidencies 1973-1993

1973: (Udenrigsministeriet; Note by the presidency, subject: the Community's schedule of work in the second half of 1973, 31 July 1973)
Keywords: Older decisions set the agenda (Paris summit, October 1972)
Priorities (Equal)

- Second phase of EMU
- Establishment of a regional development fund
- Social policy
- Measures concerning industry, technology and science
- The environment

1978: (Udenrigsministeriet; M. J.nr. 400.B.4; 3. November 1977; Notat – Oversigt over arbejdsopgaverne i EF under det danske formandskab)
Keywords: Efficiency, relations with the US/external relations (EC's problems too large to be solved alone).
Priorities:

4. Economic and political cooperation/GATT
5. Energy
6. Enlargement to the south: Greece, Spain and Portugal
7. Effectiveness of the EC (in particular the right of veto)
8. North/South dialogue
9. Agriculture
10. Fisheries
11. Employment, the environment, consumer protection

1982: (Udenrigsministeriet; M. 1., j.nr. 400.B.4. den 5. Maj 1982; Arbejdsprogram for det danske EF-formandskab i andet halvår 1982)
Keywords: Reduction of unemployment through economic expansion; coordination and cooperation
Priorities:

12. Economic growth and reduction of unemployment
13. Energy
14. The environment

1987: (Udenrigsministeriet; M. 1. j.nr. 400.B.4. den 12. Maj 1987; Arbejdsprogram for det danske EF-formandskab i andet halvår 1987)
Keywords: Reform of Community finances, efficiency
Priorities:

15. Reform of the Community finances
16. Implementation of the Single European Act (including the environment and the internal market)
17. Economic policy and monetary policy

1993: (Udenrigsministeriet; Nordgruppen, N. 1. j.nr. 400.B.4/Dan den 5. Januar 1993, (Rev. 6); Arbejdsprogram for det danske EF-formandskab i første halvår 1993)
Keywords: Enlargement, accession of third States, openness, subsidiarity, functionality
Priorities:
18. Enlargement to EFTA States
19. South-east Europe
20. Subsidiarity and openness
21. Sectoral policies (including the environment)

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