



*Department of Political Science*  
*Chair of History of International Relations*

**The Political and Diplomatic role of Italy  
in the process of European Integration during the eighties**

SUPERVISOR

Prof.ssa Maria Elena Cavallaro

CANDIDATE

Pierfrancesco Fortunato  
Matr.632112

CO-SUPERVISOR

Prof. Federico Niglia

ACADEMIC YEAR: 2017/2018

*" Europe is the natural context in which solutions for social and economic progress will find their true meaning and true value."*

*Emilio Colombo*

### ***Acknowledgments***

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Maria Elena Cavallaro, for the support she has given me during this period. I would like to thank my co-supervisor, Professor Federico Niglia and the University for the Advanced Training Model that has consistently provided me in these five years.

A special guess goes also:

To my parents, *Anna and Franco* for the daily support.

To *Valentina*, who gladdens me with her presence.

## Index

<i>List of Abbreviations</i> .....	5
<i>Introduction</i> .....	6
<i>1.The evolution of the process of European Integration (1945-1980)</i> .....	10
<i>1.1Europe divided by the Cold War: historical consideration on the birth of the European integration process</i> .....	10
<i>1.2Reasons, conditions and currents of the European unit</i> .....	14
<i>1.3The first, founding stages of Community construction</i> .....	17
<i>1.4The Community's first steps: the 1960s and 1970s</i> .....	21
<i>1.5The difficult 70's</i> .....	24
<i>2.Italy, protagonist of the European construction in the period 1945-1969 and the difficulties during the 70's</i> .....	28
<i>2.1The traditional lines of Italian foreign politic</i> .....	28
<i>2.2The post-war period and the first choices of the Italian governments</i> .....	33
<i>2.3Towards a new Europe (1951-1957)</i> .....	40
<i>2.4Italian foreign policy in the years of the miracle (1958-1969)</i> .....	44
<i>2.5Italian foreign policy in the difficult 70's</i> .....	50
<i>3.Italy's foreign policy in the first part of 1980s and its role in the Mediterranean enlargement</i> .....	54
<i>3.1Italy and Europe in the 1980s: broad lines of evolution</i> .....	54
<i>3.2The new Cold War</i> .....	61
<i>3.3Change of protagonist in Europe</i> .....	64
<i>3.4The Euromissile crisis, Europe and Italy</i> .....	68
<i>3.5Europessimism and new trends (1979-1981)</i> .....	72
<i>3.6Gensher-Colombo Plan and Spinelli Project (1980-84)</i> .....	76
<i>3.7 Italy in the process of enlargement to the Mediterranean countries</i> .....	83
<i>3.7.1 Accession of Greece (1981)</i> .....	86
<i>3.7.2 The complex accession of Spain and Portugal (1985)</i> .....	89
<i>3.7.3The important role of Italy</i> .....	93

<i>4.Italy's foreign policy in the second half of the 1980s and its role</i>	
<i>in the reform of the European institutions</i> .....	99
4.1 <i>Restart of the European integration process and institutional reform</i> .....	99
4.2 <i>The turning point of Milan and Italy</i> .....	103
4.3 <i>The Second Eighties: the Single European Act</i> .....	107
4.4 <i>The Second Eighties: towards Maastricht</i> .....	112
4.5 <i>European integration and Italian foreign policy in the 1980s</i> .....	119
<i>Conclusions</i> .....	123
<i>Bibliography</i> .....	129
<i>Annex. I</i> .....	138

## *List of Abbreviations*

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
ECSC	Economic Coal and Steel Community
ECU	European Currency Unit
EDC	European Defence Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EMS	European Monetary System
EMU	Economic and Monetary union
EPC	European Political Cooperation
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
EURATOM	European Atomic Energy Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMP	Integrated Mediterranean Program
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECE	European Organization for Economic Cooperation
SEA	Single European Act
SETAF	Southern European Task Force
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## ***Introduction***

The process of European integration that over the years has led to the creation of what is now the European Union has been characterized, since its inception, by many different actors who have brought their small but fundamental contribution to the implementation and continuous strengthening of this process. The latter, even today, presents obstacles to be overcome and objectives to be achieved in order to be defined as truly complete.

*"There was a moment when we had the feeling that the status quo could be changed, that the Wall that had been dividing the East from the West for forty years was not so impenetrable. It was perceived that a positive evolution was possible, even if full of difficulties and questions. Today everything seems clear to historians, but at that moment it was very different".*

From these words pronounced by Giulio Andreotti during an interview in September 2009, it is possible to understand how the development of European construction, taken for granted by many today, was instead characterized by different phases, each with its own peculiar and delicate characteristics, in the general background scenario represented by the forty-year cold war between the two blocks. Forty long years in fact, not only of geographical division of the continent because of the ideological wall, but also of the path towards Europe.

We restarted from the rubble left by the war to arrive in 1951 at the birth of the ECSC; in 1957 the six signed the Treaties of Rome and just over twenty years later, in 1979, we witnessed, for the first time, to the election by universal suffrage of the European Parliament, symbol of democracy. At the same time, partners in the construction of Europe grew. In the 1970s, the six States became nine, expanding to the north, and then, in the following decade, became twelve, also expanding to the south; the process of integration resumed in 1987 when, with the Single Act, the Community decided to complete the single market by 1993. In those years the world changed, the wall between the two Europe collapsed and the status quo of which Andreotti spoke and which seemed immutable quickly disintegrated. It emerged a dynamism, not by everyone immediately understood that in a short time,

brought a Germany now united to enter and integrate more and more in that Community that a few years later, in 1993, in Maastricht, was transformed definitively into the European Union.

Other important events occurred, of course, in the following years, there will be further transformations and changes, not the subject of this work limited to the '80s but which had their roots in the crucial events of that key decade.

In fact, the objective of this work is to revisit the fundamental phases that characterized first the birth of the concept of European integration and then, almost always, its continuous and incessant development, identifying in the debate and in the political choices of the 1980s the real turning point in the history of European integration. In particular, it will be examined the contribution that, from a political and diplomatic point of view, has been given to the European cause by our country and by our fellow countrymen working in the institutions of the Community, for the development of the process of European integration. Will be analyzed the first steps taken in the years immediately following the Second World War, up to the crucial decade of the 1980s. In this last part the work wants to highlight how the European Community, also under the political push of a decidedly Europeanist Italy (politicians and diplomats), took decisive steps towards integration first with the Mediterranean enlargement to Greece, Spain, Portugal and then with the fundamental, as well as necessary, reform of the European Institutions that for all the difficult 70's remained in fact stopped.

Not an easy task. In fact, a necessary premise is necessary: in the realization of this work, the available literature has been used, while unfortunately it has not been possible to use and view, with a few exceptions, the documents and archival sources necessary for the full understanding of the events under examination, concerning in particular all the '80s, the central object of this work. The historical proximity of the events dealt with, in fact, clashes with the not complete accessibility of the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, unfortunately still under state secrecy, at least in Italy. Therefore, the working methodology used in the realization of the dissertation alternated between the research and the subsequent study of the numerous historical and literary sources present on the subject and the

consultation, at the Andreotti Archive hosted by the Sturzo Institute in Rome, of the documents, which I was given the opportunity to view, focusing, as mentioned, on the decade of the '80s.

The main question to which this thesis attempts an initial answer is the following: *Was it really the process of European integration, with particular reference to the '80s, also represented and supported by our fellow countrymen who populated the political and diplomatic scene in those years? Or, as has often been suggested, especially abroad, have the choices and positions taken at Community level by our fellow countrymen continued to be secondary to national interests?*

The work has therefore been organized into four chapters: The first, introductory chapter is dedicated to the presentation of the topic, by inserting it in the historical-political context, to the premise on the working method used and to the outline of the main question to which it is intended to give an answer.

The first chapter on "*The evolution of the European integration process (1945-1980)*", attempts to provide an analysis of the main events that have taken place, at international level, since the end of the Second World War and the outbreak of the Cold War onwards. Will be analyzed the new balances generated by the forty-year East-West clash, moving through the economic reconstruction of European nations strongly supported by the United States and the first steps of the Community in the '50s and '60s. A community that, between ups and downs, made important progress, up to the difficult 1970s, in which, also due to financial crises and consequent difficulties within the states, integration slowed down, without ever stopping altogether.

In the second chapter "*Italy as protagonist of the European construction in the period 1945-1969 and the difficulties during the '70s*", the first thirty years of European integration will be discussed, analyzing in particular the main guidelines of the foreign policy of our country which, in the years following the second war, was called upon to take fundamental decisions, both national and international. As we shall see, even in those first decades, albeit to a lesser extent, Italy was nevertheless an integral part and a



convinced and active protagonist of the process of enlargement and strengthening of the Community.

The third chapter on "*Italy's foreign policy in the first part of the 1980s and its role in Mediterranean enlargement*" examines the choices made by our politicians, with particular reference to the events that characterized the Community in the first years of that crucial decade. In these, as we shall see, the country was a major player in the negotiations leading to the second enlargement of the Community, first in political and diplomatic support for the entry of Greece and, subsequently, in the difficult and lengthy diplomatic negotiations leading to the entry of the two Iberian countries in the firm support, despite appearances, for the entry of the latter.

The fourth chapter on "*Italy's foreign policy in the second half of the 1980s and its role in the reform of the European institutions*" will highlight the main events that have characterized this crucial period, the late 1980s of the Community, since the Milan Council of 1985. It was precisely with the important Italian presidency that fundamental steps were taken towards the ratification of the Single Act, to finally arrive at the years immediately preceding the Treaty of Maastricht in which, in a very short time, under the pressure of epoch-making events on the international scene such as the unexpected collapse of the communist regimes, the definitive path towards the future European Union was traced.

## CHAPTER ONE

### *The evolution of the European integration process (1945-1980)*

#### *1.1. Europe divided by the Cold war: historical considerations on the birth of the European integration process*

At the end of World War II, Europe appeared in disastrous conditions, a situation so dramatic and so exceptional that is difficult today to talk about it to the generations who have not seen and lived. In fact, as Di Nolfo observed in the introduction to the second volume of his work on the history of international relations: *"those who did not see the spectacle with their own eyes might think that the definition belongs to the rhetoric of catastrophes. Instead, it corresponds to reality (...) part of France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, United Kingdom (...) had been literally razed to the ground".<sup>1</sup>*

The devastation really crossed the entire continent: "whole cities razed to the ground, over 35 million dead, a destruction not only physical but also social, political, moral".<sup>2</sup> In many areas of the old continent law and order were practically non-existent or ineffective, institutions such as government and police disappeared, neither schools nor newspapers, there were almost no transport or banks, there was no money, much less banks to deposit it, large factories almost all destroyed or dismantled, food was missing, there was only, often, survival. The New York Times wrote in those months "Europe is in a condition that no American can hope to understand".

Faced with so much destruction, however, the European populations "did not lose the will to return to life" by rebuilding the cities as they were before, pulling themselves out of that quagmire in a few years, advancing and becoming, at least

---

<sup>1</sup> E.Di Nolfo, Storia delle relazioni internazionali, II. Gli anni della Guerra Fredda 1946-1990, Laterza, Bari 2015, p.VI.

<sup>2</sup> K.Lowe, Il continente selvaggio. L'Europa alla fine della seconda guerra mondiale, Laterza, Bari 2014, p.XI-XII. See also G.Mammarella, P.Cacace, Storia e politica dell'Unione Europea (1926-2005), Laterza, Bari 2006, pp.25 e ss.

in the western part, a prosperous and tolerant continent.<sup>3</sup> An economically surprising fact, for some almost a miracle, generated and powered by two powerful push engines: on the one hand the US economic aid policies and on the other the progressive economic and political integration of European nations.<sup>4</sup> A phenomenon that for the first few decades has affected only Western nations but that, after the end of communism in Eastern Europe and the Cold War between 1989 and 1991, has gradually spread to all of Europe.<sup>5</sup>

In 1945, however, at the end of the war, the real big change had been above all political: it was evident that after centuries of undisputed hegemony "that Europe covered with rubble had lost its centrality in the world dynamics".<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, after the great disaster emerged a new "bipolarism" made out of two "superpowers", theoretically non-European (even if historically linked to Europe), between the United States and the Soviet Union. Two nations that, although in positions unequal to each other but incomparable to the other actors, became the points of reference around which the relations between all the other states of the international scenario coagulated.

It was essentially a great system of conflict, centered on the ideological clash around the discriminating between "communism" and "the free world", as then said. With a contrast that never resulted in a generalized military confrontation but that remained for decades very alive and working. It was the so-called "Cold War", the "long peace lasting 40 years", as defined<sup>7</sup>, whose balance was marked by the terror of a possible atomic war.<sup>8</sup>

The clash originated from two irreconcilable models, immediately evident after the defeat of the common enemy. On one side Stalin, head of the USSR, who immediately imposed a "Victorian discipline" in the areas occupied by the Red Army to which he entrusted the task of extending the Soviet domination to Europe and the rest of the world and therefore its political model and economic Marxist-

---

<sup>3</sup> E.DiNolfo, Ivi.

<sup>4</sup> F.Fauri, L'unione europea. Una storia economica, Il Mulino, Bologna 2017.

<sup>5</sup> G.Manmarella, P.Cacace, cit

<sup>6</sup> G.Formigoni, Storia della politica internazionale nell'età contemporanea, Il Mulino, Bologna 2000, p.313.

<sup>7</sup> J.L.Gaddis, The Long Peace. Inquires into the History of the Cold War, Oxford University Press 1989.

<sup>8</sup> G.Formigoni, cit.

Leninist. On the other side, the United States, also great winners, who wanted the creation of a "global market whose expansive capacity and cohesion were able to neutralize internal conflicts within the bloc and in which the economy and politics could organize themselves according to the guidelines majority in each nation."<sup>9</sup>

For almost half a century the bipolar confrontation between the US and the USSR interfered with all aspects of international life. There were moments of hard conflictual opposition but also peaceful and conventional relations of cohabitation if not in agreement on specific themes. In other words, there were moments in which the opposition seemed to arrive at the open conflict (from the 1948 Berlin Bloc to the 1950 Korean War to the 1962 or Afghan crisis of 1979) with the risk of becoming a real war. There were on the contrary others, such as the Western silence on the internal crises of the communist system of 1956, 1968 and 1980 or the "détente" agreements, as in Helsinki 1975, which show that periods of tension alternated with good neighborhood phases, if not collaboration, perhaps with growth also of the commercial interchange.<sup>10</sup>

In brief, can be said that between September 1945 and the spring of 1946, the hope that the victorious powers could mutually agree to give the world an institutional, peaceful and multilateral way to reconstruction, after the great disasters of the war, disappeared quickly. It emerged on the contrary, a bipolarism without mediation, with two "models" or "two camps" as Stalin said, opposing and alternative to each other. To divide Europe, "*had fallen from Stettin on the Baltic, in Trieste on the Adriatic an iron curtain*", as Churchill said in May 1946 in Fulton in the US.

The breakthrough took place mainly in US strategy, whose universalistic illusions inherited from President Roosevelt and assumed by his successor Truman soon ended in the face of Soviet aggression and determination.

A change that for brevity can be divided into three historical steps: the first between May and December 1945 in which the US changed the perception of the USSR from a treacherous ally to an enemy and global enemy. The second in the course of

---

<sup>9</sup> E.Di Nolfo, cit.

<sup>10</sup> Idem, p.VIII

1946 in which also ended every American illusion of being able to simply live with the foreign policy of the USSR, without particular initiatives, through a separation and a detachment pending the inevitable final victory of the Western and free model. Finally the turning point in the spring of 1947 with the launch of decisive US specific initiatives to counter the USSR, through an active policy of "containment" of Soviet communism and its expansionism. This strategy followed two directions. On the one hand, with a vast and impressive plan of economic intervention (in May '47 announced the Marshall Plan) for the European friendly nations facing serious difficulties, particularly weak towards the activism of Stalin and USSR and in the face of the destabilizing activities of the trade union organizations and communist policies in the West. On the other, with the construction of a solid Atlantic military alliance that in April 1949 took the name of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization).<sup>11</sup>

Thus began the Cold War, with a succession of clashes and distances, but always in the competition, which changed the face of the world in a few years. In the late 1960s, the new framework was complete. With its bipolar logic that left so little space at intermediate positions and nuances, the situation had finally stabilized, in a far less tense view of the initial years of the hard fight (between 1947 and 1956), sometimes even cooperative but always in the fierce competition. The world was now less Eurocentric and more united than in 1945, partly due to technological progress (transport, trade, communication, finance) but at the same time it appeared much more complex and sophisticated than that of the immediate post-war period.

In those years of the Cold War, Gaddis<sup>12</sup> himself admits, within a global framework of substantial (and forced) political-strategic immobility, deep structural, economic and social transformations took place in reality as well as institutional. There had been strong ideological contrasts within the two blocs (often exploded into revolutions, clashes and local wars) and conditions were created, in the world but particularly in Western Europe, for a long and uninterrupted season of economic growth and generalized social development.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> E.Di Nolfo, cit., pp.45-47.

<sup>12</sup> J.L.Gaddis, cit.

<sup>13</sup> D.H.Aldcroft, *L'economia europea dal 1914 ad oggi*, Laterza, Bari 198, pp. 147-249.

The Cold War, though so important, was only a part of reality.<sup>14</sup> In the second half of the twentieth century, "there were changes that (...) had a decisive weight in transforming the nature and composition of the international system, in determining the emergence of new subjects and the emergence of new organizational forms. Above all, there had been a profound transformation of the way of being of advanced societies, placed before the theme of de-colonization, forced to prevent it from turning into neo-colonialism. And even more (it had happened) a technological change that adapted the international relations to the change of traditional means of communication and characterized the new way of being and coexisting with the term globalization".<sup>15</sup>

Changes that made the world different and that demanded such behavioral changes in international actors that, we can safely say today, the end of the Cold War and the USSR in the 1990s was not due to a victory by the West but "the Soviet incapacity to face new problems effectively".<sup>16</sup>

So far from the gloomy international stability of the Cold War, deep structural transformations took place and complex political operations began, including, not least, the European construction that born also on the thrust and urging of the Cold War but whose steps and nature had (and have nowadays) much deeper roots and much larger ambitions.

### ***1.2 Reasons, conditions and currents of the European unit***

The war in Europe, as mentioned, ended in May 1945 leaving the infrastructure of the European continent destroyed and its peoples divided by ideological conflicts and national resentments.<sup>17</sup> If it was difficult to imagine a less fertile ground for the start of a political process of integration between nations, yet it was exactly what happened in a very short time. As early as the autumn of 1950, the countries of Western Europe were in the midst of economic reconstruction and six of them, including the historical enemies France and Germany, had begun negotiations to

---

<sup>14</sup> G.Formigoni, cit., p.313.

<sup>15</sup> E.Di Nolfo, cit., p.IX.

<sup>16</sup> Ivi.

<sup>17</sup> M.Gilbert, *Storia politica dell'integrazione europea*, Laterza, Bari 2005, p.3 e ss.

place their coal-steel industries under the supervision of a supranational authority. In addition, 15 of them had agreed to respect the contents of a convention on human rights and all or almost all of them had joined for common defense, to a close political-military alliance with the United States against the USSR and its allies, NATO. It was certainly not the federalism advocated by some, but it was undoubtedly a respectable result: what were the key factors that had contributed to and fed this process?

The first factor was ideological: everywhere, in western countries, democratic politicians were in power who wanted to pursue European unity with different accents and methods. After such a terrible war, the cultural unity of Europe was proclaimed everywhere and some political unity was hoped for. Europeanist rhetoric was widespread at every level, acting as a democratic glue between groups of very different historical inspirations, otherwise disunited: European Catholics, Socialists, Liberals and Conservatives all said they were firmly Europeanists, while only the Communists and the nationalist right were against the construction of the community. Europeanism almost appeared as a passport to democracy.

The second factor of Europeanist cohesion was the urgent need for rapid and full economic reconstruction. At a time when the very possibility of survival of the various European nations devastated by the disaster seemed in doubt, the prospect of positive international cooperation among themselves and with the US, of mutual help in coping with the dramatic daily difficulties and of starting growth in all fields, seemed the surest and most concrete way to achieve the recover. The latter was a task that according to the German Chancellor Adenauer, appeared "*boundless and extraordinary*" for every nation if isolated.<sup>18</sup>

The third factor was linked to the great American consensus on European integration. The Europeans were well aware, that is, in the memory of the post-first world war period, how important it was that the US did not resume its traditional policy of isolationism and that on the contrary they wanted the Europeans to follow a federal path somehow similar to their own. A road on which they were prepared to put their great resources on the table, those of which Europeans lacked.

---

<sup>18</sup> Ivi.

The fourth factor of cohesion was the need for some reintegration of Germany without it constituting a danger for anyone. It was this above all but not only a French concern, after the Cold War had convinced everyone (but especially the U.S. and the UK) that Germany should return a great industrial nation, the first solid bulwark against the aggressive politics of the USSR. Hence the work of breaking with the French tradition of European politicians such as Robert Schumann and Jean Monnet, first advocates of a useful reconciliation between the two nations that faced each other for centuries.

The fifth and final factor was Britain's obvious economic weakness and political ambivalence. A nation with great moral authority as the first winner against Hitler but no longer able to return to the economic and industrial records of the past and the global strength of the pound. In addition, a nation unable to think of itself as a European regional power, because still linked to the Commonwealth and the Dominions in the world, reluctant to grant portions of its national sovereignty to common European institutions. Hence the decision of British politicians not to join the new European institutions immediately: a mistake that the British economy will pay dearly with its decline in the 50s and 60s.<sup>19</sup>

To all these reasons had to be added the strength of the needs of the Cold War starting with the massive U.S. aid program, called the Marshall Plan. An economic program for sure, but with deep and clear political meanings, anti-communist and anti-USSR, in which the American request that the Europeans would manage the aid as much as possible together was explicit. In fact, it was in the OECE (European Organization for Economic Cooperation set up to manage the Marshall Plan) that "the new ties between the countries of Western Europe were deepened and made compact and irreversible"(including Italy which, with the vote of 18 April 1948, had in the meantime removed all doubts about its choice of field).<sup>20</sup> Significant was, also on this occasion, the British refusal to make the OECE an integrating organization of the European economy, and this despite pressure from the US.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Ivi.

<sup>20</sup> B.Olivi, cit.p. 23

<sup>21</sup> Ivi, p.27.



There were different perspectives and programs, as said, of European politicians, of every country and color, on Europe. When the Congress of Europe opened in The Hague on 7 May 1948, promoted by eminent personalities from European politics, culture, economy and society, the discussions were long and passionate. There were many nuances, but there were basically two positions. On the one hand, those who essentially proposed the path of agreements between States for the most extensive and profound cooperation, and on the other those who wanted, with great diversity of accents and positions but with passionate tones, the federalist path of the United States of Europe with the election of a continental constituent assembly. In both group there was also the mediation of the "functionalists", that is, those who proposed the path of progressive integration between the various economic sectors. However, the resolution voted on was moderate and recommended the creation of a common assembly with the members appointed by the national parliaments. This happened a year later with the Council of Europe, an institution that was an important symbol but far from being a Community institution.

### ***1.3 The first, founding stages of Community construction***

If the first practical gymnasium of European integration had been the OECE of the Marshall Plan, the birth, on 18 April 1951, in Paris, of the Economic Community of Coal and Steel (ECSC) is commonly considered the first fundamental stone of Community construction, as we know it today.

It was the first concrete step from words to action in the Community direction. The first voluntary renouncement by six European sovereign states (France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg) of a portion of their national sovereignty, among other things in a strategic sector such as coal and steel, a sector that "in the common belief" had always been associated, rightly, with war and arms. The steel industries were removed from the control of France and Germany (and the other members), combining everything under the supervision and joint control of a newly established international body, the High Authority: among other things, directed in a formula of co-management on the German model by entrepreneurs and trade unions in the sector.<sup>22</sup> With heavy industry in common, the signatory politicians argued, war would become unimaginable while at the same time creating the

---

<sup>22</sup> F.Fauri, cit., pp.95-102; see also M.Gilbert,cit.p.35 e ss.

conditions for a new era of peace and prosperity for all. Beyond political rhetoric, it was clear that nothing like this had ever happened in modern European history.

The idea came to the French foreign minister, the Christian Democrat Schumann, in the spring of 1950, it is said to have been inspired by the socialist Monnet<sup>23</sup>, after the failure of cooperation negotiations between the various western countries precisely because of the French hesitations about the role to be assigned to the reborn Germany. With a reversal of perspective that surprised everyone, Schumann launched his new proposal and, after a year of negotiations, the six countries signed it. Italy joined from the beginning but, due to its weakness in the sector, it obtained favorable conditions and more time to abolish the duties, which, however, would disappear for all in a few years. Britain, on the other hand, faithful to its traditional line, did not adhere, jealous of its sovereignty in that strategic sector.

The success of the ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community) was almost immediate and of great proportions, as can be seen from the results: modernization of the plants, fall in prices, growth in production, social problems in the sector faced and resolved. A complete success depended on two important factors. The willingness of German industrialists to give in the short term in order to be able to earn more in the long term and the widespread belief that integration on the economic ground was much easier and convenient for everyone, more so than the speeches on political federalism that found ideological vetoes.<sup>24</sup> The proof of this was in fact given a few months after the announcement of the Czech when Monnet (who had been appointed in the meantime President of the ECSC High Authority) proposed to the radio the parallel constitution to the ECSC of a European army. To this proposal, De Gasperi, the Italian Prime Minister, immediately linked his idea of a political community on the ECSC model that would manage the new army; but the political difficulties suddenly became very strong until, finally, the whole project was blocked. In reality, the various European governments signed the treaty establishing the EDC (European Defence Community) and the parallel EPC (European Political Community) wanted by De Gasperi, but at the time of ratification the French Parliament voted against, blowing up the entire project.

---

<sup>23</sup> B.Olivi, cit.p.33.

<sup>24</sup> Ivi, p.102.

Several factors contributed to this failure: the strange alliance between Gaullists and Communists in the courtroom, the unsuccessful course of the French war in Indochina but above all the old diffidence spread throughout the transalpine society to the rearmament of Germany. The latter, in any case, would have been able to rebuild its own national army, a concession, however, obviously linked to the needs of the Cold War and that had little to do with the European construction. The weight of history had once again been felt, despite the progress made towards a united Europe: "the nation-states were still strong and were not prepared to give up their prerogatives".<sup>25</sup>

However, the failure of the EDC did not stop the politicians of the six ECSC countries, who thought they should relaunch the unitary project with an even more ambitious project. The model of reference to which to entrust oneself appeared to be the successful one of the ECSC, according to Monnet's functionalist idea that already had a broad consensus.<sup>26</sup> The appointment for the "relaunch" was set in Messina, at the express request of the Italian Minister Martino, where in June 1955 the delegations of the six ECSC countries converged.

Two trends emerged during the work: on the one hand, the French Pinay for a gradual sectoral integration of the various sectors of the six countries, on the other hand the Benelux countries and Germany, which (together with Italy with some differences) wanted a "horizontal" integration, i.e. global integration of the six national economies. It ended with a declaration that opened up the possibility, to be studied, of establishing two more communities: one for atomic energy and the other for a common market. For this reason, an "Intergovernmental Committee composed of high-ranking experts was set up to study the possibility of integrating certain sectors of the economy, including transport and energy sources (including atomic energy for peaceful purposes) and to examine the possibility of a gradual preparation of a general common market".<sup>27</sup> The real novelty was the appointment

---

<sup>25</sup> G.Mammarella, P.Cacace, cit., p.77.

<sup>26</sup> Ivi, pp. 84 e ss.

<sup>27</sup> B.Olivi., cit., p.45.

of an authoritative and practical president in the person of Spaak, former Belgian foreign minister.

Months of intense work followed and in May 1956 at the Conference of Ministers in Venice, Spaak presented precise proposals that went far beyond the expectations of Messina. Thus began the real negotiations between the various delegations, often met in the castle of Val Duchesse in Belgium, with sessions largely occupied to soften the French concerns that obtained the desired guarantees especially for their agriculture and overseas territories. After overcoming these resistances, also thanks to the mediation of Italian delegation, the treaties establishing the EEC (European Economic Community) and the EURATOM (European Atomic Energy Community) were signed in Rome on 25 March 1957. Nevertheless, it was above all the first to make history: for the first time six European nations solemnly gave themselves the common objective of "promoting, through the establishment of a common market and the gradual rapprochement of the economic policies of the member states, a harmonious development of all countries".

To achieve these objectives, three lines of action were envisaged: firstly a customs union with the progressive elimination of duties between the Member States, a single customs tariff and the launch of a common commercial policy. Secondly an economic union through the free movement of citizens, services and capital, the establishment of common agricultural and transport policies, the harmonization of economic policies. Thirdly a concrete commitment of the EEC to enhance and develop the backward regions of the Community (at that time our "Mezzogiorno" was in the lead) and to assist and reintegrate the unused labor force. It was important to stress that all the objectives had to be solved gradually. There were several stages in the following years, including the political transition to a Community decision-making system by majority, and no longer by unanimity, but this system will be postponed for a long time in the following years. At the level of the Community institutions, there were also significant changes.

An agreement was signed creating: firstly a Council of Ministers to take decisions with representatives of the six countries. Secondly, three executive bodies, including a Commission of nine members for the EEC, and two commissions of

five members each for EURATOM and the ECSC. Thirdly, a common assembly of parliamentarians elected by their parliaments to monitor and censure the Commission. Fourthly, a Court of Justice to settle disputes over the application of the Treaties. Thus began a path that would last until our days: there were many precautions contained in that first Treaty, given the many failures and disappointments from the post-war period onwards, but the system seemed to be founded on solid foundations, as the history of the following years will demonstrate.

#### ***1.4. The Community's first steps: the 1960s and 1970s***

The 1960s were a particularly good period for the European economy, within a general and intense growth of the entire international economy: years identified by scholars as the final period of an extraordinary, thirty-year period of growth that began in 1945 and called, not by chance, "the glorious 30 years" or "golden age of capitalism".<sup>28</sup> Even more extraordinary was the growth performance of the countries of Western Europe: "for a few years it seemed that an unprecedented steady growth cycle had been triggered, at the point that these years were remembered as the golden age of European economic growth".<sup>29</sup> This growth owed a great deal to the "progressive removal of trade barriers", both international and, after 1957, European: this was essentially the "flywheel that allowed the leap in European trade and incomes, a leap that in turn favored further steps towards the elimination of trade barriers and still the growth of trade and economic prosperity".<sup>30</sup>

In this context, the choice of the six countries that signed the Treaties of Rome immediately produced excellent economic results and ensured that European policies proceeded quickly in those early years. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was already outlined in broad terms at the Stresa conference in July 1958, with a close confrontation between governments and social partners on the various

---

<sup>28</sup> G.Feliu, C.Sudrià, *Introduzione alla storia economica mondiale*, Cedam, Padova 2017 (2013), pp.331-36 and H. Van Der Wee, *L'economia mondiale tra crisi e benessere (1945-1980)*, Hoepli, Milano 1989; about Europe see instead D.H. Aldcroft, *L'Economia europea dal 1914 ad oggi*, Laterza Bari 1981, pp.197 and ss.e F.Fauri, cit, p.71 and ss.

<sup>29</sup> F.Fauri, cit., p.72.

<sup>30</sup> Ibidem.

national agricultural policies and with the putting on the common table of the needs and resources of each (the role of Italy in mediating between the French positions and those of the others in particular was important here).<sup>31</sup> In the following years, the start of the various implementing regulations followed the Stresa conference and a sort of common fund was set up to finance the CAP directly by the Community. However, the agricultural front was obviously not the only one for the new Europe.

In September 1960, the European Social Fund (ESF) was established and the first European regulation on the free movement of workers came into force, while a few months later (in June 1961) Netherlands called for the various European institutions to be merged or at least coordinated: it was the so-called merger of the executives. The result will be a long debate, which will lead, in April 1965, to the signature in Brussels of the Treaty merging the executives of the three communities (ECSC, EURATOM and EEC) and its entry into force on 1 July 1967. These were the first but important steps towards unity, which, together with the exceptional numbers of economic growth of those years, quickly made Great Britain and the other EFTA countries (the European Free Trade Association, founded in 1960, among the Western European countries not belonging to the EEC) rethink about the opportunity to join the EEC. Something that the GB did promptly as early as August 1961 by officially presenting its candidacy but finding itself in front of the French obstacle, which, in January 1963, became a real veto.

From the moment it took office, in fact, the European Community had to face a double political challenge. One was internal, due to the strong personality of De Gaulle, a politician for whom the French interest was a priority, called to power in 1958 by the Algerian crisis. The other was external, constituted by the British government of McMillan who could not remain outside the EEC but at the same time wanted to maintain the strong traditional relationship with the Dominions and the Commonwealth countries around the world.<sup>32</sup> This situation will last more than a decade and will have many protagonists on the English side (after McMillan, there

---

<sup>31</sup> LASCHI G., *L'agricoltura italiana e l'Unione europea*, P.Lang, Bern 1999.

<sup>32</sup> G.Mammarella, P.Cacace, cit., p.103

will be Wilson and Heath). It will finally end, after more stops as in the second French veto in 1966-67, only with the succession of Pompidou to De Gaulle and then with the consent of these to the entry of the GB in the EEC in 1973. "The result will be that of conditioning and at times paralyzing the institutions of the community which, in the meantime, according to the functionalist logic (...) had to progressively and sectorally proceed along the path of ever greater integration".<sup>33</sup> This was happening in spite of the general changing political climate.

The episode of greatest internal tension occurred with the so-called "empty chair crisis" in France, provoked by De Gaulle on 1 July 1965 with the aim of leaving decision-making power in the hands of individual Member States and not to delegate it to the Commission or Parliament. For seven months, the French delegation did not participate in meetings of the Council or the Permanent Representatives Committee. It ended only at the end of January 1966 when, in Luxembourg, it was established that the principle of unanimity remained if, in a matter, a Member State considered a vital interest of its own to be threatened.<sup>34</sup> However, such a struggle did not prevent "the extraordinary economic success of those years in the six-party Europe", which was also a consequence of the success of the integration process. The EEC countries, in fact, were gradually no longer applying customs duties to reciprocal trade until their complete and total abolition in 1968; it should be noted that this was done 18 months before the deadline set in Rome. The same thing happened with the definitive launch of the CAP, with which the Community soon achieved joint control of food production and guaranteed, as called for in the Treaties of Rome, sufficient supplies for the entire European population. Indeed, soon afterwards, a surplus of European agricultural production began to be recorded, a subject which would occupy the political debate in Brussels in the following decades.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>34</sup> Ivi, p.126.

<sup>35</sup> G.Laschi, *L'agricoltura italiana...*cit.

### *1.5. The difficult 70's*

In the last months of 1969, some significant steps were taken in the direction of European construction. On 16 July, the Commission submitted to the Council a memorandum on the replacement of Member States' financial contributions with a system of Community own resources and on the extension of the European Parliament's budgetary powers. On the other hand, on 22 July, the Council again examined the applications of Great Britain, Denmark, Ireland and Norway for accession to the EEC. A new political process was beginning in some way, after the conclusion of De Gaulle's "empty chair policy", definitively shelved from the "compromise" reached in Luxembourg in April of the following year. In it, the Council approved the gradual introduction of a system of own resources whereby the Community collected customs duties on products imported from non-Community countries.

While it is true that in the second half of the 1960s the political situation of the various states (especially France) had slowed down the unitary process, there is no doubt, however, that with "De Gaulle's departure from the scene on 28 April 1969, the leaders of the EEC, including the new French president George Pompidou, began to look for a way to pursue positive integration measures in the fields of foreign policy, monetary policy and economic planning".<sup>36</sup> The following decade, from de Gaulle's fall to the introduction of the European Monetary System (EMS) in 1979, and which "is often regarded by scholars as a period of stagnation" becomes in its own way "fascinating for this reason".<sup>37</sup> The 1970s are often considered "years of stalemate" in the integration process, a judgment that perhaps derives from the many Europeanist hopes aroused in the ranks of federalists by De Gaulle's exit from the scene. However, looking at the facts, the "nine" (Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark joined the EC in 1973) made clear progress in those years on the road to integration.

In the economy, for example, in October 1973, the great and unexpected world oil crisis broke out, posing difficulties for all the industrialized economies, starting

---

<sup>36</sup> M. Gilbert, *Storia politica ...*, cit., p.94.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*.



with those in Europe. It marked the end of the great cycle of growth that began with the end of the War and the Marshall Plan, and at the same time marked the beginning of the period of great stagflation that would put the great industrial nations under severe pressure.<sup>38</sup> It was in this difficult context that the EEC intervened on the consequences of the oil crisis from 1973 to 1975, without taking refuge in economic nationalism, but trying to stabilize exchange rates. In addition, the European Monetary System (EMS) operating from 1977 to 1981 became the most important instrument of this renewed common action, if not "the central channel through which the subsequent European advancement flowed".<sup>39</sup> On institutional and political issues, however, the greatest innovation of the 1970s was the creation of the European Council, i.e. the establishment of a series of formal meetings between the Heads of State and Government of the EEC. A real new political custom, strictly observed by all, which quickly became the "supreme body of policy making of the EEC".<sup>40</sup>

Not only that, but also other supra-national institutions were consolidating. In those very years, the European Court of Justice decreed the supremacy of Community legislation over national laws and confirmed the important belief that the Treaties of Rome had conferred rights on the citizens of the Member States. In addition, the Assembly of Strasbourg obtained the first fundamental requirement to become a real Parliament: the direct elections of June 1979. On the Federalist front, too, the document of the Belgian Prime Minister Tindemans of 1976 would in essence have reworked the philosophy of the Europeanist movement, in a more realistic and forward-looking perspective that would prove valuable in the years to come.

The symbol of this period was the Hague Conference on 1 and 2 December 1969, not by chance in the same Dutch city that 20 years earlier had been the site of the great conference from which the integration process had started and which was presented to the press as the "relaunch" of the integration process.<sup>41</sup> In it, the governments reaffirmed their common will to establish an economic and monetary union gradually and to harmonize social policies in stages. Above all, they

---

<sup>38</sup> D.H. Aldcroft, *L'economia europea...*, cit., pp.285 e ss. See also F.Fauri, *L'Unione europea...*, pp.137-152.

<sup>39</sup> M.Gilbert, cit., p.95.

<sup>40</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>41</sup> G.Mammarella, P.Cacace, *Storia politica ...*, p. 135

confirmed their agreement with the principle of enlargement of the Community. The dates that followed were in line with that process.

In April 1970, the Treaty of Luxembourg was signed precisely on the Community's own resources derived from customs duties. In June, negotiations were opened with Denmark, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Norway, and in October, an agreement was reached to initiate a European regional policy as well. In January 1972 the four candidates signed the treaties of accession to the EEC (in November, however, following a referendum, Norway withdrew), while between March and June of the same year there was even more commitment on the coordination of exchange rates on the final (and operational) launch of the European Social Fund. As mentioned, in October 1973 the great global energy crisis broke out, but in December in Copenhagen the European governments responded by first launching a common energy policy.

Another important step was taken a year later at the Paris Summit in December 1974. The Heads of State and Government decided firstly to meet periodically at least three times a year. Secondly, to strengthen the European Parliament with new powers (e.g. in budgetary matters) and have it directly voted by citizens. Thirdly, to establish a European Regional Development Fund. In addition, the commitment to achieve full economic and monetary union in the future was reaffirmed and the Belgian Tindemans was given the task of presenting a summary report on the prospects for the European Union in the future. The report would have given the prospect for the following decades. The Regional Fund and the Regional Policy Committee were set up in February 1975 and on the same date, a "common unit of account" was established, based on a basket of national currencies, which will be used in the following decades until the single currency of 2002. In June, Greece, which had just emerged from the dictatorship, applied to join the EEC.

In the following years the crisis was felt, especially for Italy, which entered and left the European agreements on monetary policy, but also for all the other countries, while in the main time Portugal and Spain, recently emerged from dictatorships, asked to join the community. This happened at full capacity in 1979, while the year before, in December 1978 the European Monetary System (EMS) was finally

established, based on the European Monetary Unit (ECU).<sup>42</sup> In the end, therefore, even in the difficult 1970s, Europe took significant and important steps on the road to the common construction of the Community.

---

<sup>42</sup> Ivi, pp.133-184; see also M. Gilbert, cit., pp. 95 e ss. e B.Olivi, cit., pp.171-224.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Italy, protagonist of the European construction in the period 1945-1969 and the difficulties during the 70's*

#### *2.1. The traditional lines of Italian foreign policy*

When in March 1861 the Kingdom of Italy made its first appearance on the international scene, its political ambition was immediately evident, implicit in some members of the ruling elites, explicit in others, to be accepted on an equal footing with the great European powers. An ambition that will run from then on through the whole of Italian foreign policy until the tragic end of World War II, even if then, as has been observed, in many periods and events "the facts have not corresponded, if not rarely, to such ambitions".<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the ambitions were very unlikely, given the fundamental elements of the Italian economy that, with rare exceptions, will go through the entire nineteenth century and beyond until the middle of the twentieth century despite some steps forward, the undoubted demographic weight and the crucial strategic location of the country. A real constant of the first 90 years of unitary history.

Until the 1940s, poverty and misery remained widespread in the country, together with low education and general backwardness. This was the rule and not the exception, but above all, until 1950, Italy would have had the unenviable primacy in GDP and in the number of people employed in the agricultural sector over the rest of the economy. Italy was, in short, beyond its ambitions, an agricultural country, poor and backward.<sup>44</sup> A set of factors that made it unrealistic to achieve and maintain Italy's leading role on the international stage, to which its ruling elites aspired. However, the ruling class of the young Kingdom continued to pursue, through thick and thin, such an underlying ambition, with some success but without

---

<sup>43</sup> BOSWORTH R. J., ROMANO S. (curated by), *La politica estera italiana (1860 - 1985)*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1991, p.1; see also VARSORI A., *L'Italia nelle relazioni internazionali dal 1943 al 1992*, Laterza, Bari-Roma 1998 e ROMANO S., *Guida alla politica estera italiana*, Rizzoli, Milano 1993.

<sup>44</sup> ZAMAGNI V., *Dalla periferia al centro. La seconda rinascita economica dell'Italia*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1990.

ever obtaining results that would determine the desired turning point. An example of this are the first Italian colonial experiences in East Africa, which were successful but then ended, with very high economic costs, in the great defeat of Adua, which aroused so much blame and irony among the great powers. The same goes for the Italo-Turkish war of 1911, which gave Italy very few results, apart from the conquest of poor lands (such as Tripolitania and Cyrenaica), crossed by an exhausting guerrilla warfare that lasted for decades.

The following First World War (1915-18) showed a country capable of overcoming difficult moments, but not without shadows on its political and military image, with negotiations prior to the beginning that offered "the image of a fickle, inconstant and Machiavellian diplomacy" and with a diplomatic following, to a war even if victorious, just as negative, precisely fickle, inconstant and Machiavellian.<sup>45</sup> With Fascism it seemed, for a few years, that a strong and totalitarian central power could make up for these deficiencies and bring the country, together with modernization and development, to a foreign policy such as to "guarantee the country the international role to which it had unnecessarily aspired" since its inception. However, a series of errors and adventures in the Twenty Years, the very way in which Italy entered the Second World War in June 1940, its subsequent military conduct and the way in which in 1943 the country, defeated, tried to escape from the conflict, confirmed in the eyes of the great powers (allies or enemies) that "once again Italy had entrusted its fate to luck rather than virtue".<sup>46</sup>

A profound change in foreign policy took place only after 1945 with the advent to power of a new ruling class. The latter, often living abroad and in exile and, in any case, in strong and polemical contrast with the previous triumphant (and tragic) nationalist and imperial rhetoric, had understood the realistic international dimensions of Italy in the international arena and focused on the return to democracy and domestic economic and social development. From here, after 1945, came an Italian foreign policy with a different image. Much more prudent and wise, yet faithful without hesitation to the alliances made in the years immediately after

---

<sup>45</sup> BOSWORTH R. J., ROMANO S. (curated by), *La politica...*, cit., p.5.

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem.

the Second World War (opening to markets, NATO and European construction) with a diplomacy that knew its limits and knew what place Italy had in the hierarchy of nations, rejecting any adventure. That behind this general political tone, perhaps "resigned", there was a "frustrated diplomacy" that pursued positions of a more authoritative presence on the international stage and that had not fully accepted the balances that came out of World War II, is already evident from the '80s. In those years, Italy, which had become a great industrial power, seemed to return to a sort of new nationalism, although very different from the old, devoid of rhetoric and aggressiveness, democratic, but still present, claiming a role as a new protagonist for our country.<sup>47</sup>

It is true that the 1980s, the central subject of this work, were nevertheless and for all a turning point in international politics. They began with the Euro-missile crisis and the escalation of the Cold War and ended with the collapse of the communist regimes in the East, passing through an enlargement and a new beginning in the construction of Europe. All facts that still mark the international scene today.<sup>48</sup> Among the questions and themes of our foreign policy, which are always recurring, the place of its supposed nationalism appears crucial. Was it an authentic and popular feeling, widespread in the peninsula or rather the ideology of some elites who transferred the myths of their humanistic education to foreign policy?

It was however a feeling certainly not limited to small groups, but rather widespread in large layers also popular, with its vein also of Garibaldian and Mazzinian origin or Catholic, as well as in bands of the small bourgeoisie and middle classes emerging after the Unity. A crucial question would be to ask oneself what culture has supported and motivated, over the decades, Italian foreign policy choices. Whether more subjects of cultured culture (heritage of ancient empires, maritime and commercial vocations...) or more revolutionary or populist subjects such as the idea of an Italian proletarian nation in competition with the richest and capitalist nations.

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibidem, p.6.

<sup>48</sup> DI NOLFO E. (curated by), *La politica estera italiana negli anni Ottanta*, Marsilio, Venezia.

That the theme, however, exists, as has been observed, even if only under trace, is evident, for example, in the recurrent and reciprocal accusations, typical of the Italian political controversy, of being a group or the other, a party or a government, a leader or another... at the "service of the foreigner", yesterday as today.<sup>49</sup> A foreign policy of republican Italy in the center of which, since 1945, the "European choice" has been firmly placed. A choice that, in fact, has represented and represents a "continuity and depth superior to the other most important choices, the American-Atlantic and the Mediterranean, which marked the international action of (our) country in the second half of the twenty century and continue to characterize it in this first glimpse of the twenty-first century."<sup>50</sup>

It cannot be ignored, however, that there is a foreign and partly Italian historiography that, at least for a certain period, attributed very little weight and commitment to the European choice of our country. For all, the "reductive" and "sharp" judgment of a British scholar reported by Varsori is valid: "as far as the Common Market is concerned, few people (in Italy) were worried in one way or another about taking part, because there were no obvious implications of an internal nature. Italy did not send its best representatives to Brussels, did not renew its representatives in the European Parliament after 1959 when there were withdrawals or deaths and did not fight to defend its interests when the CAP was created. As a result, it remained a net contributor for many years until, fortunately, Great Britain joined, but the Italians did not care. Foreign policy was no longer important. "America would always have provided".<sup>51</sup> This judgement, beyond merit, gives an idea of the "perception that, especially outside the country (...) scholars had of the role played by Italy in international relations and, specifically, in the construction of Europe".<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> ROMANO S., *Guida alla politica estera italiana*, Rizzoli, Milano 1993, pp.3-8.

<sup>50</sup> CRAVERI P., VARSORI A. (curated by), *L'Italia nella costruzione europea. Un bilancio storico (1957-2007)*, F. Angeli, Milano 2009, p.9.

<sup>51</sup> VARSORI A., *La cenerentola d'Europa? L'Italia e l'integrazione europea dal 1947 ad oggi*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2010, p.1.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibidem*, p.2.

In reality, for Italy as for all the protagonists, there are two ways of interpreting the policy of European integration. On the one hand, as an economic achievement resulting in the customs union, the completion of the single market and finally the single currency. On the other hand, as a political process with federal aspirations, towards a politically united Europe.<sup>53</sup> Of course, it would be reductive to read the European construction as a simple daughter of the Cold War, although born in that era and for many reasons related to it. There has never been a process in Europe's centuries-old history comparable to that of integration. From the ECSC to the EEC to the EU, institutional integration has been created over the years with its own regulatory autonomy, its own judicial system and its own system of democratic control. A Community organization that "rests on a continuous mediation between national interests and powers and Community interests and powers (...) to the point that the whole European construction can be defined as a process that, for successive crises, changes the balance between the powers of national governments and the powers of the European institutions."<sup>54</sup>

It is in this context that the Europeanist policy of Italy must be understood. Although it has made an "important journey" in Europe since the 1950s, it is still of secondary importance in Brussels. Therefore, it is useful to admit and understand "the reasons (...) for the secondary role played by Italy, which has rarely succeeded in exerting political influence and promoting (in Europe) the interests of its own economic-productive system" as the other member states have done. Italy has been for many, over the decades, a "weak negotiator" who would always have lacked a "precise strategy to take care of community affairs", except perhaps, as will be seen, in the important exceptions of 1985 (Community Council of Milan) and 1990 (Rome).<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> NERI GUALDESI Marinella, *L'Italia e l'integrazione europea*, in RAINERO R.H. (curated by), *Storia dell'integrazione europea*. Vol.II, Marzorati, Roma 1997, p.287.

<sup>54</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>55</sup> Ibidem, p.288.



## 2.2. *The post-war period and the first choices of the Italian governments*

There is no doubt that democratic Italy, despite its position as a "co-belligerent" of the allies from 1943 onwards and despite the not insignificant contribution of its partisan formations to the defeat of the Axis, was destined to pay a heavy bill for the military and political adventure into which the fascist regime had dragged it. At the end of the war, in fact, his international isolation was evident and no one realistically thought he would not have to pay any high price for the mistakes of an embarrassing past alongside the Germans (1940-43). It was hoped only that the price would be light, but it was a vain hope, despite the fact that the attempt to rebuild diplomatic relations had already begun in the period of the "cobelligerence" (1943-45) with the former enemies, during which in April 1944 Italy re-established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. The times, however, were obviously still too unsuitable for re-emerging from that post-war "loneliness". On the other hand, what kind of foreign policy could a government think of carrying out, whose Foreign Minister Alcide de Gasperi, in a telegram to the Italian Representations in Moscow, London, Washington and Paris dated 1 May 1945, stated: *"At the same time as all of northern Italy heroically supporting Anglo-American armies, victoriously rises up against the Germans, entry of Yugoslav troops across the eastern border and into Trieste is not justified for military, political or moral reasons"*.<sup>56</sup> All this happened while the PCI, which at that historical juncture was part of the government, invited, in a telegram of 28 June 1946, the Italian representations in Washington, London and Paris to welcome Tito's partisans as "liberators".<sup>57</sup>

The country was practically confined to a "limbo" from which everyone said they wanted to get out at the lowest possible price but it was far from easy. Particularly difficult was precisely the personal and political position of De Gasperi, the Catholic at the head of a national anti-fascist coalition government (until mid-1947) extremely unstable and uneven in every field, beginning with foreign policy.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani, tenth series: 1943-1948 (DDI), vol. II, 12 December 1944-9 December 1945, Rome, 1992, n.163, pp. 226-227.

<sup>57</sup> Notebooks from the Department of Political Science, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart.

<sup>58</sup> MALGERI F., La politica estera tra atlantismo ed europeismo, in Id, La stagione del Centrisimo. Politica e società nell'Italia del secondo dopoguerra (1945-1960), Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2002, pp.181-187.

Italy was not in fact invited to the negotiations on the Peace Treaty, except once, in Paris, on August 10, 1946, and in any case only to present its point of view on what had in fact already been decided by others. On that occasion De Gasperi gave a dignified and firm speech in which he tried, surrounded by general coldness and hostility, to separate the responsibilities of Fascism from those of the Italian people but with little success. The peace clauses were minor than expected but still heavy (e.g. reduced army and navy, costly repairs, correct borders despite so much linguistic and historical evidence, abandoned colonies), the country and its government could only accept them. The Peace Treaty was then ratified by a vote in Parliament but not without difficulty, of all kinds. However, the government and the whole country as the definitive closure of an entire historical cycle and, in particular, of the tragic and embarrassing chapter of the Twenty Years dictatorship and the War on the side of Nazi Germany, eventually accepted it.

The first sign of a renewed foreign policy, although always linked to the events of the Peace Treaty, were the De Gasperi-Gruber agreements between Italy and Austria, on the Brenner border and on the rights of the German-speaking minority long denied by Fascism. These borders were given formal and definitive recognition but those lands and those populations were granted a large degree of autonomy, in practice self-government. These agreements were certainly favored by the "defeated" position of both countries and therefore by the "distraction" of the Allies on the subject, but they were also the fruit of mutual understanding and a great capacity for political compromise. It was a real turning point in relations between the two States, with largely positive effects as was then seen in the following decades when, despite the recurrent crises, the problems were always faced and overcome by appealing, in fact, to the 1946 De Gasperi-Gruber agreements. When the chapter of the Peace Treaty was finally closed, it was necessary at that point to rebuild the country's international credibility, gradually making it fully eligible to be readmitted into all international fora with a single general objective: the Reconstruction, recovery with both economic and civil development of a country that was free and democratic but economically and

morally on the ground, destroyed and poor to which, in addition to age-old problems and deficiencies, the enormous destruction of the War had been added.<sup>59</sup>

*"Italy of 1943, observes Ginzborg, was a nation in which, outside the main urban areas, very little had changed compared to the times of Garibaldi and Cavour (...) a country still mainly agricultural, characterized by great and still intact natural beauty, by sleepy provincial cities, by an endemic poverty, especially in the South and by a popular culture still deeply peasant and dialectal".*<sup>60</sup> In this context, it is necessary to remember how difficult and complex the Italian political situation was.<sup>61</sup> After the fall of Fascism in 1943 a formally national Kingdom of the South was formed (the Centre North was occupied by the Germans and administered by a fascist "satellite state") governed, after some initial perplexity, by a government of national unity to which all the anti-fascist parties adhered, from the monarch-liberals to the Catholics and the Communists. The same parties that had created in every province still occupied, the National Liberation Committees that led in those areas the armed resistance against Germans and Fascists. In the South, after the monarchic governments of General Badoglio and the old liberal pre-fascist politicians, the presidency of the Council had passed to the Resistance parties. First to Parri, a member of the Action Party, a republican and partisan politician and then to De Gasperi, DC secretary and former secretary of the old pre-fascist People's Party, the first Catholic politician to arrive at the government from a united Italy.

With De Gasperi leading anti-fascist governments of national unity, the country faced decisive political trials: the purging of the state apparatus involved in the twenty-year period, the choice between Republic and Monarchy through a referendum, the formation of a Constituent Assembly that had passed the new Constitution, the signing of the Peace Treaty, the start of the material reconstruction of the country. When, after the most serious emergencies of the immediate post-war period, the country had to choose the economic and social path for the Reconstruction, the anti-fascist front split. On the one hand the PCI and much of the PSI united in a popular Marxist front and essentially pro-Soviet and on the other the DC and the Catholic world with the laity and the reformist socialists for

---

<sup>59</sup>BATTILANI P., FAURI F., *L'economia italiana dal 1945 ad oggi*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2014.

<sup>60</sup>GINSBORG P., *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra ad oggi*, G. Einaudi, Torino, 2006 (1989), p.IX

<sup>61</sup>GINSBORG P., *Storia d'Italia ...cit.* pp.92-159.

democracy and the free market, even with a strong economic intervention of the State, along the lines of the New Deal. The contrast was clear. The choice was made by the country in the first general political elections of 18 April 1948 that gave the DC an absolute majority strengthened by the support of its political allies PSDI, PRI and PLI and to the Popular Front of the extreme United Left (communists and socialist left) a strong opposition of more than 30% of the voters.<sup>62</sup>

With regard to foreign policy in the strict sense, the line of the De Gasperi governments was clear. The objective was at first to face and overcome the deep mistrust that still existed on Italy at an international level, to obtain from the US, the strongest and most authoritative country that emerged from the War, an opening of credit both political and economic. Secondly, to undertake with the other western countries the path of the political-military Alliance, of the economic and social integration and of the accelerated common development. A decisive Western choice, then. In fact, one of the central objects of the internal political controversy was precisely this international position of Italy. From the break between the DC and the Left in May 1947 to the adherence in June to the Marshall Plan, to the conflictual and pre-revolutionary turning point arising from the directives of the Comintern in September; from the communist coup d'état in Prague in February 1948 to the Berlin blockade in June, etc. All this was commented with great passion in Italy by the various parties and their electorates and had many influences on internal political events.<sup>63</sup> Hence, De Gasperi's decision to adhere, immediately, to the great Italian ERP (European Recovery Program) aid plan called "Marshall" from the name of the U.S. Secretary of State, active from May 1947 onwards. It was an economic and political choice that involved a break with the communist and socialist parties, united in the Popular Front in favor of a neutralist if not decisively pro-Soviet choice. Was definitely a western choice that led to the creation of an international body, the OECE (European Organization for Economic Cooperation), which not only had to distribute and administer the huge US funds (13 million dollars, of which almost 2 million for Italy) but also had to lead the European nations to a progressive and reciprocal integration between them.

---

<sup>62</sup> GINSBORG P., *Storia d'Italia ...cit.* pp.156-157

<sup>63</sup> *Ibidem.*

The choice for the Plan was not an easy one, harshly opposed by the pro-Soviet PCI and PSI and by the CGIL unitary union with a communist majority. CGIL in fact suffered, precisely due to the political use of the strike in the following years, two divisions from which the CISL and the UIL were born, two pro-Western organizations, allies of the great free American and British unions, in favor of the Marshall Plan and pioneer of the European construction. The political controversy, which had already lasted in the electoral climate, became stronger and bitter after the general elections of 1948, which, as said, gave the DC an absolute majority, with left-wing accusations of enslavement to the foreigner and with black forecasts of inevitable economic and social catastrophes, the consequence of selling the Italian economy to foreign capital. In the end, however, Italy adhered unreservedly to the Marshall Plan and the OECE, a fact that soon yielded its economic and social fruits, at the basis of the subsequent, imposing and in many ways unexpected, Italian economic miracle.<sup>64</sup> The Italian accession to the OECE, among other things, accelerated the policy of progressive liberalization and openness of our economy. This happened despite the controversy and mistrust of the Italian industrial circles fearful on their part, beyond the statements, the consequences of the gradual dismantling of duties and other forms of protectionism inherited from the Fascist and autarkic Twenty Years, to which Italian companies were accustomed. The Italian government, however, continued without hesitation the policy of international economic openness and growing trade in the global market, in full compliance with the great international agreements (such as the GATT, established in Geneva in 1947, the system of fixed exchange rates, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund) that would form for decades the backbone of free world trade and the great cycle of economic growth known as the "glorious 30 years".<sup>65</sup>

On March 8, 1949, the U.S. government officially asked Italy to join the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), the great political and military alliance that would unite all Western countries on both sides of the Atlantic, and asked that it participate fully in the negotiations that have been going on for months in

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibidem, pp.30-54; see also CRAINZ G, *Storia del Miracolo italiano. Culture identità, trasformazioni fra anni '50 e '60*, Donzelli, Roma 2005 (1996).

<sup>65</sup> BATTILANI P., FAURI F., *L'economia italiana...*, cit., pp.55-63; see also VAN DER WEE H., *L'economia mondiale tra crisi e benessere (1945-1980). Una sintesi della storia economica del dopoguerra*, Hoepli, Milano 1989.

Washington. The invitation came after a year of difficult relations between the even pro-Western De Gasperi Government and the other European governments. Difficult relations that were caused by Italian caution in joining a new military alliance, after the terrible experiences of the war and the difficulties of the DC leader himself to follow this line. Sectors in fact of the Catholic world itself and of the Christian Democrats (for example the left-wing DC magazine "Social Chronicles") hesitated about NATO preferring explicitly more neutralist choices but the Cold War was pressing with its stringent bipolarism. There was the duty to choose between West (USA and allied countries) and East (USSR and allied countries) without the possibility of intermediate positions and in the end, the choice was clear.<sup>66</sup>

The discussions in Parliament were heated and the pressure of the left-wing opposition from the square unceasing and strong. In the Chamber, between November and December, opposing motions on foreign policy faced each other. On the one hand, Nenni (PSI) asked to abstain from alliances or blocks, on the other hand Giacchero and then Taviani (DC) asked for a federation of the peoples of free and democratic Europe (i.e. Western) against the aggressive policy of the Soviet Union. Little by little, the whole DC was convinced that it would not be agreed for Italy to pull itself out of a policy of close western integration. Abroad, in the meantime, under the impetus of France, an alliance with Italy was increasingly called for, which finally, in March 1948, officially joined the negotiations and signed as a founding member of NATO on an equal footing with the others. At this point De Gasperi asked for an open and public discussion in the Chambers on the fundamental choices of foreign policy, Europe and NATO. This, both to overcome the perplexities of part of his own party, and to "quickly arrive at the Italian insertion in the Atlantic Alliance (...) and also, to finally overcome the condition of former enemy and find his place among the member countries of the Western community."<sup>67</sup>

This was followed by a violent campaign in the left-handed square with demonstrations and strikes throughout the country, including a popular petition that gathered about 6 million signatures. On 11 March 1949 De Gasperi put his

---

<sup>66</sup> MALGERI F., *La politica estera tra atlantismo...*, cit., pp.201-202.

<sup>67</sup> *Idem*, p.203.

confidence in NATO membership to Parliament; a long and exhausting debate followed, which led to obstructionism and also had moments of confrontation not only verbal. Finally, the vote in the House and Senate was reached with the compact yes of the whole DC (1 single abstention) and its allies. The treaty was also solemnly signed by Italy in Washington on 4 April 1949 and, with it, Italy thus definitively closed its post-war period, even in foreign policy.

In reality, there was still an unresolved point: Italy's entry into the UN. In fact, Italy's admission to the United Nations would have represented the full rediscovery of international dignity, but it encountered recurrent obstacles in the vetoes imposed by the Soviet delegation that systematically rejected Italy's proposals for admission: 7 May and 1 October 1947, 10 April 1948, 13 September 1949 and finally in May 1952. The Italian public opinion, however, and the Government itself, at this point, did not seem very sensitive to this problem and, consequently, after the latest negative outcome, Italy seemed to wait for a few years for better times. The reasons for such a lukewarm Italian attitude towards the UN were different. First, in the opinion of the Italians, the historical memory of the failure of the "League of Nations" that then plunged the world towards war, weighted heavily. It was a widespread feeling to which the memory of the hammering fascist propaganda, which lasted for years, against Geneva and its sanctions following the war in Ethiopia, was no stranger. A second reason was the spectacle that the UN offered in those years of the first cold war: a global arena of verbal and rhetorical clashes, mostly inconclusive, between the two sides. Finally, it was now evident, apart from the UN, that Italy was now present in a series of important international bodies, from the ILO (on work) to UNESCO (on culture), from ICAO (civil aviation) to IRO (refugees), from ITO (international trade) to FAO (agriculture), the latter organization that had established its international headquarters even in Rome. In addition to all this, of course, there was the parallel full Italian participation in NATO, the OECE and the Council of Europe. In short, it can be said that having solved Italy's most important problems related to the Peace Treaty, its accession to the UN seemed to most (and to the Government) to be less important and significant.

The time was ripe in 1955 when the USSR, after Stalin's death and in an atmosphere of initial "relaxation", proposed a package deal, that is, the entry of a large group of countries, including Italy, balancing the arrivals between East and West and therefore without either camp being disadvantaged. After long negotiations, this was finally the road that allowed Italy to join the United Nations. As a consequence, on December 7, 1955 Canada proposed the entry of a number of countries, the USSR of another group and finally found a solution of mediation for Italy and for 15 other countries. In Italy, the entry was accompanied by a series of polemics by the social-communists against an Italian foreign policy too subjugated to US interests and by some distances taken by the Catholic world itself. However, there were also those who, like the Turin press or the socialist Nenni on the *Avanti*, saw in joining the UN the possibility for Italy, although clearly aligned with the western camp, to play in an era of initial "de-colonization" and "relaxation", some of its own independent role.<sup>68</sup>

### ***2.3. Towards a new Europe (1951-1957)***

The period from the late 1940s to the early 1950s marked the decisive and irreversible start of the process of building European integration. The first step had been taken in March 1948 with the birth of the military alliance called "European Union" (EU) which, however, Italy, invited, had not joined. The reasons were both that the request arrived in the immediate vicinity of the general elections in a country still undergoing strong neutralist demands, and because De Gasperi wanted to have full participation in it also West Germany. When months later, in the spring of 1949, the Council of Europe was born from the EU, Italy promptly joined it, considering it a necessary support for its choice to join NATO. They were seen as two fundamental steps of the western choice, for which Italy clearly sided, alongside those (France, Benelux and Germany) who were for a more decisive European commitment. It was in this context that French Foreign Minister Schumann launched his innovative Plan (inspired, it is said, by Jean Monnet) for a European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), that is, for a supranational authority that would govern the policies of the coal-steel sector in the past at the root of so many conflicts and wars between European nations. West Germany, the 3 Benelux

---

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem.



countries and Italy joined promptly, while England called itself out. After a few months of intense negotiations and after a decisive Italo-French meeting in S. Margherita Ligure, the final signing of the Treaty took place on 18 April 1951.

The results were immediately remarkable (increases in production, falling prices and many social guarantees) and the formula proved to be particularly happy, so much so that many people believed that the road to a sort of European federalism was going down and that the stages could be burned. The Italian government at home promoted incessant propaganda in favor of Europeanism, supporting the idea that being part of a community wider than the nation, able to overcome selfishness, suspicions and jealousies born and raised on the ancient borders and to ensure peace and prosperity for all, was the best choice.<sup>69</sup> But it wasn't, at least for the short term. On 27 May 1952 Italy signed in Paris the treaty for a European Defence Community (EDC), a military alliance that provided for the formation of an integrated European army and that would thus solve the thorny problem of German rearmament. A new body, however, destined to fail only two years later with the vote of non-ratification of the French Parliament, in which prevailed the unprecedented alliance between nationalists, Gaullists and French communists, all opposed, albeit for different reasons, to a European military pact as stringent as the EDC. Italy approved the EDC treaty in the Chamber on March 5, 1953, but the proceedings were interrupted for the general elections in June 1953. Subsequently, the centrist Government of Scelba had presented the ratification again in April 1954, but the difficulties were many: not only for the open hostility of the PCI-PSI but also for the social-democratic concerns and for some reservation in the same DC to adhere to another military pact. Obviously, the French vote brought down the whole hypothesis of a common army and of a fast political unity. To many it even seemed that the whole process of European integration had gone into crisis.

If from a military point of view the solution was immediately found with the establishment of a "Western European Union" (WEU) on 21 October 1954, the path that European economic and political unification took was different. With the negative existence of the EDC, the only possible way to relaunch European integration decisively seemed to most people to be economic and sectoral (or

---

<sup>69</sup> Idem, p.207; see also BOSWORTH R. J., ROMANO S. (curated by), *La politica estera italiana...*, cit., pp.347-349.

functional, they said), in which the experience of the ECSC shone with its success. The Benelux countries took the political initiative and, in the spring of 1955, presented two projects: a more modest one extending the integration of the coal and steel sector to other sectors, and a second one proposing the creation of a general common market. The Italian government, through its foreign minister Martino, declared that it accepted both routes with the sole concern that the supranational political aspects would not be insisted upon too much and that the agreement would also be extended to Great Britain. It was a pragmatic approach, with the intention of avoiding a new failure but also an approach that took into account the many "cautions and reservations" present in Italy in the choices of opening the borders to international markets. It was a reserve present not only on the political front by CGIL and the left<sup>70</sup> but also, for example, in many circles of Confindustria.<sup>71</sup>

Thus, in June, in Italy (Messina), a conference was held in which all six ECSC countries, with France placing some reservations, agreed on the creation of a "common market with tariff units and abolition of customs" and for a "common organization for the peaceful development of atomic energy". In particular, for the decisions reached in Messina, the Italian delegation acted with great commitment, as can be seen from the statements made a few weeks later in an interview to the "Gazzetta del popolo" by Gaetano Martino, who expressed himself in this way on 26 June 1955: *"In Messina, not only were votes cast and preferences expressed, but precise decisions were taken regarding the development of common institutions, the progressive merging of national economies, the creation of a common market and the gradual harmonization of their social policies (...). Now it is just a question of not hiding the difficulties, and at the same time not overestimating them to the point of losing confidence in ourselves and in our ideals. We must move forward on the road to the unification of Europe, with patience, courage and faith"*.<sup>72</sup> As an operational decision, an "Intergovernmental Committee" was set up in Brussels,

---

<sup>70</sup> PEPE A., IUSO P., MISIANI S., *La Cgil e la costruzione della democrazia*, Ediesse, Roma 2001, pp. 107-110 ; in particular see :DEL BIONDO I., *L'Europa possibile. La Cgt e la Cgil di fronte al processo di integrazione europea (1957-1973)*, Ediesse, Roma 2007.

<sup>71</sup> See PETRINI F., *Il liberismo ad una dimensione. La Confindustria e l'integrazione europea, 1947-1957*, F. Angeli, Milano 2005.

<sup>72</sup> [https://www.senato.it/3182?newsletter\\_item=1869&newsletter\\_numero=175#](https://www.senato.it/3182?newsletter_item=1869&newsletter_numero=175#)

chaired by the Belgian Minister Spaak; negotiations were held in Belgium for a few months and a Committee of three wise men was then set up, writing a Report presented to the governments in Venice in May 1956.

This was followed by months of intense negotiations in which the Italian attitude oscillated between supporters of the continuation of the direction taken by a Europe of six called "Little Europe" (at least at the beginning) and supporters of a strengthening of collaboration with Great Britain and all the other countries within the framework of the OECE. Under the Liberal Democrat Martino, Italy was, however, heading compactly along the path of "horizontal" integration, that is, by sectors, insisting on the final objective of a general common market, the foundation of a future European Union. This was a wide-ranging political objective that the country fully accepted "while not neglecting to emphasize, on several occasions, that its economy was the weakest and that for this reason it should not "receive too strong shocks from the opening, albeit progressive, of economic borders".<sup>73</sup>

After further and lengthy negotiations, a project for a European Common Market (MEC) was defined: the difficulty now arose from the Germans who wanted, given the trends in their Parliament, a closer link between the Common Market and the Nuclear Energy Community (EURATOM). With a significant mediation of Italy between Germans and French on this point, there was at the end a meeting. Among other things, this was a dramatic political moment between the Hungarian Revolution and the Suez crisis, but perhaps also for this reason the six decided to launch the great institutional innovation of a European Economic Community (EEC). Another problem that was mediated was that of the French overseas departments, which also obtained forms of safeguards and protection.

Everything finally materialized in Rome, on March 25, 1957, with the solemn signing of the Treaties in the hall of the Horatii and Curiatii in Campidoglio. For Italy the Prime Minister Segni and the Foreign Minister Martino, for Germany the Chancellor Adenauer and so for Luxembourg the Prime Minister Bech; for France, Holland and Belgium instead the Foreign Ministers.

---

<sup>73</sup> NERI GUALDESI M., *L'Italia...*, cit., p.291.

The declared objective of the new Community was to build a common economic policy, to create a customs union to remove (progressively) all obstacles to the free movement of goods, persons and capital, all in order to gradually bring about a major transformation of the European economy.<sup>74</sup> The executive body was a "Commission of the EEC", a "Council", an "Assembly" (elected by second-degree elections), an Economic and Social Committee for the representation of economic and social forces (EESC), a Court of Justice. The Italian Government obtained a special protocol for Italy to be presented to Parliament when political difficulties would arise at the time of ratification. More specifically, in order to avoid dangerous social tensions in the application of the Treaty, was given to the country the opportunity to continue its policy for the development of the Mezzogiorno.

Other issues of concern for the Italian side and then implemented were: the inclusion in the Treaty of a "social chapter", which was done with the establishment of a "European Social Fund"; the establishment of a European Investment Bank; ensuring ways for emigration within the six, until the creation of a common labor market and the creation of a European agricultural policy. On this point, already in the negotiations, Italy showed its willingness to defend its agricultural model by clashing with the strong French interests in the sector. Here, too, there was a first mediation in postponing until after the definition of the common policy on the sector. First of all, the signature.

#### ***2.4. Italian foreign policy in the years of the miracle (1958-1969)***

With the signing of the European Treaties in 1957, a political cycle for republican Italy ended, that of the great foreign policy choices: the western choice, the international opening to markets and a united Europe.<sup>75</sup> From that moment on, while remaining faithful to these choices, Italian foreign policy seemed to turn (also) towards other objectives, such as a renewed and strong presence in the Mediterranean, in the desire to almost build a natural bridge between the nascent

---

<sup>74</sup> OLIVI B., *L'Europa difficile...*, cit.

<sup>75</sup> NERI GUALDESI M., *L'Italia...*, cit., p.299

European community of the great industrial nations of the North and the Mediterranean area, at that time in great political ferment, from Nasser's Egypt to the Algerian War, etc..

The DC generation that led the country after De Gasperi or at least a significant part of it (Gronchi, Fanfani, La Pira, Mattei), although Europeanist, was also sensitive to other elements, such as the end of colonialism and the evolution of Atlantism and was eager for a new protagonism.

There was in reality no contrast with the traditional lines of De Gasperi but it was a complementary foreign policy, which sought to reconcile the European and Mediterranean vocation, Atlanticism loyal to the USA and a certain freedom of action on other fronts such as relations with the new nations of the third world or trade agreements with various interlocutors, including socialist countries. It was a new approach that was immediately evident with the first Fanfani government (1958-59) and that continued in its second (1960) and in the following years in which Fanfani himself will be if not Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>76</sup>

Meanwhile, the country, coinciding with its entry into Europe and the definitive international openings of its economy, went through the greatest transformation of its unitary history, contradicting the black predictions of the oppositions and going well beyond the rosier expectations of governments, in an epochal change that also modified lifestyles and secular behavior and that was defined as a "miracle". "In a few years", says Ginzborg, "Italy ceased to be a country with strong peasant components becoming one of the most industrialized nations of the West. The rural and urban landscape, as well as the dwellings of its inhabitants and their ways of life changed radically".<sup>77</sup>

Everything happened in a few years. The national net income, calculated at constant prices, went from 17 thousand billion lire in 1954 to 30 thousand lire in 1963, the per capita income from 350 thousand to 571 thousand lire. The employed in agriculture decreased vertically from 8 to 5 million, those in industry went from 32

---

<sup>76</sup> Idem, p.302; OLIVI B, *Da un'Europa all'altra*, Etas Kompass, Milano 1973, p.271.

<sup>77</sup> GINSBORG P., *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra...*, cit. p.286

to 40% of the total, those in services from 28 to 35%, investments in the manufacturing industry grew disproportionately and its productivity increased in a few years by 84%.<sup>78</sup>

There are few doubts among scholars today that the years between the 1950s and 1960s were "the period of the most intense growth of Italian GDP in its history, first sustained by investment and exports and, subsequently, starting in 1960, also by private consumption".<sup>79</sup>

The question is: how much of all this was (also) the result of the international and European "openings" of the Italian economy, in particular the new European area of common growth?

Even here today there seems to be little doubt: "Italy managed to take full advantage of the opportunities that came from this opening, so much so that the incidence of imports and exports on GDP in 1971 reached 33%, a value higher than the French one and slightly lower than the German one. Trade with the EEC increased so much that at the end of the 1960s it represented 40% of exports and 36% of total imports from our country."<sup>80</sup>

The same was true for the free movement of labor, but not according to the wishes of the Italian delegation to the Treaties of Rome, which would have liked to see full free movement, facilitated by the new EEC. However, the other European governments, fearful of Italian emigration, never admitted the principle of the free movement of the unemployed.

Yet, despite such resistance, the creation of a large common European economic area led to a migratory movement never seen before and Italy, with its South but not only, was the protagonist.<sup>81</sup> Precise data are lacking due to the complexity of the phenomenon, the high rates of rotation and the considerable importance of clandestine and temporary forms of emigration. However, the most reliable

---

<sup>78</sup> CRAINZ G., *Storia del miracolo...*, cit., pp.87 e ss.

<sup>79</sup> BATTILANI P., FAURI F., *L'economia italiana dal 1945 ad oggi...*, cit., p.87.

<sup>80</sup> Idem, pp. 88-89

<sup>81</sup> F.Romero, *Emigrazione e integrazione europea 1945-1973*, Edizioni Lavoro, Roma 1991.

valuations speak of at least 10 million immigrant foreign workers circulating in Western Europe in 1970: from 8% in Belgium (of the total population) to 25% in Luxembourg, with very high absolute values for West Germany, the real driving force behind European manufacturing. The place of Italians in this phenomenon was enormous, unprecedented and involved all our regions, especially the South but not only.<sup>82</sup> If until the second post-war period, Italian emigration had been mainly intercontinental, from the end of the 1950s that is from the birth of the EEC, this trend diminished until it almost disappeared, while emigration towards Western Europe grew exponentially.<sup>83</sup>

In the meantime, the country was undergoing such epoch-making transformations at the same time its political framework was changing. After the events in Hungary in 1956, the slow separation of the Socialist Party (PSI) from the alliance with the Communists (PCI) began, as did its rapprochement with the Social Democratic Party (PSDI), which had always been an ally of the DC and in favor of NATO and a united Europe. In 1958, the first government was launched with significant openings to the PSI, which, however, remained for a few years in the opposition; until 1963 when the first government of Centro Sinistra with Moro (DC) as President of the Council and Nenni (PSI) his deputy, was born. This was a fact that could not but have some consequences in foreign policy, even in the confirmation of the fundamental choices of the post-war period.<sup>84</sup>

Finally, there is another element to consider when analysing Italy's behaviour in the first phase of a united Europe: European foreign policy choices revealed, from the beginning, the all-Italian propensity to use Europe to reform Italy. It is as if the Italian ruling class, profoundly pessimistic about the country's autonomous capacity to change, were to place particular expectations on the reforming capacity of the European legal systems. An attitude destined over the years to repeat itself, perhaps in different forms, but still bringing great disappointments: almost a desire for external intervention that did not take place but that deprived responsibility and made several times "run the risk of having to adapt to the strategies of others".<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> Idem, pp.92 e ss.

<sup>83</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>84</sup> SCOPPOLA P., *La repubblica dei partiti...*, cit., pp.320-354.

<sup>85</sup> NERI GUALDESI M., *L'Italia...*, cit., p.303.

The year after the signing of the Treaties fell the French government that had wanted and signed them and came to power General De Gaulle, a cumbersome presence on the European scene lasted more than 10 years. He had another vision of Europe than the letter and spirit of Rome, namely that of a "Union of States" at the center of which France was the arbitrator and mediator between the various states. Between 1960 and 1962 his government rejected the idea of a larger free trade area proposed by Great Britain and proposed to the other five periodic summits of heads of state to decide on the new directions of the EEC asking for the establishment of a Commission of experts to prepare a new proposal for a European political Union. At the head of this was the French Fouchet and the final proposal followed the new French philosophy: this was opposed by Italy, calling for the text to be amended in the opposite direction of greater European integration. The moment was full of international tensions, with the construction in Berlin of the Wall that would divide the city (and the European continent) in two for the following twenty-eight years and with De Gaulle who unilaterally refused the British request to join the EEC and that the following year, considering the US nuclear defense insufficient, placed France outside of NATO, while remaining this, obviously, ally of the West.

In 1962, while the first negotiations of the common agricultural policy (CAP) were being concluded giving little or no value to Mediterranean and therefore Italian agriculture, the French government presented a new political project for the European Union, even more oriented towards the Europe of the states, which, the other five partners, obviously rejected.

The Italian government, at that moment of centre-left (with Fanfani and Nenni decidedly anti-Gaullists inside), however, was looking for a mediation in the name of the original Europeanist idea; the positions clearly contrary to the French proposal, however, of Belgium and Holland, meant that this too was rejected. It was always the new centre-left government that opposed the special Franco-German agreement, even when it was proposed to extend it to Italy. By doing that, Italy rejected the idea of a Europe led by the three great countries that relegated the small



to a subordinate role and reaffirming the original idea of the Treaties of Rome of the supra-nationality of the Community institutions.

In the meantime, in the early 1960s, the common European institutions and policies were getting stronger, far from the idea of building a future political federation, but solid in their function of economic and social integration of the various countries. In this context, Italy was distinguished by a strong attachment to the original "integrative seed" of the EEC, the repository of European values: "the Italian government was concerned above all not to jeopardize the maintenance of economic solidarity between the six, trying to counter De Gaulle with an attitude not sentimental but rather based on realistic political assessments."<sup>86</sup>

Particular attention should be paid to the first "agricultural dossier" of the CAP: when the first package of measures was negotiated in 1961-62, destined to last until 1970, Italy accepted in practice a penalizing orientation for its Mediterranean agriculture and its products, in favor of the more developed agriculture of Northern Europe and its productions. In practice, Italy sacrificed its backward agriculture, to encourage the export of its industry in those years particularly aggressive on European markets. It was almost "a price paid" for its industrial exports to find opportunities in other countries.

However, in the mid-1960s, when the Italian government realized that it had made a mistake, it tried to remedy the situation by obtaining some partial success. Italy also became a country that pursued its own "policy of interests", a country that no longer looked only at the ideals of community integration but sought every time to obtain benefits for its economy. The turning point took place mainly between 1963 and 1966 when some small but significant agricultural successes were achieved.

In 1965, a new crisis broke out caused by the De Gaulle government, known as the "empty chair". France, not being satisfied with the financial regulation to which a strengthening of the political role of the European institutions was linked, withdrew its representatives from the European tables of all kinds in protest for six months, thus immobilizing the life of the EEC. Italy, this time represented by the Prime

---

<sup>86</sup> Idem, p.313.

Minister Moro, was looking for and finding mediation formulas that led, in January 1966, to the "Luxembourg compromise". It was an agreement that saved the EEC but took away from it the central political innovation initially provided for by the treaties, namely the transition from unanimity to majority voting for a number of subjects. Problem still on the carpet today.

In order to take stock of Italy's contribution to the first decade of Community life, a number of factors need to be taken into account. The first is certainly the consistent Italian line of conduct in defense of the spirit and the letter of the Treaties, a policy that is not entirely unselfish. If, in fact, in the face of De Gaulle's disintegrating action (1961-62 Fouchet Plan, 1963 veto to Great Britain, 1965 empty chair policy, 1966 Luxembourg compromise), the Italian government followed a line of defense of the Treaties, paying a high political price in its relations with France; at the same time, however, there were to be taken into account the great economic successes achieved with the birth of the EEC. It was also these that pushed Italy to defend always and in any case the Community. Moreover, it is known that the Italian industry exerted many political pressures so that the common market continued to be as it was in the beginning. A second negative attitude, however, concerns the lack of political attention on the part of our politicians to what was happening in the Community institutions, an attitude that was evident from the outset in many episodes demonstrating such a general underestimation.

It was not certainly the best way to be ready for the difficult 70s of economic, social and political crisis.

## **2.5. *Italian foreign policy in the difficult 70's***

At the end of the 1960s, Italy's political, social and economic situation changed profoundly compared to the previous decade: a crisis of many aspects was deeply affecting the country and its European policy was strongly affected.

In politics, the general elections of 1968 led to the crisis of the governmental formula of the centre-left with its hopes of great economic and social reforms. In this way, a long instability began that would run through various phases throughout

the decade: first with governments of the centre-left (1969-72), then centrists (1972-74) then again of the centre-left (1974-76), then of national unity (1976-79) and finally of the pentaparty (from 1979 onwards). All this gave abroad a negative image of governments perpetually threatened by the possibility of crisis.<sup>87</sup>

From a social point of view, to a turbulent 1968 of great student protests, in 1969 the greatest and most intense cycle of workers' protests and conflicts in the history of the Republic followed: in the autumn of 1969 alone, more hours of strike were concentrated than in the previous 30 years. However, the conflict did not end but extended from the factories to the country, soon becoming chronic and would accompany the whole decade ending in the long night of terrorism and the "years of lead".<sup>88</sup>

Most serious of all, however, was the contemporary and profound economic crisis, both Italian and international. The country saw its "miracle" quickly run out and while the factories became ungovernable due to an acute social conflict,<sup>89</sup> the international economic situation, on which most of its exports depended, changed for the worse. First, the international monetary system went into crisis with the end of the fixed dollar/gold exchange rate (1971) and then, with the oil crisis of 1973, inflation rapidly reached peaks never seen in decades. The trade and balance of payments balance thus entered in serious deficit and the indebtedness of the state, forced to face continuous social urgencies, grew.

In 1970 an Italian (Malfatti) took over the presidency of the European Commission, while the well-known Europeanist Spinelli became one of its nine commissioners. A presence and an authoritative position that Italy initially fulfilled by seeking, as always, the good mediation between the opposing interests and defending the prerogatives of integration with respect to the selfish policies of the States.<sup>90</sup> This was not enough, however, to prevent Italy, very distracted by its serious national events, from appearing constantly far from the political life of Brussels and was considered by many to be the "tail-light" of the EEC. All this, although the new

---

<sup>87</sup> SCOPPOLA P., *La repubblica dei partiti...*, cit., pp.355 e ss.

<sup>88</sup> GINSBORG P., *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra...*, cit. pp.404-545

<sup>89</sup> TURONE S., *Storia del sindacato in Italia (1943-1980)*, Laterza, Bari, 1981, pp.408 e ss.

<sup>90</sup> VARSORI A., *La cenerentola d'Europa? L'Italia e l'integrazione europea...*, cit., p.278 e ss.

Italian Commissioner for Agriculture (Scarascia Mugnozza replaced Malfatti who resigned) obtained, for example, significant changes to the CAP in the direction of Italian interests and was actively concerned with the Mediterranean area where there were countries such as Greece, Spain and Portugal that were emerging from dictatorships and were slowly approaching Europe.<sup>91</sup>

After De Gaulle's fall in 1969, Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark joined the EEC in 1972: countries that had always been requested by Italy and just under Malfatti's presidency the last stages of negotiation of what later became the first enlargement of the European Community were conducted. This entry provoked the desired revision of the CAP incessantly invoked by Italy but with few results for our country, too bent in those years on its internal problems and advocate of a "low profile" in the institutions.<sup>92</sup>

Always in these years (in 1972) the EMS was constituted, the "European Monetary Snake", a system of fixed European exchange rates that in 1979 was then consolidated in the European Monetary System, from which, however, Italy, in extreme difficulty, came out very soon (1973), putting itself voluntarily in the group of European countries but at "slow speed". In this situation, in order to overcome the political crisis in 1974 and in 1975, German and Belgian politicians proposed a two-speed Europe, which was, however, rejected also because of the strong opposition of Italy.

In 1975 there was the Italian Presidency of the Council of the EEC and, also on the initiative of the Italian Commissioner Spinelli, the Italian government proposed direct universal suffrage for the European Parliament (a gesture of high political value), while Spinelli himself promoted the request for a considerable loan of European solidarity to Italy experiencing hard difficulties. However, the proposal was read, in the fiery Italian political climate, as a sort of "external constraint" that they wanted to put from Brussels to Italian politics and was not well accepted.

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibidem, p.282-283.

<sup>92</sup> NERI GUALDESI M., *L'Italia...*, cit., p.320

In 1976, in parallel with the new governments of national unity (DC and PCI together), the historical shift of the same Communist Party towards a yes to European integration took place, albeit between caution and rethinking. In any way, this was an important fact that changed the European geography of the Italian parliament, in which, there were almost no more groups opposed to the EEC. A Europeanism, however, barely sketched since the PCI will then vote against, in 1978 for the return to the EMS, in 1979 to the Euromissiles and in 1982 to the Italian participation in the UN peace missions.

Finally, in those years, the negative phenomenon of Italian "litigation" began: the chronic and almost structural delay with which the Italian Parliament transposed European directives in all fields, one of the main causes of the Italian failure to implement many Community decisions. Such a limited efficiency of its Parliament, combined with a lack of political initiative in Brussels, made the Europeanist history of Italy in those years the most difficult period. It was obvious that a change of pace was needed which would link in a structural way the Community and national realities. The latter would be, in turn, the leitmotif of foreign policy in Brussels in the following decade.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Italy's foreign policy in the first part of 1980s and its role in the Mediterranean enlargement*

#### *3.1. Italy and Europe in the 1980s: broad lines of evolution*

The 1980s were for Italy a period of profound economic, social, cultural and, last but not least, political transformations; transformations that did not fail to influence, and not superficially, its foreign policy, particularly that in Europe.

From an economic point of view, the 1970's was the most difficult decade for Italy since the end of the war.<sup>93</sup> In it, the worsening of industrial relations, in practice ungovernable and the consequent wage explosion<sup>94</sup>, were intertwined with the dizzying rise in the price of oil (in two shock waves: in 1973 and 1979) and with the worsening of inflation and stagnation. In fact, the sudden increase in oil prices in 1973 had plunged the country into a vicious circle consisting in the continuous pursuit of price increases and economic stagnation, so much so that to describe its essence a new term was introduced: "stagflation", a mixture of economic stagnation and high inflation. After a brief and illusory pause (between 1979 and 1980), the Italian crisis resumed with force: also thanks to the new world increase in crude oil in 1979, Italian inflation had returned to unsustainable levels. The average of 13.5% for the early '80s was more than 10 points higher than that of the main industrialized countries competing with Italy; a situation that penalized the competitiveness of its production.

As a consequence, the main priority of the economic policy of the Italian governments became, for the whole of the 80's and for the following decade, to break this perverse mechanism, to fight inflation and at the same time to relaunch

---

<sup>93</sup> BATTILANI P., FAURI F., *L'economia italiana...*, pp.123-124.

<sup>94</sup> DE LUCA M., *Nel rispetto dei reciproci ruoli. Lineamenti di storia della contrattazione collettiva in Italia*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2013.

the national industry, restoring its competitiveness, efficiency, innovation and capacity of being present on the global markets. Not all these and other objectives were achieved and heavy burdens arose for the following generations, while great weight began to be given to the European, monetary and economic "constraints". These, starting from the end of the 1960s, would gradually lead to the Maastricht Treaty and the single currency through a long journey, with obvious failures (e.g. the monetary snake) and encouraging results (e.g. the European Monetary System).

All this gave to the 1990s an Italy strongly linked to the process of European monetary integration, with a reaffirmed tradition of a strong presence of the central state in the economic life of the country (which, however, shortly afterwards, in the wake of Tangentopoli would be dismantled) and with a new "brand", on which, the success of a significant part of our industry in the following decades would be built: the "made in Italy".<sup>95</sup>

The 1980s were therefore an important and complex economic decade for Italy, in transition, essentially divided into two parts. On the one hand, the early 1980s, in which the recessionary climate that had characterized previous years persisted, albeit with some signs of recovery. In 1981, inflation reached more than 21%; the rate of economic growth was still low, stationary in 1980 and significantly in negative progression during 1982-83. Towards the middle of the decade, however, things changed abruptly, both because of the changed political and trade union "climate" in the country and because of the favorable international economic situation. The American economy and other advanced economies were recovering, with the price of oil and other commodities falling. The Italian recovery, however, had particular characteristics and intensity. There were decisive economic and social policy interventions by governments to combat stagflation, ranging from the many aids to businesses to the extension of pensions and, in general, of the social coverage of citizens (health, unemployment, etc.). Other elements were a series of multi-annual plans for public investment and the introduction of new staff into the public administration, obviously increasing the public deficit financed largely by the issuance of government debt securities purchased by citizens with their savings, but the country seemed to feel the turning point.

---

<sup>95</sup> BATTILANI P., FAURI F., cit., p.124.

The Italian recovery was there and it was solid and widespread. Among the various factors, concurrently with each other, that contributed to making it particularly important, the changed political and trade-union climate in the factories and in the country, certainly played an important role, with the defeat of the most conflictual trade-union and political wing that, in the previous decade, if not the majority certainly was the dominant one.

A turning point which began with the resounding victory of the FIAT management over the trade unions in the clash of November 1980 (known as the "40 thousand march") and continued with the negotiations on labor costs (and therefore on the containment of inflation) between the trade unions, companies and the Government, which lasted three years. It ended with the separate agreement of 14 February 1984, followed by the government decree that incorporated the contents and froze the automatic wage increases. This was followed by a definitive organizational and political break-up between the Italian trade unions, which faced each other openly on opposite sides in the abrogating referendum of 1985 that in the end confirmed the validity of the agreement itself, giving reason to the moderate wing of the union.<sup>96</sup>

In the companies, competitiveness and productivity were restored and a climate of social peace was generally established in the country, which was further strengthened by the defeat of terrorism and by the new political stability, with the governments of "pentaparty".

The result was a new, unexpected, intense period of economic prosperity that some commentators even called the "second Italian economic miracle".<sup>97</sup> Inflation fell rapidly (to 4.6% in 1987), with growth rates, from 1984 onwards, very high, especially when compared to those of the early '80s. The further fall in the dollar and in the price of raw oil favored the readjustment of the Italian trade balance, which turned into a strong surplus. Italian companies, which in previous years had often worked at a loss, experienced a period of strong growth from 1984 onwards.

---

<sup>96</sup> DE LUCA M., *Nel rispetto dei reciproci ruoli...*, p.199 e ss.

<sup>97</sup> TURANI G., 1985-1995. *Il secondo miracolo economico italiano. Istruzioni per l'uso*, Sperling & Kupfer, Milano 1986.



In order to achieve it, all sectors underwent a bit of impressive restructuring (starting with large companies such as Fiat, which lost jobs but grew in efficiency), great technological and organizational innovations were introduced, labor productivity increased while the incidence of its cost decreased. From metalworking to clothing to footwear, Made in Italy was becoming established throughout the world. In particular, small and medium enterprises were growing, located in the North-East of the country and in its Adriatic area (the so-called "Third Italy") and many, particularly specialized and very competitive local production systems were growing, called "Industrial Districts". This was a particularity of the Italian economy that became famous all over the world and also taught in other countries. <sup>98</sup>

Even the large public industry (steel, mechanics, chemicals) which, in the previous decade, had been managed with uneconomic criteria and had accumulated heavy losses, underwent new major restructuring and gained competitiveness.<sup>99</sup> Most of these transformations of industry, public and private, however, as mentioned, ended up to weight on the community, both for the higher unemployment that caused and both for the extension beyond measure of the Cassa integrazione Guadagni (CIG). The latter was a temporary salary that the State guaranteed to private Italian workers that companies could not make work and put on leave or lay-off. This helped to save companies as well as to guarantee workers.

The "second miracle", however, was not only the result of exports. The turning point was also evident on the internal market, with a rapidly growing global demand and high levels of consumption widespread almost everywhere, especially in the northern areas that reached a standard of living in those years comparable to, if not higher than, the traditionally rich northern European areas.

At the end of the decade Italy outperformed Great Britain in economic terms, becoming in fact the fifth industrial power in the capitalist world after the US, Japan, Germany and France. A resounding claim that was officially made by Treasury Minister Giovanni Goria in 1987, obviously contested by British

---

<sup>98</sup> BECCATTINI G, *Distretti industriali e made in Italy*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 1998.

<sup>99</sup> GINSBORG P., *Storia d'Italia ...*, p. 557.

politicians in Parliament; then, a few months later, it was the OECD statistics that definitively proved the Italians right by proclaiming that Italy's GDP and standard of living were indisputably higher than the British.

Beyond these controversies, there was no doubt that in the second half of the decade the Italian economic system showed a remarkable vitality, even greater, it was observed, than what was declared by official statistics for the well-known phenomenon of the so-called "underground economy". That is, the myriad of small companies scattered throughout the Italian province, "characterized (thanks to intense work shifts, the absence of trade unions, labor mobility, high tax evasion but also by entrepreneurial skills and great technological and organizational innovation ) by high productivity, low costs and considerable ability to adapt to the needs of the international market."<sup>100</sup>

Such a fast and intense change in the short course of a single decade,<sup>101</sup> however, had deep roots in the mentality and customs of Italian society in the '80s, which also changed a lot compared to the previous decade. If the 1960s and 1970s had been pervaded by collective values and a widespread expectation of social and political change, the 1980s seemed to be characterized by "a new moral", far from the great hopes for reform of only a few years earlier and the gloomy pessimism of the "reflux" of the late 1970s. In particular, we witnessed a strong reevaluation of the "business culture", previously so demonized by the media and intellectuals, which in those same years was so advocated by Mrs. Thatcher in Great Britain and Ronald Reagan in the U.S. in their countries. Paradoxically, this new culture "seemed to have found its natural home in Italy".<sup>102</sup>

At the end of the decade, the correspondent of the "Observer" wrote: *"Italy is, in 1987, one of the best examples of success in Europe. It has become the land of upward social mobility, a vibrant computer industry, busy young managers and skilled middle-aged capitalists who have abjured the ideals of the 1960s for the sacred cause of profit. Export or die."*<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup> SABBATUCCI G., VIDOTTO V., *Storia contemporanea. Il Novecento*, Laterza, Bari 2008, p.350.

<sup>101</sup> See: COLARIZI S., CRAVERI P., PONS S., QUAGLIARELLO G. (a cura di), *Gli anni Ottanta come storia*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli (Cz) 2004

<sup>102</sup> GINSBORG P., *Storia d'Italia ...*, p. 550.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibidem*.

A change of mentality very radical and profound as to affect the traditional social fabric of Italian parties, whose values and behaviors were felt gradually, during the eighties, increasingly far from their respective electorates and worlds of reference, thus preparing the crisis of representation that would explode, with outcry, in the early '90s.<sup>104</sup>

From the parliamentary point of view, the great change of the 1980s coincided, on the contrary, with the return to the normality of before the 1970s, that is, to the Centre-left formula called "pentaparty", as it included, since 1981, the Liberal Party that was an exponent of the old centrism of the 1950s. That is, it had happened that the great governments of national solidarity (with the PCI in the majority but outside the ministries), born in 1976 on the wave of the felt need to face and overcome the challenges of the great Italian crisis, had substantially failed. Those governments, in fact, even though they were both supporters of a line of economic and social austerity together with the hope of profound reforms and both they confirmed the framework of international alliances of Italy (NATO and EEC), had not succeeded in either going beyond certain reforms and social laws that had little impact or in reassuring the western allies of the Italians.

In 1979, the PCI, perceiving a general disappointment of its voters due to the results of the governmental collaboration, entered into strong contrast with the other government partners on economic policy and foreign policy issues (in particular, on the Italian accession to the European Monetary System EMS, bearer of strong constraints on economic policies). As a result, the PCI abandoned the majority and gave rise to a political crisis that led to early elections, where, however, the party suffered a sharp loss of consensus, thus losing any hope of returning to the Government.

From there began the long experience of the governments of "pentaparty", an alliance, as mentioned, between the five center-left parties and led by DC and PSI. This lasted until 1992, with the first non-DC Council presidents since the post-war

---

<sup>104</sup> GIOVAGNOLI A., *La Repubblica degli italiani. 1946-2016*, Laterza, Bari 2016, p.148-154.

period (the republican Spadolini and the socialist Craxi), obviously alternated by Christian Democrats. All these governments were affected by a strong internal competition between the two major parties, socialist and Christian-democrat, but substantially they (the governments) were stable and with strong continuity on the merits of the political choices, particularly in the themes and behavior of foreign, international and European politics. The result was a very stable Italian political framework, also because it lacked realistic alternatives, since the main opposition party, the PCI (which in 1984 also lost its authoritative leader Berlinguer), was incapable and disoriented with respect to the global crisis of international Communism. This crisis in fact, became increasingly evident during the 1980s and finally broke out at the end of the decade.

The governments of pentaparty thus continued undisturbed their path throughout the decade, which was positively marked by a robust economic recovery, alternating governments led by DC with others led by seculars or Socialist. The same happened to the Presidency of the Republic where the socialist Pertini was succeeded by the Christian-democrat Cossiga.

Certainly, there were still fundamental knots, such as the reform of an increasingly expensive welfare system. The latter, was crossed by excesses of welfare resulting from the turbulence and social struggles of the 1970s, the excessive presence of the State in the economy (even if significant restructuring had taken place in this sector) and, above all, the exponential growth of the Italian public debt. Despite this, the political majority seemed firmly in control, perhaps awaiting a possible definitive future electoral and political clash between the two great allies-enemies of the DC and PSI. The parliamentary and political framework of the '80s appeared and was, therefore, more than stable.

In retrospect, it was observed that: "*it would have been external elements to the system, that is, the solicitations induced by new political forces and by the change in international order, together with unpredictable judicial initiatives, to accelerate a crisis that had long been latent and to which the governing parties, DC and PSI, had not been able or willing to remedy*".<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> SABBATUCCI G., VIDOTTO V., *Storia ...*, cit. p. 354

### 3.2. *The new Cold War*

*"It is now clear that this decade had an uncommon importance for international life and for the positions that Italy was called upon to take in those extraordinary circumstances,"* said the historian Ennio Di Nolfo a few years ago in the opening of the volume, edited by him, dedicated to Italian foreign policy in the 1980s.<sup>106</sup>

These were years that saw epoch-making changes that still weigh on the international scene today. Years of turning point, which began in a climate of bitter tension between the blocks, in the fierce controversy over the Euromissiles, in the storm of the Solidarnosc events, in the dramatic scenario of the Contras guerrilla warfare in Nicaragua, the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, and which ended instead with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the Cold War and of the USSR, and with the expectation, finally, after more than 4 decades of conflicting bipolarism in the world, of a long period of peace, so much so as to make someone speak, at the beginning of the 90's, of "the end of History".<sup>107</sup>

The decade had in fact begun with the maximum of global political tension between East and West, as had not been seen for a long time: the 70's, on the international level, had left a complex legacy, somehow difficult and dramatic. The "Cold War" in the early '80s<sup>108</sup> seemed to have regained all its initial strength and the "international relaxation" knew a "substantial halt."<sup>109</sup> On the one hand there was the USSR, with its satellite countries in clear internal crisis both from an ideological and image point of view and from a strictly economic one. On the first aspect, the explosion in the communist countries of the phenomenon of the "dissidents" (intellectuals, often coming from the same governmental intelligentsia who began to criticize important aspects, if not the whole, of the communist system of life, often in the light of the priority respect for human rights), whose police repression could not limit, certainly had a significant weight. On the other hand, the global decline of the post-68 revolutionary hopes was evident, especially in the Third

---

<sup>106</sup> DI NOLFO E. (curated by), *La politica estera italiana negli anni Ottanta*, Marsilio, Venezia 2007, p.IX.

<sup>107</sup> FUKUYAMA F., *La fine della storia e l'ultimo uomo*, Rizzoli, Milano, 1992

<sup>108</sup> FORMIGONI G., *Storia della politica internazionale nell'età contemporanea*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2006, pp.412 e ss.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibidem*.

World or non-aligned countries. This was evident both in the fogging up of the charisma of Cuban Fidel Castro and his world revolution of poor countries, both in the extinction of the force of attraction of the Chinese model and its agrarian communism, imitated until a few years before by many ex-colonial and recently independent countries. A decisive hit on the dissolution of the communist myth finally was given, at the end of the 70's, by the war between Vietnam and Cambodia, the two communist countries that had defeated the United States in 1975. This was an internal war to communism that, if, on the one hand, it stopped the incredible and frightening genocide in progress by the "Khmer Rouge Cambodians", highlighted, on the other, the presence also in the communist world of political logics of national-regional imperialism. These logics were far from the much-vaunted "socialist solidarity" between two regimes that only a few years before was greeted by the international mass media as authentic "movements for the liberation of peoples" and then turned out to be totalitarian and bloody regimes.<sup>110</sup>

To this must be added the evident economic crisis of the socialist countries, present in all sectors but particularly in the agricultural and consumer goods sectors; these were countries in which a large part of the resources were absorbed by the enormous military-industrial apparatus and by the heavy cost of state and party bureaucracy. Above all, the great distance that separated them from the living standards of the West and the inability of their ruling classes to remedy was increasingly evident to the peoples of Eastern Europe and the USSR.<sup>111</sup>

The USSR gave itself, however, in those same years, a militarily aggressive image of strong territorial expansion: from the former Portuguese colonies to Nicaragua, from Ethiopia to Vietnam, to the Arab countries, many seemed in fact to fall under the influence, direct or not, of the USSR. Hence, an accentuated international dynamism was the way in which the Soviet leadership responded to the growing internal difficulties and the US leadership was extremely alarmed by this.<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Idem, pp.410-411.

<sup>111</sup> FELIU G., SUDRIA' C., *Introduzione alla storia economica mondiale*, Cedam, Padova 2017.

<sup>112</sup> See for example: LUTTWAK E.N., *La grande strategia dell'Unione Sovietica. Dall'ideologia della rivoluzione mondiale al mito della superpotenza militare*, RIZZOLI, Milano 1984.

Just at the end of the decade (1979) the USSR had invaded with its troops a neighboring state, Afghanistan, small country, backward and lacking in resources but strategically well positioned near the Persian Gulf, as immediately evidenced by the Carter administration itself.<sup>113</sup> This was a fact that had brought international tension to the highest levels arriving (for the first time in the history of modern sport) to the boycott in protest by the U.S. and its allies of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games. It was something that had never happened before and that was repeated 4 years later with the Soviet boycott of the Los Angeles Olympics. A tension that dominated the global scenarios despite the fact that only 4 years earlier had been signed, in Helsinki, challenging agreements on global respect for human rights and peaceful coexistence between the two blocs, by all Western and Communist countries.<sup>114</sup>

On the side of the United States, if the 70's had certainly represented an unhappy phase both in domestic politics - from the Nixon presidency resigned from Congress to a Carter (1976-1980) perceived as weak and unrealistic - and also in foreign politics with the losing crises in Vietnam, Iran, Nicaragua and Africa. The clamorous election in 1979 of the former ultra-conservative political actor, Reagan, who promised a liberal turn in the economy and a harder line towards the USSR and all the enemies of America, marked a clear turning point. The direction taken by the United States, shared by large strata of the American mass media and public opinion, was that of renewed patriotic pride and a general desire for revenge.

The success of this turning point (Reagan was re-elected in 1984 with a large margin of approval and his deputy Bush succeeded him in 1988) was intertwined with the good performance of the U.S. economy driven by high-tech sectors and military interests. U.S. military spending, in addition to helping in part the economic recovery, put the Soviets in the need to rearm themselves and therefore to invest additional resources in the military field. Just think to the futuristic Reagan program known as the Space Shield or to the strong US support, in arms and materials, for the anti-Soviet Afghan guerrillas and the anti-Communist Contras nicaraguegni, or to the continual American challenge to the Muslim fundamentalist regimes such as

---

<sup>113</sup> DI NOLFO E., *Storia delle relazioni internazionali...*, cit. pp.621 e ss.

<sup>114</sup> DI NOLFO E., *Storia delle relazioni internazionali...*, cit.588.

Iran and Libya. This was a policy that continued with the successor Bush, albeit with less heated tones and with initiatives also in dialogue with the USSR but always firm and decisive: from the direct intervention in Panama (1989) to the even more direct and hard intervention in Kuwait and Iraq (1990-1991). The US line in foreign policy in the decade had no discontinuity or uncertainty.<sup>115</sup>

### ***3.3. Change of protagonists in Europe***

The 1970s were, even for Western European countries, a period of great difficulty. First of all, after 1973, there were economic difficulties due to the oil crisis and its consequences, except perhaps for Great Britain, which was beginning to exploit its large oil fields in the North Sea at that time. Together with this there had been, in all countries, an economic and social crisis linked to the restructuring, caused by the decline of some industrial sectors (especially mining and steel) which, until then were central in the economy of old Europe. The consequence of this was the explosion of bitter social tensions, the accentuation of protectionist tensions and centrifugal thrusts contrary to the process of Community integration which, despite the accession of new countries, was struggling to take off.

Even as a result of these constraints, the European political framework changed and new players appeared in the foreign and European policy of the 1980s.<sup>116</sup> In Great Britain, in 1979, Labourers lost the elections and the Tories (conservatives) came to power, led by Margaret Thatcher, who presented herself with a platform of uncompromising economic and social liberalism. She launched an hard attack on the power of the strong British Trade Unions and questioned many points of the great Welfare State built by the Labourers after 1945 (without, however, touching, it must be remembered, the fundamental performances). Also initiated a major plan to privatize important sectors of British public industry, including mines, railways, etc., and began a bitter dispute with the European Communities over the budget and prospects for progressive unity. A liberal and cautious political line on the European Community that was confirmed in the subsequent elections of 1983 (although influenced, the observers say, by the patriotic wave that followed the war with

---

<sup>115</sup> Idem, pp. 558 e ss.

<sup>116</sup> Varsori A., *L'Italia nelle relazioni internazionali...*, cit., pp.214 e ss.



Argentina for the Falkland or Malvinas) and in those of 1987. In 1990, however, Thatcher left the leadership of the government to another leader of her own party, John Major, who impersonated a Tory line contrary to certain decidedly unpopular social measures and who did not share her obstinate opposition to the projects of European integration.

In those same years, the same liberal and conservative wave, albeit much lessened, ran through the Scandinavian countries where, after decades of unchallenged dominance by social democrats, moderate and conservative coalitions gradually came to power.

The era of social democratic governments led by Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt also ended in West Germany in 1983, and the Christian Democrat Helmut Kohl came to power. The liberals, until then allies of the social democrats, changed ally but not so much for economic reasons, being the German economy in a new clear recovery after the crisis after 1973, but rather for domestic and foreign policy reasons, such as the attitude towards the new wave of the Cold War and the strengthening of the military apparatus and the installation of new U.S. missiles on German territory in response to the deployment of similar weapons by the USSR.

The political picture was different in Southern Europe, where the socialist parties all went to government in their respective countries, alone or in coalition.

In France, a left-wing coalition (Union of the Left) won the 1981 elections, bringing Francois Mitterrand, an elderly socialist leader, to the presidency of the Republic: his program included major nationalization projects, social reforms and wage increases, but the expectations of a large part of his voters on these issues were disappointed. Between 1983 and 1984 there was a turning point. A great change determined by both economic and political reasons. On the economic front, the socialist policies aimed at increasing public spending, nationalization and strengthening the welfare state ended up causing serious difficulties for the French economy, a growing weakness of the Franco and, not least, a series of contrasts and frictions with Federal Germany (the most important European economic player), in

particular on the future of the European monetary system (EMS). A clear economic steering was therefore required.

To this need was added the need for a political steering towards the centre by the President. If, in fact, the economy required the abandonment of the more ambitious reform projects agreed before the elections with the Communists, the exit in 1983 of the Communist Party (which was in a marked electoral decline) from the majority of government also had other reasons. The French president had realized that in the climate of the new Cold War and in an increasingly neo-liberal general context, Western Europe and France in particular, would see their role on the international stage greatly reduced. It was then necessary to make full use again of the instrument of European construction and of the privileged relationship with the German Government.<sup>117</sup> From that moment on, this new strategy led to a progressive rapprochement between President Mitterrand and the German Chancellor, with personal relations of mutual understanding and trust.

Hence, we witnessed a France that abandoned more and more Gaullist rigidity and that had a new positive approach to the themes of European integration. Mitterrand was then confirmed for another seven years in the 1988 elections and at the same time his party confirmed its leadership of the parliament and the country for the whole of the following decade until the general elections of 1993.

Socialist-democratic governments were also confirmed throughout the 1980s in the southern European countries of new democracy as they had just emerged from their respective totalitarian regimes of the right and not by chance all eager to become full members of the European Community: Portugal, Greece and Spain.

In Portugal the dictatorship had fallen in 1974, after the death of the old dictator Salazar by the hands of relevant parts of the army that were tired of fighting against the guerrilla warfare for the maintenance of the old colonial empire in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, etc.. In the country, after an initial period of turbulence, the socialist led by Mario Soares won the general election, alternating in power for the 1980s with the more moderate social democrats.

---

<sup>117</sup> VARSORI A., *La cenerentola d'Europa? L'Italia e l'integrazione europea dal 1947 ad oggi*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2010, p.545-546.

In Greece the military dictatorship called "of the colonels" had fallen after the disastrous war against Turkey which had led to the division into two parts of the island of Cyprus. Then, if in the '70s had come to power the moderate party New Democracy", on the contrary for all the '80s, particularly since the entry of the country into the European Community, ruled the Hellenic Socialist Party (PASOK) led by the leader Andreas Papandreu.

In Spain, the transition from the Franco dictatorship to democracy was smooth and practically guided by the monarchy. After a democratic transition government led by the young right-wing leader Suarez, the new democratic constitution was approved by referendum in 1978 and in 1982 the Socialist Party led by the leader Felipe Gonzales came to power. The return of the three southern European countries to a stable parliamentary democracy represented a clear and positive innovation in the European political history of the twentieth century. In particular, this was an innovation that allowed them to enter in their own right (Greece in 1981 and Spain and Portugal in 1986), after a long negotiation in which Italy would play an important role, in the community and democratic Europe and in the Atlantic Alliance. As evidence of Italy's willingness to support the process of Mediterranean enlargement from the outset, the President of the Italian Republic, Sandro Pertini, during a meeting with the President of the Portuguese Republic, Antonio Ramalho Eanes, on his visit to Italy from 14 to 16 May 1980, stated as follows: *"Italy and Portugal find, in fact, in their geographical conformation and in the great openness to the sea, in the type of economy, in the composition of the social fabric, in the great humanity of the people and in their political and cultural history surprising common traits"*. Continuing in his speech, President Pertini stated that: (...) *"Driven, therefore, by the current of affinity and friendship that has always linked our nations, we have encouraged and favored the contacts between Portugal and the European Economic Community that took place in 1975 under our Presidency, and we have welcomed the entry of your noble country into the Council of Europe. Similarly, today, at a time when Italy is again holding the Presidency of the Nine, we formally reaffirm our commitment to work actively, so that the Portugal full participation in the Community enterprise will take place within the next few years,*

*without delay, and your country can, Mr. President, return to occupy its rightful place in the construction of the political unity of Europe.* <sup>118</sup>

In a similar way, President Pertini expressed himself a little less than 15 days later, on the occasion of his visit in Spain, the other relevant country, which, in the '80s, as mentioned, joined the Community: "*Italy has considered with great favor from the beginning the candidacy of Spain to the European Economic Community and has spoken out for the inclusion of Spain in the intimate fabric of free Europe, to which it belongs by right; there will never be a real European unity, if it will not be fully composed by all the nations of free Europe*". <sup>119</sup>

### **3.4. The Euromissile crisis, Europe and Italy**

As we have seen, the 1970s had ended with a marked deterioration in East-West relations, so much so that there was talk of a "new Cold War". <sup>120</sup>

December 1979 in Brussels, an important decision was taken. At the end of a year and more of internal negotiation, a Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense of the countries of NATO unanimously approved a double strategy. On the one hand, to deploy "new theatre forces", i.e. new generation weapons and missiles, and on the other hand to enter into negotiations with the communist countries for a balanced reduction of all missiles on both sides. This is because, in everyone's opinion, the Soviet installation of new, more modern and powerful missiles had in fact altered the European balance of the two sides.

For Westerners, in essence, the progress of the negotiations with the USSR would have conditioned the implementation of the military measures approved there; namely, the installation on the territory of the NATO countries (where it was still to be decided) a new series of powerful U.S. missiles, in total 572, of the latest

---

<sup>118</sup> Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Service and Documentation. Year 1980, documents on Italian foreign policy, p.293.  
[www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1980%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf](http://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1980%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf)

<sup>119</sup> Ibidem p.,306.

<sup>120</sup> VARSORI A., L'Italia nelle relazioni internazionali...,cit.,p.206; FORMIGONI G., Storia della politica internazionale...cit., pp.412 e ss.

generation, of which 108 Pershing-2 and 464 Cruise. The military objective was to obtain, as mentioned, the dismantling of the new Soviet missiles just installed in Eastern Europe, while the political objective was to "get the United States out of its position of conditional guarantee to Europe, forcing it to make a direct commitment that had a much more persuasive deterrent force". Public opinion, immediately involved by the mass media and pacifist associations, called them Euromissiles.<sup>121</sup>

These powerful new weapons, for the European governments that had requested them (first of all the German Social Democratic government), would have, from then on, organically linked "the strategic defense of Europe to that of the United States" and thus fill a perceived gap in the pattern of deterrence. In addition, they also responded to the American concern that the German Social Democrats would go a little too far in their *Ostpolitik* inaugurated more than a decade before.

The request was European, precisely German, shared by the other western countries and in some way responded to the need to do something about a "Carter administration perceived as weak".<sup>122</sup> The US atomic umbrella obviously already existed but was not yet open to Europe and the "flexible response strategy" proclaimed by the US government of Carter had diminished the credibility of the American guarantees at a time when the USSR was modernizing (and hence expanding) its arsenal directed against Western Europe. A situation that could perhaps be tolerated in a climate of "relaxation" but not in a climate of "growing international tension" such as that of the late '70s. It is sufficient to recall that in those same days of December the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan took place, to which the US and the western countries responded in an "unexpected and hard" way. On 3 January 1980 in fact, Carter asked the US Senate not to ratify the Salt II agreement, reducing wheat (very important in those years for the Soviets) and technological exports to the URSS, and announcing, among other things, the boycott of the imminent Olympic Games in Moscow. The Afghan question finally arrived at the UN where an overwhelming majority of countries, with in the frontline the Muslims and those of the third world former colonials, clearly condemned the USSR that started to become in obvious difficulty with the world

---

<sup>121</sup> DI NOLFO E., *Storia delle relazioni internazionali...*, cit., p.632.

<sup>122</sup> *Idem*, p.633.

mass media. Between 1979 and 1980 the question of the Euromissiles was thus flanked by the Afghan crisis in giving the feeling that the brief season of relaxation had never been anything but an illusion born from a brief pause of a bipolar clash that had lasted for decades. And the two issues would have been parallel for a long time and intensely in those early '80s.<sup>123</sup>

As a result, an intense and vast mobilization of pacifist public opinion was born throughout Western Europe, but above all in Germany, Holland and Great Britain, Belgium and Italy, as is well known. It was a phenomenon similar to other previous ones (just think of the great peace movements of the early 50's) but different and original in the way it was mobilized. It was more similar to the protesting youth movements which, only a few years earlier, had crossed and upset Western societies. To this strong component of protest of "ex-revolutionary" and "radical left-wing" origin were added, in the anti-missile movement, other components: from the religious one (Protestant and Catholic) to that of a strong anti-American nationalism. There were great demonstrations and marches for peace everywhere, including Italy where the question dragged on for a few years, from the Cossiga government to that of Spadolini and finally to the Craxi government with Andreotti as foreign minister.<sup>124</sup> Between March and April 1984, however, the story was virtually concluded and the first Cruise missiles were already operational in the NATO base of Comiso in Sicily.

Italy had in this event a not secondary role, decided in reaching the objective established in Brussels but always leaving open the possibility of a dialogue with the Soviets, supporting Chancellor Schmidt in the first phase of the initial request (1978-79) in pushing for the prompt installation, as said, of the missiles in its territory.

This, like other Italian pro-Atlantic decisions, has often been interpreted with reference only to "its repercussions of an internal political nature": an error of

---

<sup>123</sup> Idem, p.627 and p.634.

<sup>124</sup> ROMANO S., *Guida alla politica estera*., cit., pp.209-213; Varsori A., *L'Italia nelle relazioni internazionali*..., cit., p. 218-219.

perspective for Di Nolfo.<sup>125</sup> There is no doubt that also this time there was a part of truth. The new majority of pentaparts had every interest in distinguishing themselves from the previous majority of national solidarity (with the PCI) and the whole affair was politically exploited to put the PCI in difficulty. The latter was uncertain between joining and leading an anti-American protest widely shared by its base and its apparatus and attempting a definitive emancipation if not a clear separation from the foreign policy of the USSR.

From here the decision of the Italian government that in 1979 wanted to show the renewed dynamism, also in foreign policy, of an Italy that wanted to get out of the crisis and the status of special observer by putting the communist opposition in difficulty, accusing it of lack of sincerity and indecision, divided between both the confirmation of the NATO alliance and to ride the anti-American "tiger of protest". In this, the behavior of the socialist Craxi was clear. He had all the convenience of showing the U.S. his own personal reliability and that of the socialist party he led, now far from the ancient anti-Atlantic objections.

In reality, Di Nolfo observes, the Italian decision is explained by a mix of interests and pressures of both domestic and foreign politics. That is, nothing new under the sun of our republican history, as had already happened in similar critical moments of the Cold War: for example from NATO membership (in 1949) to SETAF (in 1955)<sup>126</sup> to Jupiter missiles (in 1958) and so on. These were all choices resulting from the military alliance with the US and in this, the only difference between the Euromissiles and the previous choices, was that the final decision was taken by a socialist politician and not by a Christian Democrat as had happened until then.<sup>127</sup>

After all, the consideration of Italian foreign policy as a simple, irrelevant and distant appendix to domestic policy appears to be a recurrent error in so much general historiography on contemporary Italy, even foreign. Rather, a complex interweaving of several reasons and an objective interdependence of the different plans appears today to be the most complete and mature explanation for

---

<sup>125</sup> DI NOLFO E. (curated by), *La politica estera italiana negli anni Ottanta*, Marsilio, Venezia 2007, p.73.

<sup>126</sup> Southern European Task Force (SETAF): is the component of the U.S. Army stationed in Italy since the '50s, based in Livorno and Vicenza.

<sup>127</sup> DI NOLFO E. (a cura di), *La politica estera italiana negli anni Ottanta...*, cit., p.75 .

understanding Italy towards the Euro-missiles. The Italian politicians of those years actually made on that occasion "simply those decisions that could be both advantageous on the domestic and international levels".<sup>128</sup>

### 3.5. *Europessimism and new trends (1979-1981)*

The first part of the eighties is commonly considered as the period of "Europessimism" and in fact, if one looks at the European achievements of those years, very few and of little importance, the assessment of a phase of stagnation and immobility of the European construction does not seem wrong.<sup>129</sup> However, in a better way, by placing those events, those decisions and those discussions in a longer-term historical perspective, the general interpretation of the period appears to be in need of revision, especially if we pay attention to the many turmoil, ideas and proposals that marked the political life of the community in those years. In other words, the idea that it was, in essence, a matter of "years of transition" between the long crisis of the 1970s and "the fervor of initiatives that, from the second half of the 1980s would then extend to the last decade of the 20th century", seems more likely.<sup>130</sup>

For the first five years, however, at least until the end of 1984, the political attention of the Community was absorbed by the "battle of England" as it was defined by the historian Mammarella,<sup>131</sup> namely by the long and exhausting negotiations on the financial contribution of Great Britain to the Community, objectively in strong passivity. "*I want my money back*" debuted Margaret Thatcher in 1979 when she addressed the EU institutions; exactly one month after the 1979 European elections she came to power in her country, succeeding the Labour and pro-European government of her left-wing opponents. She then ruled for over a decade following her own particular philosophy: enemy of state interventionism in every field, convinced of the economic superiority of private initiative (if left free from the clutches of the "public hand" and the weight of the "welfare state") she wanted the modernization and recovery of the British economy to make it compete at its best

---

<sup>128</sup> Idem, p. 76.

<sup>129</sup> CACACE P., MAMMARELLA G., *Storia e politica...*, cit., p.185.

<sup>130</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>131</sup> Ibidem.



in the new global economy. The welfare state in particular that, according to her, decayed from her original input after decades of yielding to socialist ideas, had to be profoundly reformed to allow individuals and companies a real, free, positive competition that would bring Britain back to its ancient place in the world leadership of large countries.<sup>132</sup>

From here comes her idea of Great Britain as a new global standard bearer of liberalism and competition in the world and in Europe, a country that could no longer "endure the intrusion of external influences or, worse, external coercion" as she defined Community rules and policies. In particular, her concern was, in every occasion, to underline the difference between the British policies and those of the other continental Europeans, refusing above all any attempt to impose, through legislation and common institutions, cessions of sovereignty to a power, the one of Brussels, perceived as foreign and substantially uncontrolled. A power that among other things, unjustly, in her opinion, penalized her country.

According to her, in fact, the Community institutions and policies interfered with the independence of the British sovereign power and called for unnecessarily costly solidarity. Labourist governments had already worked on this issue of costs in the mid-1970s, obtaining at the 1975 Dublin Council the launch of a "corrective mechanism" that essentially favored London. A correction that came to an end on 1 January 1980 and that gave Thatcher the opportunity to assert its reasons. Everyone in reality agreed that a more "community" system was needed to pay for the English deficit but there was no formal obligation to do so and France put forward its opposite reasons.

This was a deficit that stemmed primarily from the common agricultural policy (CAP) The French feared that, by calling for the financial deficits to be adjusted, Britain would in fact change the entire model of agricultural policy, something that they did not want to do despite the rising costs.

---

<sup>132</sup> OLIVI B., *L'Europa difficile...*, cit., p.201.

The first summits on this, in Strasbourg and Dublin (June and November 1979), had not yielded results, nor had the Luxembourg Council (April 1980), born under the aegis of the Italian Presidency, been successful. Francesco Cossiga, then president of the council, tried in vain to carry out several times and with force a mediation to bring the parties together, but in vain: Thatcher was unshakable.<sup>133</sup> Cossiga had appointed an ad hoc committee on this matter chaired by Renato Ruggiero to find a compromise on the budget but the diplomatic action of the Italians was hindered by the government crisis of April 1980. By the way, in the second Cossiga government, born immediately after, the Ministry of Community Policies was established (given to Vincenzo Scotti) to coordinate all the ministerial activity that had to do with Community policies and implement them.

Faced with the real danger of a paralysis of the Community institutions, the foreign ministers led by the Italian Colombo met in conclave in Brussels and managed to find a compromise. The 65 % of English expenditure was temporarily covered by the Community and to the Commission was given a mandate to carry out a comprehensive review of Community policies by June 1981. This review should, of course, “ not re-examine either the common financial responsibility or the fundamental principles of the common agricultural policy ”. It should be remembered that the mandate of 30 May 1980, given to the Executive Commission of the EEC, historically represented the beginning of the so-called "globalization" of the Community budget, in essence offered the opportunity for a global review (precisely) of all Community policies.<sup>134</sup>

One year after the Brussels compromise, the Commission (with the English president Jenkins and then with the Luxembourg president Thorn) presented a Report which, among other things, called for a different distribution of Community resources, obviously with savings and cuts, and suggested in particular for the agricultural sector (at the centre of the dispute with Great Britain) transitional

---

<sup>133</sup> *Idem*, p.186.

<sup>134</sup> It should be recalled that during that Italian semester, at the Venice European Council of 12-13 June 1980, a declaration on the Middle East was approved, containing the request to associate the PLO (Organization for the Liberation of Palestine) to the peace negotiations. It was a document which, although controversial, represented one of the rare autonomous initiatives of the Community in foreign policy". (*Idem*, p.203) to understand its importance, it must also be considered that, in the same period, the growing tensions of the Cold War had objectively reduced the margins of manovre of a possible Community foreign policy (GUASCONI M.E., *Il Piano Gensher-Colombo*, in PICCARDO L., *L'Italia e l'Europa negli anni '80*, F.Angeli, Milano 2015, p. 37).

measures with a view to a forthcoming global reorganization. For London, the agricultural voice was isolated and the nations that structurally most benefited from CAP aid (Benelux, Denmark and France) were asked to intervene with their own finances.

The reactions in the European capitals were different: London was only thinking of changing the budget and was not opposed to reconsidering Community policies, Bonn did not want to increase spending, Paris and Rome, even if for different reasons, made it a condition for allocating spending differently, that new joint initiatives be launched. For France was unthinkable to just make a downsizing of the CAP and Italy asked for protection of Mediterranean products. In short, an agreement was still far from being reached and the general economic crisis was looming while, at the same time, mountains of cereals, meat and milk products were accumulating in the Community's warehouses and refrigerators for sale to third countries.<sup>135</sup>

Another factor to bear in mind was the new composition of the European Parliament. Since 1979, it has no longer been an expression of national parliaments but has been directly elected by the people: 410 deputies elected by nations but organized within them by parliamentary groups and therefore by parties (Christian Democrats, Socialists, Communists, Liberals and Democrats). It was not yet a real democratization but it was now clear that the European Parliament needed a more precise institutional form and the signal was the debate on the 1980 Community budget which, for the first time, after a bitter debate, was rejected because it was too unbalanced on agriculture at the expense of other policies.

It was just a signal because the role of the European Parliament was only consultative and the Commission could continue to spend as before, but it was anyway strong signal: the principle of a necessary "reform of the CAP" was imposed, even if it was part of a "global" reform. From that moment on, "the sacredness of the CAP would be greatly diminished and this was the new political fact (...) the community could thus try to find new solutions to the problem of the

---

<sup>135</sup> CACACE P., MAMMARELLA G., *Storia e politica...*, cit., p.188.

budget".<sup>136</sup> Still on agricultural policy, although the general framework did not move much, we must remember in turn the document "Guidelines for a European agriculture" of November 1981, the decision of May 1983 to modify the principle of the absolute guarantee for some large sectors particularly onerous and finally the "Green Paper" of the Commission of January 1984. These gestures and small steps not only showed the sacredness lost by the CAP but also included in the European debate elements of a "global" revision of the budget and therefore of Community policies.<sup>137</sup>

### **3.6. Gensher-Colombo Plan and Spinelli Project (1980-84)**

At the beginning of the 1980s, the practice of regular meetings and coordination between the external policies of the countries participating in the Community, known as European Political Cooperation, had become established. A mechanism which, while not yet expressing a European foreign policy (not provided for by the 1957 Treaties of Rome) "contributed to strengthening a Community international dimension by identifying, until the Treaty of Maastricht, an embryonic common foreign policy (...) a well-organized mechanism for consulting and harmonizing the foreign policies of European governments (...) even though, the effective functioning of its mechanisms had not always been successful".<sup>138</sup>

The EPC was built on an intergovernmental structure that was outside the Community framework and had a twofold objective: to express the EEC's aspiration for greater dynamism in the international field and to appear, in the face of the outside world, a cohesive and distinct political entity. It was essentially a "working community" of ministers and officials who "over the years, developed a strong sense of belonging and common values".

If this could work in periods of "relaxation", in the climate of renewed international tension of the early 80's (Iran, Afghanistan, EuroMissiles...), however, the limits of the mechanism of European political cooperation were always evident and the nine

---

<sup>136</sup> OLIVI B., *L'Europa difficile...*, cit., p.210.

<sup>137</sup> Idem, p.211.

<sup>138</sup> GUASCONI M.E., *Il piano Gensher-Colombo...*, cit . , p.34-35.

were almost never able to coordinate themselves. Even an Englishman like Lord Carrington expressed, in his October 1981 Report, the hope of an improvement of the mechanisms of political coordination between the European governments towards the outside world.

Strengthened in those years in its representation<sup>139</sup>, Italy, at the beginning of the 1980's, together with Germany, became the protagonist of a proposal to strengthen the political dimension of the process of European integration that after the disappointing performance in some crises, appeared to be in marked decline.

The first step was taken by the German Genscher, on January 6, 1981, in a speech in Stuttgart in which he reiterated the need to move towards the European Union, suggesting the development of cooperation between EEC governments extending it from the economic sector to foreign policy, security and culture, abolishing the distinction between EEC and EPC and transforming the European Council into the highest decision-making body of the Community. The moment in Germany was difficult, with Social Democratic Chancellor Schmidt in clear internal difficulty for the Euromissiles. The German proposal was immediately accepted by Italy, and to answer him on 21 January was Emilio Colombo, foreign minister in the pentapartite government of Spadolini. It was necessary, he replied, to relaunch the European project precisely because in those years it appeared at risk: the EEC had a large network of relations in the world but it still lacked a "necessary political and institutional framework".<sup>140</sup> Italy, however, was also interested in the progress of the economic aspects of the community, which for Colombo had to go in parallel with the political-institutional aspects.

After a few months spent coordinating the requests and finding a synthesis, the two, officially presented the Plan to the Council in November 1981 and a few days later also to the Council of Foreign Ministers, to the European Parliament and to the European Council. Colombo's analysis was lucid: *"after the brilliant unitary results achieved over a long period of years (...) a phase of hardship has arisen (...). To*

---

<sup>139</sup> For example, the Christian Democrat Lorenzo Natali, the diplomat Renato Ruggiero and his successor Pietro Calamia (Idem, p.40) are remembered as prominent and influential personalities in the community in those years.

<sup>140</sup> GUASCONI M.E., *Il piano Gensher-Colombo*, cit., p.40

*these difficulties it would be inappropriate and harmful for our peoples if the Community reacted with a halt or a retreat. (...) The interests, even legitimately competing with each of our countries, are better defended, we are sure, placing the common development and the progress of the Community in the front line". Finally, as a sign of the successes achieved, Colombo placed those that took place "on the external level, for the Community's action and influence in geographical areas near and far and for the numerous and innovative relations (...) a fundamental positive element that has been added to the Community's commitment is the pragmatic process of political cooperation promoted and increasingly developed between our countries (...) in a phase of great instability such as the current one, this process must be reinforced and extended ".<sup>141</sup>*

The Colombo-Genscher Plan was made up of two documents. The first was the European Act, a set of principles that did not imply a new treaty or any supranational momentum but proposed to gradually develop a pragmatic process of political cooperation between states in new fields such as culture, security and law. In addition, the Act called for the birth of a European Union five years after the adoption of the Act itself. It was suggested to coordinate the security policies of European countries and to adopt a common policy to safeguard Europe's independence, protect its vital interests and strengthen its security, including by enlarging the Council of Foreign Ministers with the Ministers of Defense. Finally, the European Council was to be institutionalized and entrusted with the leadership of the EPC, to extend the powers of the European Parliament in discussing the issues addressed by the EPC and to reduce the use of the right of veto without abolishing it (Genscher suggested adopting the practice of constructive abstention) so as not to hinder the decision-making process.

The two ministers continued cautiously but firmly, making sure that their proposal was not confused with others more radical of the federalists, whose extremism they feared. With "*realistic gradualism*", they in fact ( Genscher and Colombo ) affirmed, "*because only in this way in this phase does the objective maintain its*

---

<sup>141</sup> Istituto L.Sturzo, Carte Giulio Andreotti (GA), Serie Europa, Envelope 352, Letter from Emilio Colombo to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, 12 November 1981.

*strength and does not become an element of division and dispute (...) bringing the primary objective of European Unity closer ".*

The second document, supported above all by Italy, which was then in a serious recession, dealt with the issue of economic integration: it proposed the completion of the common market and greater coordination of the economic policies of the member countries in order to strengthen the functioning of the EMS.

Italy and Germany therefore tried together to take the Community path, while Giscard d'Estaing in France seemed to be focused on the world dimension, while, his successor Francois Mitterand was on the contrary focused on national reforms (more public intervention in the economy and more welfare state). The two ministers appeared to be particularly close-knit and the appreciation between them was mutual at the point that these personal conditions went hand in hand with political convergences.

However, the Plan immediately clashed with the mistrust of many partners: Great Britain, Ireland, Denmark and Greece in particular and ended up stranded. Only in 1983, with a new German presidency, did the Plan come to light again, however, translating into a "solemn declaration" approved by the Stuttgart European Council in June 1983. The declaration diluted the most innovative aspects of the Plan, which became an important but non-binding political text; the word "Act" itself disappeared from the text. However, the willingness of the European countries to proceed along the path of integration into foreign policy was reaffirmed; the role of the Community institutions was also reasserted by the declaration and cultural cooperation between professors and students from all over Europe was proposed to be strengthened.

Of course, the disappointing outcome of the two ministers' initiative was a reflection of the difficult international and Community situation. Everything seemed to be steady in Europe on the British question of the budget review but if seen from a historical perspective the Plan and the solemn Declaration had the merit of anticipating the path on which the Community would move in the years to come. Colombo wrote that the Declaration, with all its limitations, "expressed a European

vision that had ended up prevailing over the rawness and inertia of that complex historical phase" and his first merit was to "confirm that the basic sense of the joint undertaking to which they had subscribed had not been lost among the members of the Community".<sup>142</sup> Not only that, but the declaration deserves to be remembered because it shed light on the obvious state of "deep institutional discomfort of the Community" at that time, preparing so the way for what would happen later.<sup>143</sup>

In parallel or almost parallel to the realistic and cautious attempt of the two Italo-German ministers, another initiative took shape and substance in the circles of the European Parliament, of a federalist and radical nature, always in the direction of a completion of the Community towards the European Union. Namely, the Spinelli Project, named after the Italian MP, federalist since always and elected as independent from the PCI lists, who dedicated himself with an idealist attitude (according to some commentators) or with a prophetic vision (according to others) to forcing the times and ways of a complete political and economic Union.<sup>144</sup>

*"Our institutional initiative and the Genscher-Colombo plan were born almost simultaneously a little more than two years ago and have many things in common".<sup>145</sup>* In his speech to the European Parliament on 14 February 1984, Spinelli spoke in these tones about the initiative of the German and Italian foreign ministers, immediately after distancing himself from it, stating: *"The methods used in the two studies were, however, very different. The negotiators of the Genscher-Colombo plan, ministers and diplomats, derived their legitimacy from their role as representatives of States as such. In our initiative, however, we derived our legitimacy from our role as elected representatives of the citizens of the Community, of the most authentic representatives of the nascent European democracy".<sup>146</sup>*

---

<sup>142</sup> GUASCONI M.E., *Il piano Genscher-Colombo*, cit., p.46

<sup>143</sup> OLIVI B., *L'Europa difficile...*, cit., p.235; VARSORI A., *La cenerentola d'Europa?...*, cit., p.342

<sup>144</sup> On this see OLIVI B., *L'Europa difficile...*, cit., pp.236-250; CACACE P., MAMMARELLA G., *Storia e politica...*, cit., pp.193-196; VARSORI A., *La cenerentola d'Europa? L'Italia...*, cit., pp.323-345; ROMANO S., *Guida alla politica estera italiana*, Rizzoli, Milano 1993, pp.229-231.

<sup>145</sup> Speech by Altiero Spinelli to the European Parliament on 14 February 1984.

<sup>146</sup> Idem.



One of the most severe critics of the "solemn declaration" of Stuttgart, Spinelli called it "nothing written in 20 pages", blaming the two presenters of a "functionalist and confederal" perspective. It was not a coincidence. In fact, in those same months he had presented another project on behalf of a group that was as numerous as it was transversal, of MEPs. The proposal had in fact been prepared by federalist deputies of various tendencies and nations, called the "crocodile group" after the name of the restaurant in Strasbourg where they met periodically since June 1980. In essence, they wanted "a major institutional reform" to commit first the European parliament and then the national parliaments.

As already mentioned, in the early 1980s the process of European integration, affected by the disputes over the financial contribution for Great Britain, the reform of agricultural policy and the increase in own resources, was in a phase of slowdown and obvious difficulty. For this reason, Spinelli, as a competent strategist, was the spokesman for this unsatisfactory situation and, already in 1980, in a speech to the Parliament, proposed a political action for Europe, with the intention of providing the Community with new powers and its institutions with the means to effectively exercise them.<sup>147</sup> Not only in its content, but also in its method, the Spinelli project could be regarded as innovative. Until then, in fact, the process of formation and then ratification of the treaties was always carried out at the level of Heads of Government and was often the result of long and confidential negotiations between diplomatic delegations, without any involvement on the part of the supranational European institutions and even less on the part of the population. Spinelli believed that a treaty, moreover constitutional in nature, should be prepared not by an intergovernmental conference but by the most representative and symbolic European assembly, the European Parliament, in an effort interconnected with the various national representative assemblies.

In this regard, the very content of the Treaty reflected the idea of a Europe not of states but rather of peoples, to the point that the Spinelli project was defined as the design of a European Constitution. Another peculiar aspect of Spinelli's work was

---

<sup>147</sup>At the time, the European Parliament felt disappointed that, although it was elected by direct electoral suffrage, it did not have real powers of political influence in the European decision-making process (with the sole exceptions, however, of a substantially negative nature, of the power to reject the budget voted by the Council and of the Commission's power of censure, but without being able to influence its investiture).

undoubtedly the vast scope of the initiative in the Member States, thanks to frequent speeches or visits to national parliaments and the debate process that gave all the most important forces of Parliament the opportunity to take part, without discrimination of party groups or currents. In concrete terms, Spinelli's action was expressed in three fundamental initiatives: first, the creation of the "Crocodile Club" as a transversal union of innovative European Parliamentarians. Secondly, the creation of an "ad hoc Commission" within the European Parliament to deal with the draft Treaty. Finally, the pursuit of an intense action of meetings and pressure on leading political figures, such as Enrico Berlinguer, Willy Brandt, Leo Tindemans, to arrive, after the vote of the European Parliament, to François Mitterand who was considered by Spinelli, for personal culture and as French President, the political individuality most likely to support the Treaty.

Following this strategy, they ( Spinelli and his group ) managed to get the European Parliament to approve an institutional Commission to finalize the major reforms they were calling for. They then obtained the authorization to give the Commission the power to present a new draft Treaty, which was presented in plenary in July 1983 and approved by the assembly in February 1984. In essence, a new Treaty was proposed, transforming the Community into a genuine Union, with a far-reaching reform that redistributed existing powers and allowed the Council to be the promoter of the new entity. The reform then redistributed powers between the Union and the national States in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, that is to say with certain powers given to the Union and other powers shared with the States. It was more prudent in foreign policy and economic cooperation.

The basic approach, evident in every step, was, however, strongly federalist and the French presidency (President Mitterand) in practice made the whole project fall into oblivion (Fontainebleau summit, June 1984): on the other hand, at the same summit, the dispute with Great Britain finally ended, with a compromise very favorable to the British. The European Community finally came out of the political stalemate.

### 3.7. *Italy in the process of enlargement to the Mediterranean countries*

The first enlargement of the EEC, which had taken place in 1973 and which had brought in, as seen, Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark, had in fact "shifted the centre of gravity" of the Community "towards the north of the continent". In the following decade, the "Mediterranean" enlargement, due to the positive start of democratic political processes in the three candidate countries, "changed that tendency by balancing the major European economic structure towards its geographical centre".<sup>148</sup> This accession was a direct consequence of the almost simultaneous end of the three authoritarian regimes that had governed them until the mid-1970s. Entering the EEC took on a strong political-symbolic significance for them and for the whole Europe, definitively breaking down the archaic authoritarian structures that had governed those peoples until then and consolidating those young democracies on which so many hopes were placed.

But there were also serious questions: first of all on the impact that the entry of the three countries would have led to the democratic structures of the community and on the opportunity itself to sink the borders of the EEC so deeply towards the South. The strengthening of the Mediterranean component of the EEC, in fact, inevitably widened "the aims of the Community itself, adapting it to the new challenges that now came to the old continent more from the south than from the east, according to completely new parameters, such as demography, immigration and cooperation or to old prospects such as energy".<sup>149</sup>

The real underlying problem, however, was the great economic, social and political disparity between the countries of the Community and those which were now aspiring to join it: in fact, the imposition of policies of "harmonization" between the two would have been necessary in the future. A subject that had already proved complex with the accession of Great Britain, but that was now in danger of coming up again with much greater strength and intensity. The problems of the three countries soon became apparent: they all had lower GDP than the other EU

---

<sup>148</sup> DEL VECCHIO E., *L'Europa dei dodici*, in RAINERO R.H., *Storia dell'integrazione europea*, vol.2, ed., Milano 1997, p.119

<sup>149</sup> *Ibidem*

countries, lower wages, weaker currencies and much higher inflation rates. Moreover, their best productions (wine, oil and fruit) were looked on with fear by those who, in the Community, were already producing similar ones such as France and Italy; the same and was true for their industries, just think of sectors such as textiles, steel and shipbuilding, until then very protected and closed. Finally, the question was whether the entry of further Member States would require a reform, or at least an adaptation, of the Community institutions and their decision-making procedures in order to avoid a possible excess of bureaucracy and the political immobility of cross-vetoes. In short, it was immediately clear that the first imperative for the Community was to take time to respond to the many challenges ahead.<sup>150</sup>

This certainly did not stop the process of rapprochement so much so that the Commission, in an official statement, had immediately recognized that the three candidates from the Southern Mediterranean represented a "*challenge but also an opportunity*". As a result, the Commission had prepared very clear and detailed dossiers of the many problems on the table to begin to discuss and see how to solve them.

Above all, as early mentioned, there were major economic disparities. Portugal's income was well below 50% of the income of the EEC countries and, while Spain and Greece were in a slightly better position, they showed enormous disparities between the areas of the large cities (Madrid, Barcelona, Athens) and the rural areas, not to mention the great disparities between the various regions of the candidate countries. Agriculture was then at a level of real "subsistence" in all three countries, with a large number of employees, therefore soon destined to emigrate to the other EU countries of the North. On wine, oil and citrus fruit in particular, French and Italian producers feared a competition of costs and therefore of final prices difficult to contrast and the same was true for British and Irish fishermen who feared the competition of the many fierce colleagues, even if technologically backward, from Southern Europe. Moreover, all their industries, especially the Spanish ones, had so far used huge protectionist barriers. Would they have been able to face competition

---

<sup>150</sup> Ibidem

from European open markets? Not to mention the respective trade balances of payments, all of which was highly passive.<sup>151</sup>

Another group of problems was the fate of the internal organization of the Community institutions with the arrival of so many new members on an equal basis with the others. In fact, finding unanimous agreement among twelve would have become much more difficult than finding it among nine: limiting decisions by unanimity was the easiest way, but it was certainly not the easiest. Linked to this question was then that of the spaces to be assigned to the new members in the decision-making bodies, what weight to give to each country and above all, what criterion to apply? By inhabitants, by GDP, by surface area for example? It was thus decided, as a general criterion, to "avoid significantly changing" the existing balances between the various EEC countries. This principle is easy to enunciate but difficult to implement in practice. However, the idea prevailed that these countries, fragile in democracy and economy, should be accompanied with patience towards a gradual development that was both economic and civil and that such a policy as well as being a moral duty for the Community would also bring, in average times, more welfare and more development for all.<sup>152</sup>

Greece, Portugal and Spain in the mid-1970s presented their applications to join the EEC, but the times were different: Greece, where the military dictatorship had already dissolved in 1974 following the short (lost) war with Turkey over Cyprus, presented its candidacy in June 1975. Portugal, led by the socialist Mario Soares, applied later in March 1977, as soon as its internal political situation stabilized. Spain, the largest and most problematic of the three countries due to the difficult and delicate internal political framework, was the last to apply for membership in July 1977. However, until the advent of the Socialist Party to power in 1982, the internal instability and precariousness of its young democratic institutions prevented the country from "pursuing membership with the necessary decisiveness".<sup>153</sup>

---

<sup>151</sup> GILBERT M., *Storia politica dell'integrazione...*, cit., p.139-141.

<sup>152</sup> *Idem*, p.142.

<sup>153</sup> GILBERT M., *Storia politica dell'integrazione...*, cit., p.139

### 3.7.1. Accession of Greece (1981)

The small Greece arrived first at the conclusion, fully admitted to the EEC already in 1981: its negotiations lasted from July 1976 to May 1979: a relatively short time. It was backed by federal Germany, which in previous years had developed a wide and deep economic and commercial penetration in the country. For its part, the Greek government was eager to enter thinking of solving its many internal problems of economic development.<sup>154</sup>

In fact, its path had been neither easy nor linear and it came from afar, even from 1959. In fact, Greece had been the first European nation, long before Great Britain, to ask to be somehow "associated" with the Community, indicating by this term the framework of an overall agreement aimed at safeguarding, for all matters falling within the competence of the Treaty of Rome, the interests of the nation that requested it. Greece was followed by Turkey, which also asked for and obtained a "different" treatment that meant first of all reciprocal opening of the markets and some aid; the condition of "association", however, had no legal significance even if the case of Greece was to set a precedent for many other countries.<sup>155</sup>

The military coup d'état known as "of the colonels", which in 1967 had suppressed Democracy and introduced an authoritarian regime that lasted until 1974, partially froze the Association Agreement with the Community even though it did not impede the growth of trade relations, exports as well imports from and to the EEC countries. Indeed, in the early 1970s, trade had even doubled. When the fall of the military regime brought official relations between the EEC and Greece back into the open, the new democratic (politically conservative) government called for formal entry into the EEC itself. Negotiations lasted about two years, held back only by France because of the potential competition of Greek agricultural products (oil, wine and legumes) while Athens feared, for its part, for the high prices of imports of manufactured goods from the EEC area.<sup>156</sup>

---

<sup>154</sup> DEL VECCHIO E., *L'Europa dei dodici...*, cit., p.121.

<sup>155</sup> OLIVI B., *L'Europa difficile...*, cit., p.212.

<sup>156</sup> CACACE P., MAMMARELLA G., *Storia e politica...*, cit., pp.200-201

At the end of the negotiations, the Accession Treaty provided for a five-year transition period for trade liberalization, while Greek agriculture received substantial funding from Brussels for the necessary modernization: ( European Currency Unit ) ECU 82 million in 1982 and ECU 200 million the following year. The Community countries also promised to eliminate all tariffs against Greek products from the outset (except for steel). In return for this generous agreement, Greece agreed to suspend the free movement of its citizens for the countries of the Community. The Greek merchant fleet, the third largest in the world, made a significant contribution to the European merchant fleet as a whole, which thus accounted for some 27 % of the world's civilian fleet.<sup>157</sup> Finally, in the joint institutions, Greece was given five votes in the Council of Ministers, 24 seats in Parliament, a Commissioner in the Commission of the European Communities and a member in the European Court of Justice.

In this context, an Italian, named Lorenzo Natali, played a leading role in the negotiations between the Community and the diplomatic delegations of the incoming countries, Greece but also Spain and Portugal. He was European Commissioner for Energy, Environment and Enlargement between 1977 and 1981, European Commissioner for Mediterranean Policy, Enlargement and Information from 1981 to 1985 and, in addition, European Commissioner for Development Cooperation and Enlargement from 1985 to 1989. In particular, in the Greek negotiations, thanks to the words of Byron Theodoropoulos,<sup>158</sup> it is possible to highlight the contribution of Natali: *"I have had the honour and the pleasure of meeting and working with Lorenzo Natali for several, decisive, years. At the time, he was a member of the Commission and the key person for our negotiations. (...) And I can say that it was a particularly pleasant experience. Nevertheless, during these long and difficult years, I had the opportunity to appreciate the personality of Natali. He knew how to present and defend the Community's positions on the various points of our agenda, always maintaining a cordial, friendly and personal relationship and always helping to find the essential points of the agreements. I remember that even at times when our opinions differed and when an impasse in*

---

<sup>157</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>158</sup> Ambassador, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece, from 1976 to 1979 President of the Greek delegation for the accession negotiation.

*the negotiations seemed very likely, his warm personality and good humor could overcome obstacles and push towards shared solutions. Having known and worked with Lorenzo Natali was therefore a privilege for me.*<sup>159</sup>

However, the relative ease with which the negotiations for the entry of Greece had taken place was counterbalanced by the growing difficulties that had arisen in the months and years that followed. In fact, Greece's entry into the EEC had been negotiated by conservative governments while, in October 1981, at the time of its entry, the Greek Socialist Party (PASOK) that had conducted an electoral campaign with critical tones towards the Community, won the elections. In essence the EEC was facing a situation with Greece similar to that created after the victory of Thatcher against Labour in Great Britain in 1979. The socialist leader Papandreu, ally of the Greek communists, threatened immediately to leave the community with a referendum and asked for new conditions to remain; he asked in particular a special statute for Greece. Thus, he blocked the agricultural agreements and finally managed to obtain the launch of the "integrated Mediterranean programs" (IMP) that guaranteed more resources for Mediterranean agriculture and therefore also Greek.

In addition to this, there was the negative economic situation: despite the large amounts of funding provided by Brussels in the following years, the Greek economic difficulties remained great and development did not start while the government often raised problems at Community level to the political ambitions of integration.<sup>160</sup> These non-positive events, which all occurred after the official entry of the country into the EEC and following a rapid path of entry, certainly did not help the accession of the other two candidates, Spain and Portugal. On the strength of the negative Greek experience in fact, the countries of the community and the institutions of Brussels now showed great caution in verifying the path of Spain and Portugal. In practice, the Iberian countries would have had the reverse procedure with respect to the Greek model: great difficulties during the negotiations and significant (although not related to all fields) successes after accession.<sup>161</sup> In fact,

---

<sup>159</sup> Institute for International Affairs. Lorenzo Natali in Europe, memories and testimonies.

<sup>160</sup> DEL VECCHIO E., *L'Europa dei dodici...*, cit., p122.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibidem*.



contrary to what happened for Greece, Portugal and Spain in the years following the accession saw their economies grow, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by membership of the EEC and contributing in no small measure, in turn, to the overall dynamism of the Community in many economic sectors.

### **3.7.2. *The complex accession of Spain and Portugal (1985)***

For Spain, the first links with the Community had been established since the 1960s. In this decade, under the umbrella of the old dictator Franco, a new technocratic elite linked to the Catholic group Opus Dei took power, which, in contrast to the phalangist component of the government, convinced him of the importance for the country of negotiating some form of association with the EEC. This was something that Spain had been doing by asking to negotiate its own form of "association" since 1962 in a negotiation that ended on 29 June 1970 with the signing of a "preferential agreement" that facilitated agricultural exports but above all industrial exports to Europe. The Spanish (industry) sector until then had been depressed by the scarce outlet markets.<sup>162</sup> The agreement contained clearly favorable provisions for Spain and sanctioned the total opening of its economy to Europe. For Portugal, on the other hand, the initial date of its rapprochement with the EEC can be indicated in 1972 when the country had joined the EFTA, the free trade area created in the 1950s on the impulse of Great Britain. These last ones, however, were both little more than important political signals, waiting for the end of the two authoritarian regimes.

In fact, it was only the fall of the Caetano government in Portugal (April 1974) on the one hand and the death of Franco in Spain (November 1975) on the other that removed all political obstacles to the entry of the two countries into the EEC, which in fact officially presented their candidatures in 1977.<sup>163</sup> The negotiations, however, will be "long and complex" especially for Spain and will arouse more than one concern among Italian farmers in the South but especially for French farmers

---

<sup>162</sup> OLIVI B., *L'Europa difficile...*, cit., p.226.

<sup>163</sup> CACACE P., MAMMARELLA G., *Storia e politica...*, cit., p.201.

who saw in the Spanish backward competitors but at the same time fearsome on the front of prices, significantly lower. The Iberian industry, on the other hand, was in arrears and accustomed to protection and had to fear, especially from France (second exporting country and investor after the USA), Germany and Italy.

Among other things, Spain had one of the largest fishing fleets Europe (about 70% of the Community fleet) and the agreements for its integration were intertwined with the laborious formulation of the Community's fisheries regulations, which ended in 1983 after six years of negotiations.

Negotiations were thus dragged on into lengthy discussions and the European Council, understanding these problems, had set, with some optimism, a deadline for their conclusion, scheduled for 30 September 1984.<sup>164</sup>

However, the issue was first and foremost a political one and not an insignificant one. Apart from the outstanding technical problems, the Iberian Peninsula had always been an important part of Europe, both in terms of culture and history, even though in the last two centuries its backwardness had accentuated a certain separation from the center of Europe. A separation that the last two dictatorships, from the 1930s onwards, had converted into genuine political, economic and social isolation. The return to Europe of these two important nations that had been marginalized for too long on the periphery of the continent was therefore a shared but not simple objective.

The main obstacle seemed to be French mistrust. The negotiations, from the official presentation of the candidacy to the Council in November 1978 to 1981, when the socialist Mitterrand was elected President of France, did not make significant progress.<sup>165</sup> The 1978 document had listed the difficulties but also given some suggestions such as the immediate introduction of VAT (value-added tax) and the longer times for the transition. Two issues were paramount over the others: the consequences (of expenditure) of enlargement for the Community budget and French agricultural interests.

---

<sup>164</sup> OLIVI B., *L'Europa difficile...*, cit., p.225.

<sup>165</sup> GILBERT M., *Storia politica dell'integrazione europea...*, cit., p.142.

With the first period of the new French presidency (very committed on the domestic front in implementing the program of the united left) the accession process had not moved much but from the spring of 1983 onwards, with the "conversion of Mitterrand to a Europeanist policy" things had changed and the entry of "Spain and Portugal became a concrete possibility".<sup>166</sup>

The Stuttgart European Council saw an unexpected German aid reaching Spain when Chancellor Kohl proposed to increase the Community share of VAT revenue from 1 to 1.4% by linking each solution to the enlargement to the South. Obviously, there was the problem of British consent, with Thatcher committed on the only front to limit as much as possible the British contribution to the European budget or at least keep it within acceptable limits for his country, and in fact at the Athens Council, in December 1983, there was only talk of this without achieving any result.

The political turning point that made enlargement to the Iberian countries possible took place at the Fontainebleau summit (June 1984). In this regard, Foreign Minister Andreotti expressed himself, in the following month of July, with these words in the Senate of the Republic: (...) *"The Government has been working in all these months with the aim of relaunching at all costs the process of political and economic integration of Europe. (...) Looking at the results of Fontainebleau it would be out of place to sing victory. But the fact that we have taken out of the way, albeit with difficulty, the point of disagreement represented by the correction of the British budgetary imbalance and the fact that we have refrained from calling into question once again the essence of the delicate balances achieved last March in the field of the common agricultural policy, is a necessary element in trying to bring community life back to normal"*.<sup>167</sup> In particular, in Fontainebleau, all the Community governments committed themselves to decide within three months on all the technical problems and disputes linked to enlargement, together with the problems of the Budget. An ambitious timetable, which, although not respected, gave the Iberian enlargement process and its negotiations a "decisive impetus". It

---

<sup>166</sup> Idem, p.143

<sup>167</sup> Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, historical service and documentation. Year 1984, texts and documents on Italian foreign policy p.153. [www.farnesina.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1984%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20de%20l'Italia.pdf](http://www.farnesina.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1984%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20de%20l'Italia.pdf)

was not a coincidence that the Spanish head of delegation spoke of "a great German contribution" to enlargement and that immediately after that summit, Mitterrand visited Spain to meet with the Spanish leader, also a socialist: Felipe Gonzales.<sup>168</sup>

The following months confirmed this new perspective. Spain and Portugal signed their accession treaties in March 1985. The conditions were certainly less generous than those obtained by Greece. In fact, for sure it was given a longer transitional period (seven years from 1986) but, it was stressed that, in this same period, there was not full freedom of movement for their workers: a precaution more than understandable given that these strong countries were exporters of potential labor to the North of Europe.<sup>169</sup> Seven years was also the time allowed for a complete reduction of all the tariff and quota barriers which, until then, had protected the Iberian economy. On agricultural products, seven years were given to Spain and ten years to Portugal and, unlike Greece, the agreement was reciprocal. In addition, the Spaniards did not have free access to the European market and at the same time had to wait for the system of Community tariffs to be phased out; likewise, for seven years, the access to fishing grounds in the northern seas was also banned for Iberian anglers.

On the institutional side, in the Council of Ministers was given 8 votes in Spain and 5 in Portugal; in Parliament 60 seats were given to the Spanish and 24 to the Portuguese. Overall, the accession of Spain and Portugal was seen not as an opportunity for immediate convenience and prosperity but as a symbol of the return to democracy and Europe of two ancient nations after so many decades of exclusion. And the two countries would have demonstrated this in the following years, taking full advantage of such an historic opportunity. As highlighted in the Greek accession, behind the scenes, despite the speeches and institutional discussions between ministers and politicians concerned, the diplomatic negotiations were conducted for the European Community by the Italian Commissioner Lorenzo Natali who, especially for the enlargement to the Iberian Peninsula, can undoubtedly be considered one of the main architects. In this regard, reference is

---

<sup>168</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>169</sup> CACACE P., MAMMARELLA G., *Storia e politica...*, cit., p.202.

made to Manuel Marin,<sup>170</sup> who expressed himself, as evidence of the great work done by Natali, with these words: *"Viva Lorenzo, Viva l'Europa, Viva l'Italia, those good people happy and glad cried and ran through the streets of Almagro, the beautiful city of La Mancha. They expressed their gratitude to Lorenzo Natali, the Italian who had become popular on Spanish television as the representative of the European Commission in the accession negotiations with Spain and Portugal"*.<sup>171</sup>

In Portugal, where, as mentioned, the accession negotiations had been strongly linked to that of Spain, the consideration of the role played by Natali was no less, as can be seen from the following words of Antonio Cardoso and Cunha<sup>172</sup>: *"The Commission delegated the difficult task and responsibility of "leader" of the negotiations to Vice-President Lorenzo Natali. When the Portuguese (and Spanish) process came to an end in 1985, the unanimous collective feeling was that the obvious success of this difficult mission was primarily due to Natali."*<sup>173</sup>

### **3.7.3. The important role of Italy**

It is in this perspective that the positive attitude of Italy in this process of enlargement to the South, far beyond its immediate economic advantages, should be read.<sup>174</sup> The position of the Italian Government was in fact, from the outset, favorable: already in 1977 the then Foreign Minister Forlani commissioned Pietro Calamia,<sup>175</sup> at the time Italian coordinator for Community affairs, to write an article illustrating Italy's favorable position on the subject. When, in the same year, Prime Minister Suarez ( the new leader of post-Francoist Spain ) visited Rome, he achieved great success with the explicit encouragement of the secretaries of all the

---

<sup>170</sup> Spanish State Secretary for Relations with the European Community (1981-1985); European Commissioner and Vice-President of the Commission from 1985 to 1989, responsible for Social Affairs, Employment, Education and Training.

<sup>171</sup> Institute for International Affairs. Lorenzo Natali in Europe, memories and testimonies.

<sup>172</sup> Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries of Portugal (1981-1983). European Commissioner from 1986 to 1993, responsible for Fisheries, Energy, Personnel and Administration, Social Economy.

<sup>173</sup> Institute for International Affairs. Lorenzo Natali in Europe, memories and testimonies.

<sup>174</sup> For a correct classification of the Italian position, see the speech by Pietro Calamia, in DI NOLFO E. (ed.), *La politica estera italiana negli anni Ottanta...*, cit., p.263-268.

<sup>175</sup> Pietro Calamia, Ambassador, was Permanent Representative of Italy to the European Community from 1984 to 1990. He chaired the Permanent Representatives Committee in 1985, was a signatory, with President Craxi and Foreign Minister Andreotti, of the Accession Treaties of Portugal and Spain in Lisbon and Madrid on 12 June 1985. He was Head of the Italian delegation at alternate level at the Intergovernmental Conference for the Single Act.

main parties (it should be remembered that in those years there was a government of national solidarity in Rome) to continue the Spanish path towards Europe. Again in that year (1977), at a meeting of Foreign Ministers on the enlargement of the EEC held in Leeds (21-22 May), the Italian position on the matter emerged markedly: “ *The Italian position on the enlargement of the EEC was repeatedly clarified both by the Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti and by the Foreign Minister Arnaldo Forlani; the latter took part in the meeting at the castle of Leeds. In particular, Mr Andreotti, in his meeting with the Portuguese Prime Minister Mario Soares, and Mr Forlani, in their visit to Madrid in mid-May 1977, both reiterated that Italy, from a political point of view, is in favor of enlargement. They also said that they considered it necessary to carry out a detailed and preliminary analysis of the problems that enlargement itself poses in the various sectors and that it was therefore necessary to find solutions to these same problems* ”. <sup>176</sup>

The main reasons for the Italian position were as follows. On the one hand, the desire to welcome into a democratic and prosperous Europe those countries that had emerged from a long period of isolation caused by the dictatorships that had governed them for so long; on the other hand, a rebalancing of the Mediterranean component from within the Community itself, with a view to future developments, was welcomed. In particular, Italy was pushing for the entry of the Iberian countries, even with the many sectoral problems that this entailed, to act as a stimulus for the entire Community to seriously address the problem of inequality between the various regions of the EEC. (...) *"If the governments of the Member States succeed in feeling this problem as a truly common problem, they will not lack the support of public opinion and a potential risk to Community development may become a dynamic factor in the progress of integration"*. <sup>177</sup> A great impetus for the successful outcome of the accession process will be given during the six-month presidency of the EEC in 1985, when the negotiating rounds will be in Italian hands. In the Italian position, however, the political dimension of the issue prevailed, so that the entry

---

<sup>176</sup> Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Service and Documentation. Year 1977, texts and documents on Italian foreign policy p.361. <http://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1977%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf>

<sup>177</sup> Foreign Affairs. July 1978. Rome: Italian Association for Foreign Policy Studies. "La posizione dell'Italia sui problemi dell'allargamento", author Anchise, P. ( Pietro Calamia ), p. 379-392.

of Spain took on more than a positive meaning and on this there were many Italian interventions in individual technical-political issues, although difficult to resolve.

In other countries, instead, there were resistance, above all of an economic-agricultural nature. For example, "in 1984, during the active phase of the negotiations, Italy blocked an initiative aimed at making concessions to the Mediterranean countries on the most sensitive agricultural products, thing that would have made the negotiations with Spain practically insoluble". It was clear, in fact, that Spain's accession should be based on a period of stand-still and a subsequent medium-long transition period for the most sensitive Mediterranean agricultural products. In addition, it was also evident that, if already in 1984, that is to say, before dealing with Spain this delicate problem, the EEC made concessions to Mediterranean third countries on these products *"we would be in a position, said the Italian head of delegation, or to impose practically politically humiliating conditions on the Spanish or to make the negotiation fail"*.<sup>178</sup>

Having blocked this attempt in 1984, Italy took over in 1985 the real negotiations, during the period of its semester, with all its most serious problems still open, except for the industrial sector, where, however, Spanish membership was easy to achieve: it was enough to set the speed of the reduction of customs duties on manufactured goods, until their disappearance. The most burning issues were, on the other hand, very open: "continental" agricultural products, "Mediterranean" agricultural products, fishing problems, institutional problems and, finally, the social and labor market aspects, including the free movement of workers.

It should be noted that Italy had strong problems and interests only for Mediterranean products while it had none at all for continental products (cereals, meat and dairy products) of which we were not exporters. Among those who wanted (the countries of the North) to have immediate access to continental products in Spain ignoring the Mediterranean ( products ) and those who wanted to defend EU production on the Mediterranean ( products ), such as France, it was precisely the Italian Presidency that found a balance by introducing the principle of gradualness,

---

<sup>178</sup> Ibidem.

both for imports and exports from Spain and also saving the interests of Mediterranean third countries.

The same happened also on the issue of fishing, where others wanted to impose on Spain a period of transition, i.e. an impediment to fishing in the north of at least 15 years, and where Italy was decisive in rejecting this clearly punitive position and obtaining a fairer period of transition. On the institutional dossier, Italy asked for and obtained for Spain a place in the Community as a "great country", and therefore with relevant posts in the Community institutions. This was done both to recognize its natural status to this country and to silence the strong internal opposition of Spanish society to accession by making it clear to Spanish politicians to "look beyond the texts of individual agreements" and that the political entry into Europe was worth the sacrifice of some position of prestige or some economic interest sector.

The decisive phase of the negotiations, however, began between February and June 1985, with intense political and diplomatic activity conducted by our country. First, bilateral meetings and negotiations between Italy and the candidate countries (15 February in Madrid visit of the Prime Minister Craxi; 4-5 June again in Madrid visit of the Foreign Minister Andreotti)<sup>179</sup> and then, between Italy and each of the 10 EU Member States. Then, the Italian Presidency prepared a final compromise text that was presented to the 10 countries and discussed point by point with the delegations. All presented objections to which Italy each time replied on the substance. After this, the Italian Presidency met the Spaniards who used the same technique as the 10: rejecting and objecting on many points, calling everything into question. On this Spanish behavior, witnesses tell us, even if with some modification Italy made the Spaniards understand that this was the way to sink the negotiations and that this modus operandi would be disastrous for them. After 41 consecutive hours of meeting at the end, everyone agreed on the Italian text and only France asked for a week to think about it and verify the reactions at home. The following week, there was another night session that allowed to finally reach the global agreement that

---

<sup>179</sup> Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, historical service and documentation. Year 1985, texts and documents on the foreign policy of Italy. <http://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1985%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf>



was officially celebrated by governments. In reality, the marathon was not yet over and for 70 days after the agreement (that is until about 5 days after the signing), negotiations continued on the individual technical aspects on the part of the "substitutes" of the ministers, especially with the French. The latter tried several times to bring the negotiations back to the general political level, but in this Andreotti showed himself unshakable: only the technical and marginal aspects could be discussed because the general political decision at ministerial level had been taken.<sup>180</sup> It should also be remembered that, at the European Council of the signing, in Italy, in June, the Italian Prime Minister Craxi also obtained the conclusion of the negotiation of an issue related to the Italians: that of the launch of the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes (IMC), policies of great help to the Mediterranean part of our agriculture, especially in the south.

Also in this occasion, as previously for Greece, the political and diplomatic role of our country in the figure of Natali emerges, perhaps even more so. In particular, Edouard Pounset,<sup>181</sup> in the years following the Spanish accession, attests; *"Still there are historians to whom it is very difficult to attribute to people and not only to ideas or institutions the responsibility for what happens in the world"*, challenging, with these words, the vision of some historians who claimed that the entry of Spain into the EEC would happen "when it was due", that is without recognizing the merit of the will of a particular person. *"As Minister for Relations with the European Communities of the last government of Adolfo Suarez - the first president of democratic Spain - I have witnessed the opposite, that is, that the weight of people can be decisive and mitigate the opposition"*.<sup>182</sup> Pounset testifies that, referring to Natali, few people have been able to reconcile and beat the skeptics and the disheartened. In fact, at that time the negotiations for the admission of Spain had been unjustly prolonged. However, not because of historical and economic rivalries (between France and Spain), but rather for the inappropriate antagonism of two traditionalist leaders such as Valery Giscard d'Estaing on the one hand and Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo on the other under the pretext of divergences in agricultural interests between the two countries, an Italian emerged. It was again Lorenzo

---

<sup>180</sup> See the worlds of Pietro Calamia, in DI NOLFO E., *La politica estera italiana negli anni Ottanta...*, p.267

<sup>181</sup> Spanish Minister for Relations with the European Community ('80-'81); Member of the European Parliament from 1987 to 1994.

<sup>182</sup> Institute for International Affairs. Lorenzo Natali in Europe, memories and testimonies.

Natali, which, was able to "navigate" as if that problem did not exist. In short, according to Pounset, with his diplomatic skills, Natali anticipated by thirty years the school of Blair or Sarkozy and, above all, of Obama.

According to the persons directly concerned,<sup>183</sup> the negotiations on the entry of Spain and Portugal seemed to want to restart the entire process of consolidation and reform of the Community, which would lead to the Single European Act and therefore to Maastricht.

---

<sup>183</sup> See Pietro Calamia, in DI NOLFO E., *La politica estera italiana negli anni Ottanta...*, p.269.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Italy's foreign policy in the second half of the 1980s and its role in the reform of the European institutions*

#### *4.1. Restart of the European integration process and institutional reform*

At the Fontainebleau summit (in June 1984), the unblocking of the negotiations for the entry of the Iberian countries was not the only important decision taken by the Community governments. Two other important decisions were taken, which would have had a significant impact on European affairs in the years to come.

The first was the conclusion of the British question, putting an end to the exhausting "battle of England" declared by Thatcher 5 years earlier to "get her money back". She obtained a billion Ecu for 1984 and for the following years an automatic refund of 66%. In return, she gave her full assent to the increase in the Community's own resources obtained by raising the European VAT quota from 1% to 1.4%; this was done according to the original proposal by Germany, the community's first contributor, since Stuttgart one year earlier. The Community, on the other hand, had an undeniable and "desperate need" to have a larger overall budget, also to provide for an increasingly enlarged and expensive CAP given the old and new enlargements to other states.

The second decision would have been even more important in the future: it was decided to set up two ad hoc ministerial commissions: the first chaired by the Italian Andolino on "the Europe of citizens" and the second chaired by the Irish Dodges on "institutional reform" of the Community. In practice, once the British brake was lifted, the Community seemed to be moving towards a new historical cycle of consolidation and growth. On the contrary, having obtained almost everything it asked for in repayments, Britain itself had now become a more than Europeanist country whose first political objective seemed to be the completion of Europe as a

single market, by eliminating the last barriers to the free movement of goods, capital and people.<sup>184</sup>

Historians have also pointed to another factor as an important sign of a changing climate and of a firmly established path towards the completion of the common market: the succession of a series of innovative judgments handed down by the European Court of Justice in those years.<sup>185</sup>

The first and most important of these was certainly that of 20 February 1979 in the case that has gone down in history as *Cassis di Digione*. In the text of the judgment, the European Court for the first time defined and condemned the obstacles to free trade prohibited by the Treaty establishing the EEC but which, for various reasons, had not only survived the application of the provisions on the customs union but, over the years, had even increased in number and variety. The Court stated that such were “ national regulations capable of hindering directly or indirectly, actually or potentially, intra-Community trade ”. Hence the proclamation of a principle which would set an example in subsequent years: "any product lawfully manufactured and marketed in a Member State must in principle be admitted to the market of all the other Member States". Any provision to the contrary was therefore illegal, unless it was justified on serious health and safety grounds.

The *Cassis* judgment and the subsequent, in practice, not only solved a series of technical problems but also laid down new rules according to highly simplifying general principles. The problem of the completion and functioning of the common market was brought to the forefront of the Community and at the same time the institutions, starting with the Commission, were urged to fully fulfill their “ duties imposed by the Treaty ”.<sup>186</sup>

It was in this positive context that European governments renewed the members of the Commission by appointing particularly authoritative and prestigious personalities, starting with French politician Jacques Delors, who was a leading politician in his country. In the following months, other European experts were

---

<sup>184</sup> GILBERT M., *Storia politica dell'integrazione europea...*, cit., p.144 e ss.

<sup>185</sup> OLIVI B., *L'Europa difficile. Storia politica della Comunità europea...*, cit., pp.251 e ss.

<sup>186</sup> *Idem*, p.254.

appointed, such as the aforementioned Italian Lorenzo Natali, former Vice-President of the Commission, or the British Lord Cockfield, a well-known businessperson to whom Delors entrusted the central task of completing the single European market, initiating the complete liberalization that was becoming the first political objective of the new Commission. In essence, it seemed that the time had come for European governments to apply consistently and rigorously the program they had signed a few years earlier in their "solemn declaration".

After being appointed Commissioner for the Internal Market, Mr Cockfield of England published a White Paper entitled "Completing the Internal Market" containing some 300 proposals and directives for deregulation to make the EEC a genuine "frontier-free area".

The "turbulence of the 1970s", in fact, with the two major energy crises of 1973 and 1979, resulting in financial and economic earthquakes, the tormented and, for Italy, tragic political events, seemed to have postponed indefinitely the creation of a real common market. Even if it has to be said that the "absolute disrespect of the existing treaties" put on the agenda the urgency of their modification.

The creation of the single market had essentially stopped at industrial products, both because of the prevalence of protectionist pressures, national interests or particular and monopolistic interests, and because extra-price barriers had multiplied: for example, in the form of detailed regulations and border controls on goods in the way of hygiene, environment, public order, etc.. There were countless violations of Community rules with laws and regulations issued by the Member States, in breach of the spirit and sometimes the letter of the Treaties. In 1985, the Community will calculate around 2500: they threatened to stifle agreements on the common market and to make them fall back on simple policies of economic cooperation left to the good will of governments. Another problem was the disposal of food surpluses accumulated in community warehouses.

In this situation, according to the White Paper, "*Europe is at a crossroads. Either we go forward with resolution and determination or we fall back into mediocrity.*"

*Renouncing would mean not being equal to the founders of the Community* <sup>187</sup>: with a full and total free movement of goods and services, instead, the way to European unity would be opened up, an objective which, according to the Book, could be achieved by 1992.

This was an impressive set of measures proposed. On a number of issues: 1) the elimination of tax barriers, customs controls on goods, immigration and passports, the inspection of baggage and all border operations; 2) the elimination of technical barriers, created by standards and regulations on hygiene, health, consumer guarantees, manufacturing techniques, etc.. 3) the removal of tax barriers through the harmonization of taxes and rates. On services, the White Paper also stressed the slowness and often lack of effective full liberalization processes on insurance, banking and financial products in general.

The book was deliberately distributed to national governments only two weeks before the Milan summit in June 1985. In other words, the Commission wanted to confront governments with a *fait accompli*. It should also not be forgotten that the White Paper was preceded by two reports, the result of the work of the two Committees, Dogde and Adonnino, decided at Fontainebleau. The first was on the reforms of political cooperation, towards "democratic but efficient" institutions (first of all by majority decisions, albeit with a few exceptions). The second was on the creation of a European identity, a citizens' Europe, a European model of coexistence to bring people closer to European institutions and values; on this a series of concrete proposals were put forward, inspired by these objectives, such as the election of the European Parliament with a uniform electoral system. <sup>188</sup>

Obviously, the first person who tenaciously opposed this plan was Thatcher, the one who paradoxically had designated Lord Cockfield in the Commission on behalf of Great Britain. The Dodge Committee also found the growing British opposition, a country that in fact took half a step back from Fontainebleau's decisions on the treaty: from majority voting to the new and more important role of the European Parliament. When the Dodge Committee's proposals were discussed in March 1985,

---

<sup>187</sup> MAMMARELLA G., CACACE P., *Storia e politica dell'Unione europea* ...,cit., p.209.

<sup>188</sup> *Idem*, p.209-210.

the opposition of Great Britain and Denmark (often with Greece) focused on many points, but above all on the right of veto. Liberalization was their intention, but no step towards any political federalism.

Thus, in June 1985, at the summit in Milan under Italian leadership, Great Britain and Denmark remained on their rigid positions, proposing only a gentleman's agreement on the partial use of the right of veto; a proposal that obviously saw the clear rejection of all the other states that perceived it as an inadmissible step backwards.<sup>189</sup> As is well known, the impasse was resolved by the Italians: the Prime Minister Craxi and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Andreotti. The latter, having recalled that Article 236 of the Treaty establishing the EEC allowed an intergovernmental conference to be convened by simple majority, adopted this procedure and put to the vote the proposal of a special Conference to discuss and vote on the suggestions of the Dodge Committee and all the rest, which the Committee itself had requested. Craxi put it to the vote and, as was to be expected, the proposal was adopted by a majority with the support of all seven other states and the contrary vote of Great Britain, Greece and Denmark.

Between 1979 and 1986, it is written today, "the European Community had regained the momentum of the 1950s" and began, with the second half of the decade, "one of the periods of greatest activity of the European Community": a new political cycle began for Europe.<sup>190</sup>

#### **4.2. *The turning point of Milan and Italy***

The Milan Summit can be considered the first concrete episode of the relaunch of European integration after a long period of stagnation; without it, it can be said, the Community born with the Treaties of Rome would perhaps have ended up as EFTA or would have become, as De Gaulle had feared, a simple appendix of NATO.<sup>191</sup>

---

<sup>189</sup> GILBERT M., *Storia politica dell'integrazione europea...*, cit., p.149

<sup>190</sup> Everyone seems to agree on such historic, turning point : DI NOLFO E. (a cura di), *La politica estera italiana negli anni Ottanta...*, cit, pp.189-200; MAMMARELLA G., CACACE P., *Storia e politica dell'Unione europea...*, pp.205-226; GILBERT M., *Storia politica dell'integrazione europea...*, cit., p.150; OLIVI B., *L'Europa difficile. Storia politica della Comunità europea...*, pp.277-281; VARSORI A., *La cenerentola d'Europa? L'Italia e l'integrazione europea...*, p.351-352; NERI GUALDESI M., *L'Italia e la CEE. La partecipazione italiana alla politica...*, p.329.

<sup>191</sup> MAMMARELLA G., CACACE P., *Storia e politica dell'Unione europea...*, cit., p.189.

In Milan, in essence, another road was taken. A few months later, under the impetus of the Intergovernmental Conference, the key Single European Act of the future Union would be born and there is no doubt that the decision taken by majority was the starting point for the process. In fact, never before, a vote had been taken with a clear and distinct majority and minority, changing in this way the nature of the European Council from a structure of meetings into a real decision-making body, an institution of the Community.<sup>192</sup> Commenting on the decisions taken, Prime Minister Craxi said: "*We have taken an important and necessary decision and, I hope, useful and decisive for the future of European unity (...) a difficult and hard-fought decision (...) we would certainly have preferred the kind of consensus and unanimity of vote that, instead, have not been possible (...) we will work with commitment to overcome the obstacles that have been created and to move forward together towards the objectives of the European Union*".<sup>193</sup>

In reality, not everyone was satisfied: on the part of the federalists, thousands of whom came to Milan to support the Europeanist choice, there was a certain disappointment and on the other side the British newspapers, which until a few days before the Summit predicted a victory for Thatcher, wrote: "*The Milan Summit (...) ended in the worst possible way. Its aim was to speed up decisions by widening majority voting and reducing the right of veto. Instead, everything was reduced to a clash of will, nothing was decided and with a split that leaves the founding states plus Ireland allied against Great Britain, Denmark and Greece*".<sup>194</sup>

In fact, while the summit ended with an undoubted postponement of decisions on crucial issues, different positions and conceptions of institutional reform had clearly emerged as never before. A reconstruction of the days, albeit brief, perhaps helps to better understand that turning point.<sup>195</sup>

Friday, June 28, the first day of work, ended with nothing. The delegations had not taken definite and clear positions and only the Italian delegation had taken on board the conclusions of the Dodge Committee on the proposals for institutional reform

---

<sup>192</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>193</sup> "Corriere della sera", 30 giugno 1985, p.1.

<sup>194</sup> "Financial Times", 1 luglio 1985, p.20.

<sup>195</sup> MAMMARELLA G., CACACE P., *Storia e politica dell'Unione europea...*, cit., pp.191 e ss.



and the request for a reform conference. The Italian position was supported by the Belgians, the Dutch and the new but already active President of the Delors Commission. The French and Germans (Mitterrand and Kohl) had first agreed on a reductive project for a new treaty; the English (with the Greeks and Danes), on the other hand, were in favor of widening the spectrum of majority decisions, but not of calling an ad hoc Conference on the reforms: it was better for them, a "gentlemen's agreement". In the evening, at the table of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Andreotti declared that Italy would not accept a final "minimalist" document, supported by the German Genscher and the Benelux. The chronicles say that at the end of the dinner the three foreign ministers, Italian, French and German, were left to speak for themselves.

The next morning, Germany presented a document that took on board the conclusions of the Dodge Committee and called for an extraordinary Intergovernmental Conference to see how to implement the desired revision of the Treaties. It was followed by a tough debate and a tense general climate. When work resumed in the afternoon, Craxi, the Italian President of the Council and temporary President of the Council of the Community, took note of the unchanged positions and put the proposal for a reform conference to the vote. Seven for and three against: this was the first time it had happened, a majority decision in the Community, on an important if not decisive political issue.

Suddenly isolated, Great Britain let itself go to comments (the chronicles say) against the direction taken by the conference while its spokesman declared to journalists: "*here we make cinema and not politic*"<sup>196</sup>, and the foreign minister declared: "*we are faced with new methods, we must adapt*".

A coup d'état or a simple decision-making philosophy, that of President Craxi? The debate has since continued among scholars: Craxi and Andreotti certainly appealed to Article 236 of the 1957 Treaty, which was punctually reported in the conclusions of the European Council in Milan, where, among other things, it was decided to call to the Conference the Spanish and Portuguese governments newcomers to the Community. Obviously, it was stated that "the results of this conference" would be

---

<sup>196</sup> A detailed chronicle in "Corriere della sera", 30 June 1985.

"submitted to the final decision of the Heads of State or Government at the Luxembourg European Council".<sup>197</sup>

In reality, the Italian position, if traced back to the philosophy of "decisionism", was certainly historically prior to Milan 1985. The objective of enlargement and institutional strengthening of the Community had for years been supported by Italy in general and by Craxi in particular, backed by the identical deep conviction of Andreotti and in any case carefully prepared throughout the six months of the Italian Presidency that precisely expired in Milan. The final decision, however, may have been taken in the face of the obvious failure that was to be expected given the unshakable British opposition.<sup>198</sup>

Other decisions were taken in Milan that would mark the subsequent history of the Community: on citizens' rights, on culture, on youth, on sport, etc. according to the proposals of the Committee chaired by the Italian Adonnino. Moreover, following the indications of the White Book, it was decided that the next Conference would elaborate a draft treaty on the themes of security (these were the bases of what would later become the Treaty of Schengen) and of the common foreign policy. It was also decided to increase economic relations with Japan, by now a great industrial and economic power, and to establish a series of aids to Africa, where in many countries there was a great famine. The last field of decisions was the Eureka project inspired by France and it was given the mandate to organize conferences on European technology: a field in which the gap with other areas of the world such as the U.S. appeared to be closing as soon as possible.

If, therefore, the absence of immediate decisions could justify the critical comments (such as that of Spinelli), there was no doubt that a political turning point had begun, the results of which would be seen in the following years.<sup>199</sup>

---

<sup>197</sup> Text conclusions in "Rivista di studi Politici internazionali", n.208, oct./dec. 1985, pp.621 et seq.

<sup>198</sup> Andreotti Archive. Europe series/ ECSC and EEC common issues and summits (1957-2004).

<sup>199</sup> MAMMARELLA G., CACACE P., Op.cit. p.195.

### 4.3. *The Second Eighties: the Single European Act*

With the "second half of the 1980s, one of the periods of greatest activity" of the European Community began. There was a clear need for a relaunch, not only on a strictly political level but also on the level of attention and renewed popular consensus, and the ideas and dynamism of the new President of the Commission, the French Jacques Delors, who took office in January 1985, made an undoubted contribution to it. A follower of Jean Monnet and therefore an ardent Europeanist but also a politician with long experience, Delors gave, for the whole of the following decade and with the clear support of Mitterrand and Kohl, a vigorous impulse to the resumption of the Community path.

His action was part of a new, favorable international context, due to a combination of factors: a) the new positive international economic situation, in the US and in Europe; b) the climate change in East-West relations with the new Soviet leadership of Gorbachev; c) the appearance and debate among themselves of various reform proposals on the EEC; d) the widespread, general conviction that the reforms had to be carried out at that moment or the entire process of integration would have entered into crisis probably forever; e) the enlargement to 12, with the entry of the countries of the Southern Mediterranean, which posed in itself problems of difficult functioning of the institutions themselves of a much larger community than the original one of 1957.<sup>200</sup>

Undoubtedly, the decision of Milan, obtained by majority vote (wanted, it should be remembered, by Italy) had given a "salutary jolt to the European machine".<sup>201</sup> Now, however, it was a question of making it a good starting point, in a positive climate that was still waiting for important changes.

A reflection should also be made on Great Britain which, after the first furious reaction immediately after Milan, accepted the decisions of the majority trying, however, in return, to obtain many convenient facilities for its economy. Thatcher, that is, in the subsequent negotiations in Milan, was flexible on the political issue

---

<sup>200</sup> DI NOLFO E., *Storia delle relazioni internazionali...cit.*, p. 650-651.

<sup>201</sup> MAMMARELLA G., CACACE P., *Op.cit.* p.211.

of reducing possible vetoes in many areas, thus managing to achieve much on the side of the Single Market, as she will write in her memoirs: “ *I had set myself a priority objective to create a single market favorable to British companies (...) the price we would have to pay to achieve it, with its economic benefits, was the consent to the wider use of majority voting in the community* ”.<sup>202</sup>

The climate was said to help a lot. From the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference in Luxembourg, it was clear that no government wanted more breakdowns and all were, more or less, willing to mediate in the search for a compromise acceptable to all. The Luxembourg government was in charge of the negotiations (it was the Luxembourg presidency in the second half of 1985) and wanted to conclude the discussions quickly. The Strasbourg Parliament, for its part, in those months (driven mainly by the Italian MEP Spinelli and his group of impatient transversal Europeanists) tried to be admitted to the negotiations. In practice it had happened that the Commission wanted to collect the opinion of the Strasbourg Chamber and that this had been expressed on 9 July after a heated debate: in it the Parliament criticized the contents of the Commission's work, recalled a previous draft expressed by the Chamber and asked, precisely, to be able to deal with it too. An institutional conflict arose (Council/Parliament) but the essentially federalist approach of the latter was rejected by the governments and continued along the "functionalist path" led by Delors, a true "deus ex machina" of those months. He succeeded in giving a unified approach to the work of the delegations of the 12 states, immediately bringing together the many proposals in a single Dossier, even at the cost of reducing the scope of the reforms themselves or sacrificing some of them.

The mandate received had in fact been twofold and of no small political scope. On the one hand the extra-ordinary conference had to prepare a draft Treaty "on foreign policy and a common security policy" on the basis of the Franco-German and British projects. On the other hand, it (the extra-ordinary conference ) had to proceed with the amendments of the EEC Treaty on the institutional adjustments of the Council's decision-making process, on the executive power of the Commission

---

<sup>202</sup> GILBERT M., *Storia politica dell'integrazione europea...*, cit., p.151.

and the powers of the European Parliament, as well as on the extension of Community competences to new areas of activity.<sup>203</sup>

In practice, it was a matter of putting together a common document "in view of the European Union" as Delors said,<sup>204</sup> which aimed above all at the completion of the internal market by the end of 1992. Basically, Delors wanted to make specific commitments on this, (on the instruments and the calendar) convinced that the total abolition of internal borders would be, as in fact happened then, the key to ensure subsequent and stronger forms of integration, including political integration.<sup>205</sup> In the days of the negotiations in Luxembourg, few people really understood and supported such a plan and the fact that the Commission's proposal to arrive at a "Single Act" was approved by all, in the common belief that it was a marginal and formal aspect, proves this. The compromise was therefore soon found, namely at a meeting in Luxembourg on 2-3 December 1985 and then at the ministerial summit, also there, a few days after, 16-17 December. The idea was that, as Delors said, it was no longer conceivable that the European Union, towards which everyone said to strive, could function without recognizing the interdependence of foreign policy and security problems with economic, financial and monetary problems. Hence Delors' proposal that the work of the conference be integrated into a "single legal act".

It is worth remembering the parties, in the negotiations, on the powers of Parliament. On the one hand Germans and partly Italians who wanted a massive increase in the powers of Parliament at the expense of the powers of the Commission, on the other hand the French, British and Danish who did not want to make any changes on this and finally the Benelux countries who, together with the Delors Commission, wanted to find a mix between the increased powers of Parliament and the Commission.

The contents of the compromise were essentially: a) the widening of majority vote on matters relating to the completion of the single market, with the exception of

---

<sup>203</sup> OLIVI B., L'Europa difficile. Storia politica della Comunità europea..., p.279.

<sup>204</sup> Idem, p.285.

<sup>205</sup> MAMMARELLA G., CACACE P., *Op.cit.* p.212.

taxation and people; b) the integration of the Treaty with new chapters; c) a limited strengthening of social policy; d) the abandonment, for the time being, of the idea of monetary union. As mentioned, the powers of the Parliament grew, which ceased to be a consultative body, but not by much: the British were satisfied even though they would realize only eventually the inexorable, albeit slow, mechanism of unification triggered by the Single Act. Equally satisfied, Germans and Benelux for the substantial even if small progress achieved on the road to common integration, not very satisfied instead the Italians and Delors (at least in the declarations) who expected growing contrasts with the Parliament after the proposals of the latter had not been listened to at all.

In short, it can be said that the renunciation to the federalist approach of the Parliament document, already implicit in the Dodge Committee text, was the political price to pay to stop the opposite intergovernmental way that Great Britain wanted instead. The Commission was the one who gained the most in power; perhaps in those days the democratic way was sacrificed to the future Union, in order to have more decision-making powers at the center, in the Commission and in the Council; a choice that would have had its weight, years later, in Maastricht. Many of the disappointments were due more to the "anger of unrealized expectations" than to a more lucid assessment of the true meaning of the Act.<sup>206</sup> Looking at it from a historical perspective, on the other hand, it was undeniable that, with that signature, "the member states had committed themselves to completing the internal market and that, even the most jealous of their sovereignty, made themselves available to renounce their right of veto in many political spheres".

Thatcher herself had actually accepted a mechanism whereby her European partners could "legislate also for British citizens without, theoretically, the consent of their government (...) and it was no small thing". The simple fact that "twelve member states had signed a document of such political importance that no one would have predicted until the end of the 1970s"<sup>207</sup>: that is, it was a thousand miles away from a European Community conceived as a simple association for collaboration

---

<sup>206</sup> GILBERT M., *Storia politica dell'integrazione europea...*, cit., p.156.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibidem*, p.167.

between nation states. The latter was something that only a few years earlier many people had been thinking.

With the small but significant steps forward taken, they were almost all practically satisfied, even if not for the same reasons; however, the Italian Prime Minister Craxi declared himself unsatisfied and announced that he wanted to wait at least for the judgment of the European Parliament; this came, shortly afterwards, and was negative and bitter. The Italian delegation then, through Minister Andreotti, declared that it not only supported the position of the European Parliament but that it would not sign if greater powers were not granted to the Assembly in Strasbourg. Italy's position was uncompromising, but it gave no results and is still criticized by some scholars today.<sup>208</sup>

A small positive sign was finally the participation of Spain and Portugal, who were fully invited even if their accession was not yet effective. The two Iberian delegations obviously kept a rather low profile but their constructive attitude was noticed and it was a clear signal that the latest arrivals were going to play a very different role from the "risky" and "wary" one of the previous arrivals: Great Britain, Denmark and Greece.

The work of the Conference ended, however, with the adoption of the Single European Act (SEA), which was signed on 17 February 1986. On that occasion Andreotti declared that he was present at the ceremony " *to show that we are not withdrawing to the Aventine* " but that he would not sign for protest and to await the important Danish popular referendum called in the meantime, given the vote against the ratification of that Parliament. Thus Italy signed 11 days later together with Greece and Denmark, declaring that with the Single Act a great opportunity had been lost: " *it was neither understood nor wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to make the community make a real leap forward by announcing the determination to work so that the limited reforms agreed are not only applied but also and above all implemented in the evolutionary sense* ".<sup>209</sup>

---

<sup>208</sup> For all: NERI GUALDESI M., L'Italia e l'integrazione europea, in RAINERO R.H. (curated by), Storia dell'integrazione europea..., cit. p.329; ROMANO S., Guida alla politica estera italiana..., cit., p.231.

<sup>209</sup> Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Service and Documentation. Year 1986, texts and documents on the foreign policy of Italy.

The Single Act thus appears to be the result of a series of facts and circumstances that occurred in a short and in an unforeseen time, that are: a) Great Britain, having solved the problem of the Budget, was relatively well disposed towards the EEC initiatives and, in any case, an ideological government like that of Thatcher was certainly inclined towards the free market; b) everyone wanted the completion of the single market, if for no other reason than economic interests; c) France, having failed the national socialist program, now, with the liberal turn, wanted with Europe to recover some economic sovereignty; d) the EEC was too enlarged not to modify the original institutions; e) Germans and Italians were very keen on European integration. To this must be added the presence on the European scene of strong and charismatic personalities such as Thatcher and Delors, Mitterrand, Kohl and Craxi.

#### ***4.4. The Second Eighties: towards Maastricht***

The Single Act was a small first step towards the institutional reforms wanted by many, but it introduced two major innovations. These were the enlargement of the issues on which decisions could be taken by majority vote and the willingness of all, in the common path towards the Single Market and the European Union as it had been proclaimed, to identify a wide range of areas of Community cooperation: from technology to the environment, from the economy to currency. Among all these new commitments, in foreign policy, the most important was the one made to give an institutional character to "political cooperation", meaning by this a special procedure by which the Commission, in agreement with the Council, would have taken on the task of expressing the position of the EEC on the main problems of international policy.

Since then, from the entry into force of the Single Act to the conclusion of the ratification processes on 1 July 1987, what "until then had only been practice has become a valid and legally sanctioned commitment". Also in foreign policy, a



permanent Secretariat with coordination and programming tasks was set up in Brussels.<sup>210</sup>

In the political field, it should not be forgotten the first step, contained in the Act, towards a common security policy. It was the first time that the need for closer collaboration in this delicate field between the Community countries was formalized, obviously outside, even if not in contrast with other already existing structures such as NATO and EMU: "a seed that was sown and prepared to sprout in the future".<sup>211</sup>

The years that followed saw enormous changes in the international scenario that opened up new spaces for Europe to develop its integration, starting with the process underway, after 1985, of a new relaxation between the United States and the Soviet Union following the advent of Gorbachev with its attempt to reform the communist system. At the same time, however, the challenges and therefore the difficulties for the adaptation of the EEC to the end of the internal bipolar conflicts in its territory grew.<sup>212</sup>

Evidently, the Single Act had all the characteristics of a transitional document towards more ambitious objectives, namely to arrive at a political union through the completion of an economic and monetary union. It was at this point that Delors's skillful action began.

Having obtained the Single Act, the single document that everyone had undertaken to support, Jacques Delors understood very well that the time required to be shortened in order for it to become a reality. Even before the final ratification, the first "Delors Package" came to light with its three main proposals: a) the reform of the Community's agricultural policy, with its necessary compression of expenditure; b) the reform of the financing and budgetary system of the EEC, above all to increase its resources; c) the strengthening of the "structural funds" which were intended to reduce the gap between the various European regions, in particular

---

<sup>210</sup> DI NOLFO E., *Storia delle relazioni internazionali...*, cit.p.652; see also MAMMARELLA G., CACACE P., *Op.cit.* p.216.

<sup>211</sup> *Idem*, p.217.

<sup>212</sup> DI NOLFO E., *Storia delle relazioni internazionali...*, cit.p.652.

between the North and the South of the Community, through support for the less developed areas.

The reactions were contrasting and this was noted at the Copenhagen summit in December 1987: not only did Thatcher attack, as is obvious, the whole package, but also the Italian government, chaired by Goria and with Andreotti still foreign minister, opposed fearing a strong increase in spending for Italy. However, it was the subsequent German Presidency and Kohl in the first person who resolved everything in favor of the Delors Package: it was decided a compromise on the CAP with a reduction in expenses, a doubling of structural funds and a mediation that met the Italian requests on VAT and expenses.

At the Hanover Summit (June 1988) a first assessment was made of the road to the single market without frontiers: the road was in fact continuing and a third of the measures envisaged had already been adopted while a study was being presented entitled *"The 1992 challenge. A great bet for Europe"*, by the Italian Paolo Cecchini,<sup>213</sup> who highlighted the advantages for all of the economic reforms underway. In particular, the aim of the study was to provide a solid basis for analyzing the costs of the fragmentation of the European market and the benefits that the removal of barriers could offer, as provided for in the White Book on the completion of the internal market. Cecchini's study illustrated in detail the problems caused by the large number of barriers still existing, despite the fact that thirty years had passed since the signing of the Treaties of Rome. The conclusion reached by the Italian economist, together with his international team, was precisely the confirmation of the political objective of the 1985 White Book, namely the necessary removal of non-tariff barriers so that companies, consumers and government could benefit from the single European market.<sup>214</sup>

---

<sup>213</sup>In those years he was a special adviser to the European Commission. The working group, established in 1986, was supported by Commission officials from Directorate-General II (Economic and Financial Affairs) and Directorate-General III (Internal Market and Industrial Affairs), as well as eminent external experts from Bocconi University in Milan; the French Ministry of Economy, Finance and Budget; the Centre d'études prospectives et d'informations internationales in Paris; the European Investment Bank. the Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung in Munich; and the University of Sussex.

<sup>214</sup> [www.dizie.eu/](http://www.dizie.eu/)

Such a positive climate was created that it was decided to set up a Committee chaired by Delors to study, once a year, the possibility of a single currency. It was a purely exploratory mission, without many explicit ambitions but which, in reality, to review today, was the first piece of a "mechanism that would lead to the Maastricht agreements of capital movements in the Community area and therefore to the long march towards the single currency".<sup>215</sup>

In this regard, it should be remembered that the Italian government, chaired at the time by Ciriaco De Mita, expressed reservations and put delays on the road to monetary union and the completion of the single market, in particular on the possibility of establishing a European Central Bank. For example, Italy asked and obtained to postpone for two years the total financial liberalization: a position that also highlighted the growing difficulty of the "administrative, economic and legal apparatus of the State" in Italy, clearly lagging behind the other European partners in preparing the measures in view of the goal of 1992.

In June 1989, at the Madrid Council, Delors did not limit himself to a theoretical presentation of the possibility of a single currency, but set three conditions for continuing along that path, which was inevitable: 1) the total convertibility of European currencies; 2) the complete liberalization of capital movements; 3) the elimination of the fluctuation margins of the various currencies and a system of fixed exchange rates. The route was thus fixed. It also recommended "the greatest possible convergence between the economies of the various countries, the consolidation of national budgets and the harmonization of monetary policies"; some of the Delors Committee also called for the creation of a reserve fund, the basis of the future European central bank. The single currency was not called for, but it was stated that it "would be a desirable element". Apart from Thatcher's foreseeable opposition, the other states were not against it, but it was decided to launch a generic "first phase" on the road to monetary union, which would start on 1 July 1990. Important statement but made without much conviction, it was said.<sup>216</sup>

---

<sup>215</sup> MAMMARELLA G., CACACE P., *Op.cit.* p.219.

<sup>216</sup> *Idem*, p.221.

At that point, what no one expected happened in an area of the world that had been politically immobile for decades: Eastern Europe under Soviet control. In a few months the communist regimes and governments in the area of Soviet influence collapsed after decades of absolute power and complete control of civil society; shortly afterwards the USSR itself collapsed. An entire historical cycle ended, beginning in 1917 with the October Revolution and indeed some even theorized the "end of history";<sup>217</sup> but the great question of a possible German reunification also opened up, unexpectedly. The German leadership, led by Kohl, understood that the dream was possible and worked hard to achieve it immediately.

The discussion on the implementation of the Madrid proposals was therefore taking place while the whole world, and Europe first and foremost, was focusing on what was happening in Germany and, in general, in the East. It was so in that particular climate, in which everything seemed easy and inevitable, that serious and realistic discussion began again on the possibility of possible European political unification, as had not happened since the '50s.<sup>218</sup> The changes were fast.

The last months of 1990 were also the months of the Italian semester and the Rome Council in December of the same year completed the preparatory work for two historic conferences to be held in the following year: one on economic and monetary union and the other on the political union of Europe. The negotiations began at an unusual rate for the history and practice of the Community "in an atmosphere of European optimism"<sup>219</sup>, as evidenced by these brief lines taken from the document of the Rome Council of 14-15 December 1990: "*As regards internal development, the Heads of State and Government have expressed their firm determination to complete the single market within the timescale set, to pursue the strengthening of economic and social cohesion and to define the stages of the process of transformation of the Community into a political Union, conceived as a pole of stability in Europe*".<sup>220</sup> This general optimism was always accompanied by strong resistance from the British Government, led by Thatcher until October 1991 and then by his party colleague Major, albeit with less vehemence and

---

<sup>217</sup> FUKUYAMA F., *La fine della storia e l'ultimo uomo*, Rizzoli, Milano 1992.

<sup>218</sup> DI NOLFO E., *Storia delle relazioni internazionali...*, cit.p.653.

<sup>219</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>220</sup> Document of the Rome European Council, 14-15 December 1990, Presidency Conclusions. [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20535/1990 December - roma it part i.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20535/1990%20December%20-%20roma%20it%20part%20i.pdf)

determination. As is well known, the agreement was reached between 11 and 12 December 1991 in Maastricht and was also signed there on the following 7 February, coming into force on 1 November 1993. It was the beginning of another history: the economic communities closed their historical experience, the European Union entered the scene and put together the economy and politics in a constantly rethought balance and always in the continuous mediation between opposing philosophies. By the end of the millennium there would be, it was decided, however, the single currency and the European Central Bank and new, further, more stringent treaties: Amsterdam, Nice and Lisbon.

The event that had completely changed the cards in Brussels and in Europe in general was the German unification that exploded in November-December 1989. In a few days, after the clear will expressed by the German government to achieve the old dream of a united Germany, it seemed clear to everyone that this triggered a major issue. The fact was that a united Germany actually altered the European balance, with its 80 million inhabitants in the center of the continent, with its strong economy and with its natural, historical, economic expansionism to the east and towards the Balkans. As a consequence, not only was there the danger of creating a new superpower at the center of Europe, but also of seeing the political and economic interest of this nation shift from the Rhine and the Community area to the East and Central Europe.<sup>221</sup>

The French were particularly worried (at the end of 1989 it was their six-month presidency of the EEC), official supporters of the German ally and its legitimate unitary aspiration but in reality concerned about the consequences of this on the European balance.

Thus, Mitterrand's invitation to the Community partners on 18 November 1989 for an "informal dinner" was made. Witnesses reported that all more or less, in one way or another, were frightened by the speed with which German reunification was taking place and that Kohl, in practice isolated, wanted explicit support from Europeans, instead: "*After dinner, we gathered around the fireplace for a coffee and Mitterrand immediately made it clear that for him German reunification was a*

---

<sup>221</sup> MAMMARELLA G., CACACE P., *Op.cit.* p.222.

*historical possibility, that is, to be examined in a fairly uncertain future (...) in the same vein the interventions of others (...) Kohl became more and more red with anger (...) you cannot let me return to Bonn without a clear message of support from Europe for German reunification ”.*<sup>222</sup> And it was precisely after these words of Kohl that the far-sightedness of Italy emerged in the person of Andreotti, who was also present that evening and who played a decisive role in negotiating the reunification of Germany, stating: “ *Europe promotes and hopes for the reunification of Germany* ”. <sup>223</sup>

About a month later, at the final summit of the French semester, Mitterrand, whose reservations on Germany had certainly not fallen, stated that before reunification "it would be wise to further develop and strengthen the structures of the Community. Shortly afterwards, Kohl and his foreign minister Genscher had abandoned all reservations about the rapid implementation of a European Economic and Monetary Union: for the Germans, that is, at that point, working hard for integration was the only way to obtain the green light for their reunification.

Hence the strong Franco-German commitment in the following months to complete the first phase of EMU by July 1990 and to convene the Intergovernmental Conference for the codification of the Treaties. In this way, the script of Milan was repeated with Great Britain voting against the proposal but this time alone. The same happened on the vote for the "Community Charter of Fundamental Social Rights".

In the weeks and months following German reunification, the European green light went hand in hand with strengthening the Community towards its transformation into a political Union. In short, the general idea was to have a united Germany firmly anchored to the European institutions. “ *We are pleased* ”, the 12 declared at the 1990 Dublin summit, “ *that German unification is taking place under the European roof* ”.<sup>224</sup> And so, with very fast times for the history of community integration, for example compared to the accession of Spain and Portugal (it had

---

<sup>222</sup> DE MICHELIS G., *La vera storia di Maastricht*, in “Limes”, n.3 1995.

<sup>223</sup> “*Il pragmatismo indispensabile*”. Interview with Giulio Andreotti by Roberto Rotondo, taken from the international monthly magazine "30 giorni".

<sup>224</sup> MAMMARELLA G., CACACE P., *Op.cit.* p.225.

taken 7 years and more), the five East German Lander entered Germany and then Europe. An historic event that took place in just one day: when the Treaty between the two Germanies came into force on 3 October 1990 and unification was proclaimed. At the same time, the road to Maastricht began, where the European Union, the new name of the EEC, would be born.<sup>225</sup>

It was the conclusion of a process that began in 1947, or, if you prefer, in 1950 and 1957. The EEC, in any case is evaluated, although firmly rooted within the Western system represented an “ *exceptional success (...) between 1952 and 1992 was born an economic giant and a political subject in solidarity with the U.S. but able to rival in power with them. From the point of view of historical analysis, when ended in 1993 the process of verifying the agreements (...) was opened for the new European Union a phase of adaptation to the new institutional norms, a phase, however, which coincided with the beginning of a new period of economic recession in 1992 that exposed the European Union to the problems determined by the difficulty of the transition from the old to the new institutional structure (...) the new actor did not yet possess a defined stability and a compact structure and was instead exposed to centrifugal tensions and destabilizing intrusions* ”.<sup>226</sup>

#### **4.5. European integration and Italian foreign policy in the 1980s**

In the relaunch of the European Community, Italian foreign policy did, as we have seen, its part, and in no small way compared to that of other partners. Few people in Italy, however, realized what was happening and, above all, understood what all this would mean in the concrete aspects of Italian economic, social and political life: that is, that the Single Act signed in the mid-1980s, even by Italy, would profoundly alter the country's international status and its own internal life: political, economic and social.<sup>227</sup> This, would have occur in two directions.

First, the Act reflected the new European balances, much less egalitarian than those of the 1950s because they were the result of the Franco-German convergence that had taken the effective lead of the Community, leaving Great Britain and Italy in

---

<sup>225</sup> DI NOLFO E., Storia delle relazioni internazionali..., cit.p.653.

<sup>226</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>227</sup> ROMANO S., Guida alla politica estera italiana..., cit., p.232.

the background for various reasons. To this must be added the sudden and unforeseen end of the Cold War with the consequent end of Italy's leading strategic position in the East-West bipolar confrontation. A change that would also have modified, in the long run, the role and behavior of our foreign policy.

A second element of reflection not made (in Italy) had been on the actual content of the new economic union that loomed. The creation of a large European market by the end of 1992, which had been hoped for and announced since the Single Act, would have forced Italy to change laws and regulations, to renounce traditional barriers behind which it had until then protected its backwardness in many fields. Then, later, as soon as the major projects of the Economic and Monetary Union were completed, Italy would have to bring its financial and fiscal policy into line with the policies of countries such as France and Germany, which had a very different history in those fields but had taken the control over the integration process and therefore had to be followed.<sup>228</sup>

However, the Italian parties, which by the end of the 1980s had all become Europeanist parties, did not seem to understand that the Single Act was not a simple petition in principle. On the contrary, it set in motion mechanisms that would sooner or later require all European states, and therefore also Italy, not only to adopt public positions but also, and above all, to assume precise responsibilities and develop demanding transformations in the economic and administrative fields, in order to face the new prospect of a single market.

The undoubted success of Milan in 1985 thus appeared to be an episode, even though it was not so, and the Italian political leadership appeared to be incapable of understanding the profound economic transformations that the Single Act, the new Franco-German axis and Delors' action would bring about in the community.<sup>229</sup>

It was therefore an Italy perceived as one of the partners that showed the greatest difficulties in adapting to the prospects of the single market, beyond the professions of the Europeanist faith of almost all its politicians, and in particular it was observed

---

<sup>228</sup> *Idem*, pp.233-234.

<sup>229</sup> VARSORI A., *L'Italia nelle relazioni internazionali...*, cit., p.230.



that it was often in default in transposing EU regulations. At the same time, it did not pass over in silence the fact that the funds made available by Brussels were squandered or not used. From here started the many Community criticisms to the inefficiency of the government, local authorities and the Italian bureaucracy.<sup>230</sup>

The undoubted liveliness of the Italian economy remained, but some shadows tarnished the positive vision of the second economic miracle: an internal market with little competitiveness, an inefficient administration, corruption, growing public debt, the backwardness of some infrastructures, and last but not least, the inability of the great Italian entrepreneurs to make their way abroad.

Despite these negative aspects, at the end of the 1980s, Italy was optimistic about its six-month presidency and something was moving. For example, the episode of 1988 with the request of Italy to review the economic part of the fiscal strengthening of the Community, showed a renewed interest: it seemed over "the distracted attention" with which until then Italy had followed the events of the Community. There was a growing awareness of the importance of what was decided in Brussels for our internal policy; that, in essence, by joining the community, we had committed ourselves to developing an efficient and competitive economy, to opening up new frontiers and to following up many economic policy commitments.

<sup>231</sup>

It was not by chance that, at the end of the 1980s, the public sector, then the most protected from international competition, began to be modernized, reinforcing the tendency towards privatization, which would then explode, perhaps excessively in view of the results, in the following decade of the 1990s.

Finally, an important element for understanding the Italian choices of the 80s and then the beginning of the 90s is a certain "thaumaturgical vision of Europe", experienced in some Italian, financial and monetary environments. The open support to the most integrationist European theses and to the German-French choices in monetary matters, often came from the conviction that adhering to the

---

<sup>230</sup> Idem, p.237.

<sup>231</sup> NERI GUALDESI M., *Il cuore a Bruxelles, la mente a Roma...*, cit. pp.333-334.

choices of others, accepting the discipline in matters of public finance, would be bound to the Italian political and economic forces. In short, it was almost the hope that "the drive for recovery could come from an external incentive, from the need to achieve the necessary conditions for European monetary unification". But, as we have seen, the thaumaturgical vision of Europe was the weakness and not the strength of Italian Europeanism of those years.<sup>232</sup>

The conception of the process of European integration as an "external constraint" decisive for "grafting into the strain of Italian society a set of systems that internally, it did not have the capacity to produce" was theorized in the early '90s by Guido Carli. Even if, this conception had always been present in the Italian debate since the '50s of the birth of the community.<sup>233</sup>

---

<sup>232</sup> *Idem*, p.336.

<sup>233</sup> GUALTIERI R, *L'Europa come vincolo esterno*, in CRAVERI P., VARSORI A.(a cura di), *L'Italia nella costruzione europea...*, cit, pp.313-331.

## *Conclusions*

The process of European integration has been characterized from the earliest years by numerous ups and downs which have often influenced its progress and results. In this history, the 1980s certainly represent a decade of great transformations: on the international scene, they begin with the new Cold War and end with the collapse of Communism, while in Europe, they begin with Europessimism and the battles of Thatcher and end with the Single Act and Maastricht, the premises of today's European Union.

The present work aimed to deepen the role and the action of Italy in that crucial decade, retracing in particular the main lines of foreign policy adopted by our country in the European construction. What seems to emerge is an undoubted Italian change in the approach and in the political-diplomatic weight towards the Community: for example, it seems difficult to deny the political courage of our country, in particular of its governments, to "overcome the resistance of others and in particular that of Margaret Thatcher" towards the European Union that would soon be born.

In those years, Italy, also thanks to a renewed internal economic growth and a rediscovered political stability became again, after the long decade of the 70's with great economic, social and political crisis, one of the nations of the Community with more relevant political and diplomatic weight, obviously spent in a decidedly Europeanist direction.

This is particularly evident in the not simple issue of the accession of Spain and Portugal, a key political point for the relaunch of the Community. In fact, it emerges from the analysis carried out that, in the negotiations that led to enlargement towards the southern Mediterranean, Italy played a predominant role, not only in terms of political direction (through the repeated and decisive statements made by our representatives), but especially in concrete diplomatic action. In fact, the importance of the figure and the work of the Italian Lorenzo Natali emerges. During the difficult years of the negotiations of the Iberian countries, he took care of the relations between the Community and the delegations of the incoming countries,

mediating in a unanimously recognized positive way among the many problems, of an economic nature (and not only) that were hindering the entry into the Community of the new members.

There were two main reasons for the Italian position. On the one hand, the desire to welcome into a democratic and prosperous Europe those countries that had emerged from a long period of isolation caused by the dictatorships that had governed them for so long. On the other hand, a rebalancing of the Mediterranean component from within the Community itself was welcomed, with a view to future developments; in other words, the Italian hope was that the new enlargement would provide the necessary stimulus to tackle, more carefully than in the past, the problem of the disparity between the various regions of the EEC.

Also with regard to the relaunch of the process of European integration, which took place in the second half of the 1980s, it was possible to observe the lively and conscious Italian presence in the events that led to the relaunch of the initiative to reform the European institutions. Italy has made a substantial contribution to the construction of Europe by giving its strategic vision and the ability to maneuver, making so a great contribution to the development of Europe. It is above all due to Italy that acted as a guardian of the supranational component which unification has advanced along the watershed between the intergovernmental model and the supranational model. Our country has constantly in the eighties referred to the creation of a politically united Europe, based on supranational power, and has endeavored to remind other partners of this as a guide for joint decisions. Its willingness to adopt supranational solutions has generally been shared with Germany. In Italy in fact, the line of supranationality has always been constant, because its limited political weight preserved it from the temptation to move independently in the international arena. As it seems to emerge from the present work, the objective of institutional strengthening of the Community, in parallel with enlargement, had always been defended and supported by Italy and its political-diplomatic elites.

At the European summits following the introduction of the Single Act, work was being done, under the particular impetus of the French President of the Commission

Delors, in order to ensure that this document, which everyone had formally agreed to support, would actually become a reality. This was followed by research and proposals on the way forward to implement the necessary reforms, including a study entitled *"The 1992 Challenge. A great bet for Europe"*, by the Italian Paolo Cecchini. The research illustrated in detail the problems caused by the large number of barriers still existing, despite the fact that thirty years had passed since the signing of the Treaties of Rome and also helped to generate greater awareness of the progressive reduction of barriers until their disappearance. In this context, it has emerged that, in this regard, the Italian government chaired at that time by Ciriaco De Mita, expressed reservations and delays on the road to financial and monetary union and the completion of the single market. This was due to the many institutional problems and internal bureaucracy that slowed down in practice, beyond the statements, Italian Europeanism.

At the very end of the 1980s, an event outside the Community provided an incredible and unexpected boost to Community development: the sudden and total collapse of the communist regimes in the East and the subsequent historic opportunity to create a new united Germany under a European-community roof. In this regard, it was possible to point out that not all the states then belonging to the Community immediately understood the importance and historical significance of this event, or rather, perhaps, they feared it in secret.

In this context, once again a contribution was given by our political representation on the evening of 18 November 1989 at an informal dinner between Community partners, organized by French President Mitterand, who was highly skeptical about German unification, as reports say. On that occasion Italy, represented by Andreotti and De Michelis, effectively mediated in favor of German reunification, obtaining, as a counterweight, that Kohl and his foreign minister Genscher would abandon all reservations about the rapid achievement of a European Economic and Monetary Union. It seems therefore that the fundamental step in the construction of the European Union today is certainly also the result of some Italian mediation, all to be verified obviously with the future opening of the archives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As we have seen, in the decade under review, Italy has given Europe a number of ingredients that can still help to complete its construction and that remain essential for the development of a united Europe:

- to defeat the paralysis of unanimity;
- strengthen democratic control;
- avoid a narrow cost-benefit approach;
- to accept enlargement.

These four Italian contributions have had a profound influence on the construction of Europe: they affect central aspects, which make the difference between a weak regional organization and the system conceived by the founding fathers, completely comparable to a state-style construction. Italy during the eighties has always fought for these principles, which have been enshrined in the Treaties since their inception and, although has always met with strong opposition, over time they have been able to gained ground and extended their field of application. All this is was due to Italy, a founding member, which has acted with consistency and sagacity in their support.

The most important strategic contribution of Italy to the progress of the European Union has been to break the paralyzing grip of unanimity: the unanimity rule allows a minority to impose its vote and prevents the pursuit of the collective interest. The line that separates the majority principle from that of unanimity is that which divides simple intergovernmental cooperation from the functioning of a supranational entity. In 1977, at the instigation of the President of the Council, Moro, the European Council of Rome established the date for the first direct election of the European Parliament overcoming the opposition of two countries. In June 1985, in the European Council of Milan, the Prime Minister Craxi and the Foreign Minister Andreotti, in a completely unexpected way, applied for the first time the majority principle to decide the convocation of an Intergovernmental Conference charged with amending the Treaty. This was then the Conference that stipulated the Single European Act and paved the way to the implementation of the single market.

In 1989, the Italians approved by a very large majority (88%) the consultative referendum asking them if they wanted to give constituent powers to the European Parliament.

In October 1990, Andreotti, at the last hour of Maastricht, persuaded the European Council to set a binding date for the start of monetary union. Under Andreotti's chair, after a long and repeated series of bilateral negotiations, Italy transposed the essential elements of the Delors report on Economic and Monetary Union into the conclusions of the European Council, allowing Great Britain to dissociate itself by expressing its position in a separate paragraph. This fundamental step transformed what until then had only been a detailed technical project into an act of binding political will for the subsequent Intergovernmental Conference.

Italy has contributed also to strengthening the democratic principle in the European Union and has strongly supported the need for great European democratic legitimacy by supporting the election of the European Parliament. Italian politics in Europe, during the eighties, has had the constant objective to base the legitimacy of the Union on the democratic principle and not only on the intergovernmental method. This is a very innovative aspect of European integration. In fact, initially the Treaties left ample room for intergovernmental cooperation, while assigning a marginal influence to the Parliament, initially not directly elected. However, over time, the lack of democratic participation has become one of the major obstacles to further the development of the European Union. In the eighties, Italy started the season of institutional reforms, supporting with more force the "Draft Treaty establishing the European Union", prepared by the Parliament, under Spinelli's leadership. In 1979-84, during the first legislature of the directly elected parliament, Spinelli, as parliamentary rapporteur, persuades the Parliament to reject the budget of the Community, thus using the strongest parliamentary prerogative conferred on that time in the Treaties.

If Italy has played a positive role in all the crucial steps of the European construction of the 1980s as highlighted, reciprocally, the European factor has had a decisive influence on the economic, social and political transformation of Italy in the last fifty years. Over the last fifty years, Europe has had a very profound and widespread

influence on Italy's economic, political and institutional development, even though it has often failed to implement Community rules on time and to make effective use of their instruments. Despite the frequent delay in complying with the obligations imposed by the daily functioning of the Union, Italy is one of the member countries that most deeply and widely accepted the influence of the European process in its evolution. During the second half of the century, the country undertook changes that had not made in previous centuries and the impetus came mainly from Europe, which has proved to be Italy's true reformer.

If there is one possible conclusion, in relation to the question asked at the beginning of this report, it is that the commitment and foresight shown by our political and diplomatic elites in the important events that took place in the process of European integration in the 1980s has certainly been noteworthy and, perhaps, of no small importance. In the constitution of Europe of the first thirty years, Italy has usually been a secondary player that has operated within the spaces allowed by the pre-eminence of the so-called Franco-German axis: the idea of a united Europe was born from the need for Franco-German reconciliation; France and Germany were the two countries that have most influenced European unification. Despite his minor role before, however, Italy's action over the decade under examination has been significant and on numerous occasions even decisive, in changing the Europe's delicate balance. In the 1980s, Italy was able to use its newfound political and diplomatic weight in such a manner as never to lose the ultimate purpose of European initiatives.

This reflection therefore observes, for the 1980s, a clear change of direction compared with the first thirty years of Community life, in which our country was often accused, particularly by foreign historiography, of being a weak negotiator within the Community and of overlapping its own internal interests with those of the integration process.



## ***Bibliography***

- ALDCROFT D.H., *L'economia europea dal 1914 ad oggi*, Laterza, Bari 1981
- BALDINI A., *La presidenza italiana della CEE*, in "Affari Esteri", n. 68, 1985, pp. 427 ss.
- BATTILANI P., FAURI F., *L'economia italiana dal 1945 ad oggi*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2014
- BECCATTINI G., *Distretti industriali e made in Italy*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 1998
- BOSWORTH R. J., ROMANO S. (a cura di), *La politica estera italiana (1860 - 1985)*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1991
- CACACE P., MAMMARELLA G., *Storia e politica dell'Unione europea*, Laterza, Bari 2003
- CASTELLINA L., *Cinquant'anni d'Europa. Una lettura antiretorica*, Utet, Torino 2007
- CRAINZ G., *Storia del Miracolo italiano. Culture identità, trasformazioni fra anni '50 e '60*, Donzelli, Roma 2005 (1996).
- COLARIZI S., CRAVERI P., PONS S., QUAGLIARELLO G. (a cura di), *Gli anni Ottanta come storia*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2004
- CRAVERI P., VARSORI A. (a cura di), *L'Italia nella costruzione europea. Un bilancio storico (1957-2007)*, F. Angeli, Milano 2009
- DEL BIONDO I., *L'Europa possibile. La Cgt e la Cgil di fronte al processo di integrazione europea (1957-1973)*, Ediesse, Roma 2007
- DE LUCA M., *Nel rispetto dei reciproci ruoli. Lineamenti di storia della contrattazione collettiva in Italia*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2013

- DE MICHELIS G., *La vera storia di Maastricht*, in “Limes”, n.3 1995
- DI NOLFO E. (a cura di), *La politica estera italiana negli anni Ottanta*, Marsilio, Venezia 2007
- DI NOLFO E., *Storia delle relazioni internazionali. II Gli anni della guerra Fredda 1946-1990*, Laterza, Bari 2015
- FAURI F., *L'Unione Europea. Una storia economica*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2017
- FELIU G., SUDRIA' C., *Introduzione alla storia economica mondiale*, Cedam, Padova 2017
- FERRARIS L.V., *Manuale della politica estera italiana 1947-1993*, Laterza, Bari 1993
- FORMIGONI G., *Storia della politica internazionale nell'età contemporanea*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2006
- GADDIS J.L., *The Long Peace. Inquires into the History of the Cold War*, Oxford University Press 1989
- GALLI G., *I partiti politici italiani (1943 - 1991)*, Milano, Rizzoli, 1991
- GILBERT M., *Storia politica dell'integrazione europea*, Laterza, Bari 2005
- GINSBORG P., *Storia d'Italia dal dopoguerra ad oggi*, G. Einaudi, Torino, 2006 (1989)
- GIORDANO G., *Storia della politica internazionale 1870-2001*, F. Angeli, Milano 2004
- GIOVINE U., *La politica estera del governo Craxi*, in “Relazioni Internazionali”, 1983
- HITCHCOCK, W. I., *Il continente diviso. Storia dell'Europa dal 1945 ad oggi*, Carocci, Roma 2003

- LASCHI G., *L'agricoltura italiana e l'Unione europea*, P.Lang, Bern 1999
- LASCHI G., *L'Unione europea: storia, istituzioni, politiche*, Carocci, Roma 2001
- LOWE K., *Il continente selvaggio. L'Europa alla fine della seconda guerra mondiale*, Laterza, Bari 2014
- MALGERI F., *Storia della Democrazia Cristiana*, Ed. Cinque Lune, Roma 198
- MALGERI F., *La politica estera tra atlantismo ed europeismo*, in Id., *La stagione del Centrisimo. Politica e società nell'Italia del secondo dopoguerra (1945-1960)*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2002.
- MAMMARELLA G., *L'Italia contemporanea*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1990
- MAMMARELLA G., CACACE P., *Storia e politica dell'Unione europea (1926-2005)*, Laterza, Bari 2006
- NERI GUALDESI M., *L'Italia e la CE. La partecipazione italiana alla politica di integrazione europea 1980-1991*, ETS, Pisa 1992
- NERI GUALDESI Marinella, *L'Italia e l'integrazione europea*, in RAINERO R.H. (a cura di), *Storia dell'integrazione europea. Vol.II*, Marzorati, Roma 1997, pp.287-338
- NERI GUALDESI M., *Il cuore a Bruxelles, la mente a Roma. Storia della partecipazione italiana alla costruzione dell'unità europea*, ETS, Pisa 2007
- NEUDER F., *Costs and Benefits of EU Enlargement*, in "Intereconomics Review of European Policy", vol 38, n°4, 2003, pp. 190-195
- OLIVI B., *L'Europa difficile. Storia politica della Comunità europea*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1993

- PELKMANS, J., CASEY, J.P., *EU Enlargement: External Economic Implication*, in PINZANI C., *Il bambino e l'acqua sporca. La guerra fredda rivisitata*, Mondadori, Milano 2011
- PETRINI F, *Il liberismo ad una dimensione. La Confindustria e l'integrazione europea, 1947-1957*, F. Angeli, Milano 2005
- PISTONE S., *L'integrazione europea. Uno schizzo storico*, UTET, Torino 1999
- PREDA D, *Sulla soglia dell'Unione. La vicenda della Comunità politica europea (1952-1954)*, Jaca Book, Milano 1994
- ROMANO S., *Guida alla politica estera italiana*, Rizzoli, Milano 1993
- ROMEO G., *La politica estera italiana nell'era Andreotti*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2000
- SABBATUCCI G, VIDOTTO G., *Storia Contemporanea. Il Novecento*, Laterza, Bari 2003
- SCOPPOLA P., *La repubblica dei partiti. Profilo storico della democrazia in Italia*, il Mulino, Bologna 1991.
- TELÒ M., *Dallo Stato all'Europa: idee politiche e istituzioni*, Carocci, Roma 2004
- TURANI G., *1985-1995. Il secondo miracolo economico italiano. Istruzioni per l'uso*, Sperling & Kupfer, Milano 1986
- TURONE S., *Storia del sindacato in Italia (1943-1980)*, Laterza, Bari, 1981
- H. VAN DER WEE, *L'economia mondiale tra crisi e benessere (1945-1980)*, Hoepli, Milano 1989
- VARSORI A., *L'Italia e la fine della guerra fredda. La politica estera dei governi Andreotti (1989-1992)*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2013

- VARSORI A., *L'Italia nelle relazioni internazionali dal 1943 al 1992*, Laterza, Bari-Roma 1998
- VARSORI A., *La cenerentola d'Europa? L'Italia e l'integrazione europea dal 1947 ad oggi*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2010
- VERNET D., *La Renaissance Allemande*, Flammarion, Paris 1992
- VILLANI C., *Un buco nel cielo di carta. La nuova storiografia globale, la guerra fredda e l'Italia*, Progedit, Bari 2012
- ZAMAGNI V., *Dalla periferia al centro. La seconda rinascita economica dell'Italia*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1990

## *Sitography*

- <http://old.sturzo.it/archivio-andreotti/percorsi-d-archivio/934-europa>
- <https://web.esteri.it/archivistoricodiplomatico/>
- <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/library/online-resources/>
- [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20535/1990\\_dicembre\\_-\\_roma\\_it\\_part\\_i.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20535/1990_dicembre_-_roma_it_part_i.pdf)
- <https://www.eui.eu/Research/HistoricalArchivesOfEU>
- <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/200712/20071218ATT16319/20071218ATT16319IT.pdf>
- [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1970-1979/1977\\_it](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1970-1979/1977_it)
- [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1970-1979/1978\\_it](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1970-1979/1978_it)
- [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1970-1979/1979\\_it](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1970-1979/1979_it)
- [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1980\\_it](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1980_it)
- [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1981\\_it](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1981_it)
- [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1982\\_it](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1982_it)
- [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1983\\_it](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1983_it)
- [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1984\\_it](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1984_it)
- [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1985\\_it](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1985_it)
- [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1986\\_it](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1986_it)
- [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1987\\_it](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1987_it)
- [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1988\\_it](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1988_it)
- [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1989\\_it](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/1980-1989/1989_it)
- [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/acc\\_1985/sign](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/acc_1985/sign)
- <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/historicalarchives/en/multimedia-gallery.html>
- <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:11951K/TXT&from=IT>

- <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/?uri=CELEX:11979H/TXT>
- <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/?uri=CELEX:11985I/AVI/COM>
- <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/?uri=CELEX:11986U/TXT>
- <http://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1977%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf>
- <http://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1985%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf>
- [https://www.senato.it/3182?newsletter\\_item=1869&newsletter\\_numero=175#](https://www.senato.it/3182?newsletter_item=1869&newsletter_numero=175#)
- <http://www.bnrcm.beniculturali.it/it/32/biblioteca-digitale>
- [www.dizie.eu/](http://www.dizie.eu/)
- [www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1979%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf](http://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1979%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf)
- [www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1980%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf](http://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1980%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf)
- [www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1984%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf](http://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1984%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf)
- <http://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1986%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf>
- [www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1987%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf](http://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1987%20Testi%20e%20Documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf)
- [www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1988%20Testi%20e%20documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf](http://www.farnesina.ipzs.it/images/biblioteca/testi/1988%20Testi%20e%20documenti%20sulla%20politica%20estera%20dell'Italia.pdf)

## *Historical Documents*

- Andreotti Archive, (since 2007 hosted by L. Sturzo Institute in Rome, via delle Coppelle 35). The cards are in re-order. To date it has been possible to consult only 25 series of the personal archive of Giulio Andreotti, several times in the '80s Foreign Minister.
- “Corriere della sera”, June 30, 1985.
- “Financial Times”, July 1, 1985.
- Foreign Affairs. July 1978. Rome: Italian Association for Foreign Policy Studies. "La posizione dell'Italia sui problemi dell'allargamento", author Anchise, P. (Pietro Calamia).
- *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani, decima serie: 1943-1948 (DDI), vol. II, 12*  
December 1944-9 December 1945, Rome, 1992, n.163.
- Institute for International Affairs. Lorenzo Natali in Europe, memories and testimonies.
- Institute L. Sturzo, Carte Giulio Andreotti, Europe Series/ Common issues and ECSC and EEC summits (1957-2004).
- Institute L.Sturzo, Carte Giulio Andreotti (GA), Europe Series, Envelope 352, Letter by Emilio Colombo to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, november 12, 1981.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Service and Documentation. Year 1977, texts and documents on the foreign policy of Italy.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Service and Documentation. Year 1979, texts and documents on the foreign policy of Italy.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Service and Documentation. Year 1980, texts and documents on the foreign policy of Italy.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Service and Documentation. Year 1984, texts and documents on the foreign policy of Italy.



- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Service and Documentation. Year 1985, texts and documents on the foreign policy of Italy.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Service and Documentation. Year 1986, texts and documents on the foreign policy of Italy.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Service and Documentation. Year 1987, texts and documents on the foreign policy of Italy.
- "Rivista di studi Politici internazionali", n.208, oct./dec. 1985.

## *Annex. 1*

The process of European integration has been characterized, since its inception, by many different actors who, over the years, have brought their small but fundamental contribution to the implementation and continuous strengthening of this process. It is interesting to revisit the fundamental phases that characterized first the birth of the concept of European integration and then, almost always, its continuous and incessant development by examining, in particular during the eighties, the contribution that, from a political and diplomatic point of view, has been given to the European cause by our country and by our fellow countrymen working in the institutions of the Community, for the development of the process of European integration.

The first chapter, “*The evolution of the European Integration Process (1945-1980)*”, examines the main steps taken by European countries from the outbreak of the Cold war to the end of the 1970s. At the end of World War II, Europe appeared in disastrous conditions, a situation so dramatic and so exceptional that is difficult today to talk about it to the generations who have not seen and lived. The devastation really crossed the entire continent: "whole cities razed to the ground, over 35 million dead, a destruction not only physical but also social, political, moral". Faced with so much destruction, however, the European populations "did not lose the will to return to life" by rebuilding the cities as they were before, pulling themselves out of that quagmire in a few years, advancing and becoming, at least in the western part, a prosperous and tolerant continent. An economically surprising fact, for some almost a miracle, generated and powered by two powerful push engines: on the one hand the US economic aid policies and on the other the progressive economic and political integration of European nations. In 1945, however, at the end of the war, the real big change had been above all political; after the great disaster emerged a new "bipolarism" made out of two "superpowers", theoretically non-European (even if historically linked to Europe), between the United States and the Soviet Union. For almost half a century the bipolar confrontation, better known as Cold War, between the US and the USSR interfered with all aspects of international life. However, even if it was difficult to imagine a less fertile ground for the start of a political process of integration between nations,

yet it was exactly what happened in a very short time. As early as the autumn of 1950, the countries of Western Europe were in the midst of economic reconstruction and six of them, including the historical enemies France and Germany, had begun negotiations to place their coal-steel industries under the supervision of a supranational authority. In addition, 15 of them had agreed to respect the contents of a convention on human rights and all or almost all of them had joined for common defense, to a close political-military alliance with the United States against the USSR and its allies, NATO. What were the key factors that had contributed to and fed this process?

The first factor was ideological: everywhere, in western countries, democratic politicians were in power who wanted to pursue European unity with different accents and methods. The second factor of Europeanist cohesion was the urgent need for rapid and full economic reconstruction. The third factor was linked to the great American consensus on European integration. The fourth factor of cohesion was the need for some reintegration of Germany without it constituting a danger for anyone. The fifth and final factor was Britain's obvious economic weakness and political ambivalence. To all these reasons had to be added the strength of the needs of the Cold War starting with the massive U.S. aid program, called the Marshall Plan. An economic program for sure, but with deep and clear political meanings, anti-communist and anti-USSR, in which the American request that the Europeans would manage the aid as much as possible together was explicit. If the first practical gymnasium of European integration had been the OECE of the Marshall Plan, the birth, on 18 April 1951, in Paris, of the Economic Community of Coal and Steel (ECSC) is commonly considered the first fundamental stone of Community construction, as we know it today. It was the first voluntary renouncement by six European sovereign states (France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg) of a portion of their national sovereignty, among other things in a strategic sector such as coal and steel, a sector that "in the common belief" had always been associated, rightly, with war and arms. The subsequent failure of the EDC (European Defence Community) did not stop the politicians of the six ECSC countries, who thought they should relaunch the unitary project with an even more ambitious project.

The model of reference to which to entrust oneself appeared to be the successful one of the ECSC, according to Monnet's functionalist idea that already had a broad consensus. The appointment for the "relaunch" was set in Messina, at the express request of the Italian Minister Martino, where in June 1955 the delegations of the six ECSC countries converged. Months of intense work followed and in May 1956 at the Conference of Ministers in Venice, Spaak ( the appointed president of the new Intergovernmental Committee) presented precise proposals that went far beyond the expectations of Messina. Thus began the real negotiations between the various delegations, with sessions largely occupied to soften the French concerns that obtained the desired guarantees especially for their agriculture and overseas territories. After overcoming these resistances, also thanks to the mediation of Italian delegation, the treaties establishing the EEC (European Economic Community) and the EURATOM (Nuclear Energy Agency) were signed in Rome on 25 March 1957. Nevertheless, it was above all the first to make history: for the first time six European nations solemnly gave themselves the common objective of "promoting, through the establishment of a common market and the gradual rapprochement of the economic policies of the member states, a harmonious development of all countries".

The 1960s were a particularly good period for the European economy, within a general and intense growth of the entire international economy: in this context, the choice of the six countries that signed the Treaties of Rome immediately produced excellent economic results and ensured that European policies proceeded quickly. In those early years, the creation of the ESF (European Social Fund) and the signature, in April 1965, of the Treaty merging the executives of the three communities (ECSC, EURATOM and EEC), quickly made Great Britain and the other EFTA countries (the Free Trade Area, founded in 1960, among the Western European countries not belonging to the EEC) rethink about the opportunity to join the EEC. The process of admission of Great Britain was a very controversial one, mainly due to the strong opposition of the French President De Gaulle and it will finally end, after more stops as in the second French veto in 1966-67, only with the succession of Pompidou to De Gaulle and then with the consent of these to the entry of the GB in the EEC in 1973.

While it is true that in the second half of the 1960s the political situation of the various states (especially France) had slowed down the unitary process, there is no doubt, however, that with "De Gaulle's departure from the scene on 28 April 1969, the leaders of the EEC, including the new French president George Pompidou, began to look for a way to pursue positive integration measures in the fields of foreign policy, monetary policy and economic planning". In fact, even though the 1970s are often considered "years of stalemate" in the integration process mainly due to the international economic crisis following the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979, however, looking at the facts, the "nine" (Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark joined the EEC in 1973) made clear progress in those years on the road to integration.

In the second chapter, “ *Italy, protagonist of the European construction in the period 1945-1969 and the difficulties during the 70's* ”, are presented the traditional lines of the Italian Foreign Policy with a specific focus on the role of our country in the most important events of the first twenty five years of European integration. Starting from the very beginning of our unitary history and in particular when in March 1861 the Kingdom of Italy made its first appearance on the international scene, its political ambition was immediately evident, implicit in some members of the ruling elites, explicit in others, to be accepted on an equal footing with the great European powers. An ambition that will run from then on through the whole of Italian foreign policy until the tragic end of World War II, even if then, as has been observed, in many periods and events "the facts have not corresponded, if not rarely, to such ambitions". In the first half of the twenty century and in particular the years of the First World War, offered "the image of a fickle, inconstant and Machiavellian diplomacy" and the following twenty years of fascist dictatorship, with the Second World War as its climax, certainly did not contribute to increasing the political and diplomatic prestige of Italy, rather the opposite.

A profound change in foreign policy took place only after 1945 with the advent to power of a new ruling class that, often living abroad and in exile and, in any case, in strong and polemical contrast with the previous triumphant (and tragic) nationalist and imperial rhetoric, had understood the realistic international dimensions of Italy in the international arena and focused on the return to democracy and domestic economic and social development. From here, after 1945,

came an Italian foreign policy with a different image. Much more prudent and wise, yet faithful without hesitation to the alliances made in the years immediately after the Second World War (opening to markets, NATO and European construction) with a diplomacy that knew its limits and knew what place Italy had in the hierarchy of nations, rejecting any adventure.

That behind this general political tone, perhaps "resigned", there was a "frustrated diplomacy" that pursued positions of a more authoritative presence on the international stage and that had not fully accepted the balances that came out of World War II, is already evident from the '80s. In those years, Italy, which had become a great industrial power, seemed to return to a sort of new nationalism, although very different from the old, devoid of rhetoric and aggressiveness, democratic, but still present, claiming a role as a new protagonist for our country. It was a feeling certainly not limited to small groups, but rather widespread in large layers also popular, with its vein also of Garibaldian and Mazzinian origin or Catholic, as well as in bands of the small bourgeoisie and middle classes emerging after the Unity.

A crucial question would be to ask oneself what culture has supported and motivated, over the decades, Italian foreign policy choices. Whether more subjects of cultured culture (heritage of ancient empires, maritime and commercial vocations...) or more revolutionary or populist subjects such as the idea of an Italian proletarian nation in competition with the richest and capitalist nations. That the theme, however, exists, as has been observed, even if only under trace, is evident, for example, in the recurrent and reciprocal accusations, typical of the Italian political controversy, of being a group or the other, a party or a government, a leader or another... at the "service of the foreigner", yesterday as today. A foreign policy of republican Italy in the center of which, since 1945, the "European choice" has been firmly placed. A choice that, in fact, has represented and represents a "continuity and depth superior to the other most important choices, the American-Atlantic and the Mediterranean, which marked the international action of (our) country in the second half of the twenty century and continue to characterize it in this first glimpse of the twenty-first century.

It cannot be ignored, however, that there is a foreign and partly Italian historiography that, at least for a certain period, attributed very little weight and commitment to the European choice of our country. In reality, for Italy as for all the protagonists, there are two ways of interpreting the policy of European integration. On the one hand, as an economic achievement resulting in the customs union, the completion of the single market and finally the single currency. On the other hand, as a political process with federal aspirations, towards a politically united Europe. Of course, it would be reductive to read the European construction as a simple daughter of the Cold War, although born in that era and for many reasons related to it. There has never been a process in Europe's centuries-old history comparable to that of integration. From the ECSC to the EEC to the EU, institutional integration has been created over the years with its own regulatory autonomy, its own judicial system and its own system of democratic control. A Community organization that "rests on a continuous mediation between national interests and powers and Community interests and powers (...) to the point that the whole European construction can be defined as a process that, for successive crises, changes the balance between the powers of national governments and the powers of the European institutions. It is in this context that the Europeanist policy of Italy must be understood. Although it has made an "important journey" in Europe since the 1950s, it is still of secondary importance in Brussels. Italy has been for many, over the decades, a "weak negotiator" who would always have lacked a "precise strategy to take care of community affairs", except perhaps, as will be seen, in the important exceptions of 1985 (Community Council of Milan) and 1990 (Rome).

The third chapter “ *Italy's foreign policy in the first part of 1980s and its role in the Mediterranean enlargement* ” developed a precise analysis of the most important events correlated with the process of enlargement of the CEE, first to Greece and then, to the Iberic peninsula with a particular focus on the role of Italy in this first half of the eighties. The 1980s were for Italy a period of profound economic, social, cultural and, last but not least, political transformations; transformations that did not fail to influence, and not superficially, its foreign policy, particularly that in Europe. Even as a result of the hardship of the 1970s, the European political framework changed and new players appeared in the foreign and European policy of the 1980s. In Great Britain, in 1979, Labourers lost the elections and the Tories

(conservatives) came to power, led by Margaret Thatcher, who presented herself with a platform of uncompromising economic and social liberalism. The era of social democratic governments led by Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt also ended in West Germany in 1983, and the Christian Democrat Helmut Kohl came to power. In France, a left-wing coalition (Union of the Left) won the 1981 elections, bringing Francois Mitterrand, an elderly socialist leader, to the presidency of the Republic. In Portugal the dictatorship had fallen in 1974, after the death of the old dictator Salazar by the hands of relevant parts of the army that were tired of fighting against the guerrilla warfare for the maintenance of the old colonial empire in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, etc.. In the country, after an initial period of turbulence, the socialist led by Mario Soares won the general election, alternating in power for the 1980s with the more moderate social democrats. In Greece the military dictatorship called "of the colonels" had fallen after the disastrous war against Turkey which had led to the division into two parts of the island of Cyprus: and if in the '70s had come to power the moderate party "New Democracy", on the contrary for all the '80s, particularly since the entry of the country into the European Community, ruled the Hellenic Socialist Party (PASOK) led by the leader Andreas Papandreu. In Spain, the transition from the Franco dictatorship to democracy was smooth and practically guided by the monarchy. After a democratic transition government led by the young right-wing leader Suarez, the new democratic constitution was approved by referendum in 1978 and in 1982 the Socialist Party led by the leader Felipe Gonzales came to power. The return of the three southern European countries to a stable parliamentary democracy represented a clear and positive innovation in the European political history of the twentieth century. In particular, this was an innovation that allowed them to enter in their own right (Greece in 1981 and Spain and Portugal in 1986), after a long negotiation in which Italy would play an important role, in the community and democratic Europe and in the Atlantic Alliance.

The first part of the eighties is commonly considered as the period of "Europessimism" and in fact, if one looks at the European achievements of those years, very few and of little importance, the assessment of a phase of stagnation and immobility of the European construction does not seem wrong. However, in a better way, by placing those events, those decisions and those discussions in a longer-term historical perspective, the general interpretation of the period appears to be in need



of revision, especially if we pay attention to the many turmoil, ideas and proposals that marked the political life of the community in those years. In other words, the idea that it was, in essence, a matter of "years of transition" between the long crisis of the 1970s and "the fervor of initiatives that, from the second half of the 1980s would then extend to the last decade of the 20th century", seems more likely. For the first five years, however, at least until the end of 1984, the political attention of the Community was absorbed by the long and exhausting negotiations on the financial contribution of Great Britain to the Community, objectively in strong passivity.

Beyond this, at the beginning of the 1980s, the practice of regular meetings and coordination between the external policies of the countries participating in the Community, known as European Political Cooperation (EPC), had become established. Strengthened in those years in its Community representation, Italy, at the beginning of the 1980's, became the protagonist of two proposals to strengthen the political dimension of the process of European integration that after the disappointing performance in some crises, appeared to be in marked decline: Gensher-Colombo Plan and Spinelli Project.

As said, the second enlargement of the CEE occurred during the 1980s; The first enlargement of the EEC, which had taken place in 1973 and which had brought in, as seen, Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark, had in fact "shifted the centre of gravity" of the Community "towards the north of the continent". In the following decade, the "Mediterranean" enlargement, due to the positive start of democratic political processes in the three candidate countries, "changed that tendency by balancing the major European economic structure towards its geographical centre". However, the second enlargement carried with it also serious questions: first of all on the impact that the entry of the three countries would have led to the democratic structures of the community and on the opportunity itself to sink the borders of the EEC so deeply towards the South. The strengthening of the Mediterranean component of the EEC, in fact, inevitably widened "the aims of the Community itself, adapting it to the new challenges that now came to the old continent more from the south than from the east, according to completely new parameters, such as demography, immigration and cooperation or to old prospects such as energy". The

real underlying problem, however, was the great economic, social and political disparity between the countries of the Community and those which were now aspiring to join it: in fact, the imposition of policies of "harmonization" between the two would have been necessary in the future.

Greece, Portugal and Spain in the mid-1970s presented their applications to join the EEC. The small Greece arrived first at the conclusion, fully admitted to the EEC already in 1981: its negotiations lasted from July 1976 to May 1979: a relatively short time. It was backed by federal Germany, which in previous years had developed a wide and deep economic and commercial penetration in the country. For its part, the Greek government was eager to enter thinking of solving its many internal problems of economic development. For Spain, the first links with the Community had been established since the 1960s: when, under the umbrella of the old dictator Franco, a new technocratic elite linked to the Catholic group Opus Dei took power, which, in contrast to the phalangist component of the government, convinced him of the importance for the country of negotiating some form of association with the EEC. This was something that Spain had been doing by asking to negotiate its own form of "association" since 1962 in a negotiation that ended on 29 June 1970 with the signing of a "preferential agreement" that facilitated agricultural exports but above all industrial exports to Europe; a Spanish ( industry) sector that until then had been depressed by the scarce outlet markets. The agreement contained clearly favorable provisions for Spain and sanctioned the total opening of its economy to Europe. For Portugal, on the other hand, the initial date of its rapprochement with the EEC can be indicated in 1972 when the country had joined the EFTA, the free trade area created in the 1950s on the impulse of Great Britain. But they were both, little more than important political signals, waiting for the end of the two authoritarian regimes. In fact, it was only the fall of the Caetano government in Portugal (April 1974) on the one hand and the death of Franco in Spain (November 1975) on the other that removed all political obstacles to the entry of the two countries into the EEC, which in fact officially presented their candidatures in 1977.

The negotiations, however, will be "long and complex" especially for Spain and will arouse more than one concern among Italian farmers in the South but especially

for French farmers who saw in the Spanish backward competitors but at the same time fearsome on the front of prices, significantly lower. The political turning point that made enlargement to the Iberian countries possible took place at the Fontainebleau summit in June 1984. In particular, in Fontainebleau, all the Community governments committed themselves to decide within three months on all the technical problems and disputes linked to enlargement, together with the problems of the Budget. The following months confirmed this new perspective. Spain and Portugal signed in fact their accession treaties in March 1985. In all the process of Mediterranean enlargement behind the scenes, despite the speeches and institutional discussions between ministers and politicians concerned, the diplomatic negotiations were conducted for the European Community by the Italian Commissioner Lorenzo Natali who, especially for the enlargement to the Iberian Peninsula, can undoubtedly be considered one of the main architects. The position of the Italian Government was in fact, from the outset, favorable. The main reasons for the Italian position were as follows: on the one hand, the desire to welcome into a democratic and prosperous Europe those countries that had emerged from a long period of isolation caused by the dictatorships that had governed them for so long; on the other hand, a rebalancing of the Mediterranean component from within the Community itself, with a view to future developments, was welcomed. In particular, Italy was pushing for the entry of the Iberian countries, even with the many sectoral problems that this entailed, to act as a stimulus for the entire Community to seriously address the problem of inequality between the various regions of the EEC. The main reasons for the Italian position were as follows: on the one hand, the desire to welcome into a democratic and prosperous Europe those countries that had emerged from a long period of isolation caused by the dictatorships that had governed them for so long; on the other hand, a rebalancing of the Mediterranean component from within the Community itself, with a view to future developments, was welcomed. In particular, Italy was pushing for the entry of the Iberian countries, even with the many sectoral problems that this entailed, to act as a stimulus for the entire Community to seriously address the problem of inequality between the various regions of the EEC.

In the fourth chapter "*Italy's foreign policy in the second half of the 1980s and its role in the reform of the European institutions* ", are addressed the main events

which, in the second half of the eighties, opened the path toward the reform of the Community institution. At the Fontainebleau summit (in June 1984), the unblocking of the negotiations for the entry of the Iberian countries was not the only important decision taken by the Community governments. Two other important decisions were taken, which would have had a significant impact on European affairs in the years to come. The first was the conclusion of the British question, putting an end to the exhausting "battle of England" declared by Thatcher 5 years earlier to "get her money back". The second decision would have been even more important in the future: it was decided to set up two ad hoc ministerial commissions: the first chaired by the Italian Andolino on "the Europe of citizens" and the second chaired by the Irish Dodges on "institutional reform" of the Community. The Community seemed to be moving towards a new historical cycle of consolidation and growth. However, when the Dodge Committee's proposals were discussed in March 1985, the opposition of Great Britain and Denmark (often with Greece) focused on many points, but above all on the right of veto. Liberalization was their intention, but no step towards any political federalism. Thus, in June 1985, at the summit in Milan under Italian leadership, Great Britain and Denmark remained on their rigid positions, proposing only a gentleman's agreement on the partial use of the right of veto; a proposal that obviously saw the clear rejection of all the other states that perceived it as an inadmissible step backwards. As is well known, the impasse was resolved by the Italians: the Prime Minister Craxi and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Andreotti. The latter, having recalled that Article 236 of the Treaty establishing the EEC allowed an intergovernmental conference to be convened by simple majority, adopted this procedure and put to the vote the proposal of a special Conference to discuss and vote on the suggestions of the Dodge Committee and all the rest, which the Committee itself had requested. Craxi put it to the vote and, as was to be expected, the proposal was adopted by a majority with the support of all seven other states and the contrary vote of Great Britain, Greece and Denmark.

The Milan Summit can be considered the first concrete episode of the relaunch of European integration after a long period of stagnation; without it, it can be said, the Community born with the Treaties of Rome would perhaps have ended up as EFTA. In Milan, in essence, another road was taken. A few months later, under the impetus of the Intergovernmental Conference, the key Single European Act of the future

Union would be born and there is no doubt that the decision taken by majority was the starting point for the process. In fact, never before, a vote had been taken with a clear and distinct majority and minority, changing in this way the nature of the European Council from a structure of meetings into a real decision-making body, an institution of the Community. The Italian position, if traced back to the philosophy of "decisionism", was certainly historically prior to Milan 1985. The objective of enlargement and institutional strengthening of the Community had for years been supported by Italy in general and by Craxi in particular, backed by the identical deep conviction of Andreotti and in any case carefully prepared throughout the six months of the Italian Presidency that precisely expired in Milan.

The new President of the Commission, the French Jacques Delors, who took office in January 1985, made an undoubted contribution to one of the periods of greatest activity of the European Community. A follower of Jean Monnet and therefore an ardent Europeanist but also a politician with long experience, Delors gave, for the whole of the following decade and with the clear support of Mitterrand and Kohl, a vigorous impulse to the resumption of the Community path. His action was part of a new, favorable international context, due to a combination of factors: a) the new positive international economic situation, in the USA and in Europe; b) the climate change in East-West relations with the new Soviet leadership of Gorbachev; c) the appearance and debate among themselves of various reform proposals on the EEC; d) the widespread, general conviction that the reforms had to be carried out at that moment or the entire process of integration would have entered into crisis probably forever; e) the enlargement to 12, with the entry of the countries of the Southern Mediterranean, which posed in itself problems of difficult functioning of the institutions themselves of a much larger community than the original one of 1957.

Now it was a matter of putting together a common document "in view of the European Union" as Delors said, which aimed above all at the completion of the internal market by the end of 1992. Basically, Delors wanted to make specific commitments on this, (on the instruments and the calendar) convinced that the total abolition of internal borders would be, as in fact happened then, the key to ensure subsequent and stronger forms of integration, including political integration. In the days of the negotiations in Luxembourg, few people really understood and

supported such a plan and the fact that the Commission's proposal to arrive at a "Single Act" was approved by all, in the common belief that it was a marginal and formal aspect, proves this. The compromise was therefore soon found, namely at a meeting in Luxembourg on 2-3 December 1985 and then at the ministerial summit, also there, a few days after, 16-17 December. The idea was that, as Delors said, it was no longer conceivable that the European Union, towards which everyone said to strive, could function without recognizing the interdependence of foreign policy and security problems with economic, financial and monetary problems. Hence Delors' proposal that the work of the conference be integrated into a "single legal act". It is worth remembering the parties, in the negotiations, on the powers of Parliament: on the one hand Germans and partly Italians who wanted a massive increase in the powers of Parliament at the expense of the powers of the Commission, on the other hand the French, British and Danish who did not want to make any changes on this and finally the Benelux countries who, together with the Delors Commission, wanted to find a mix between the increased powers of Parliament and the Commission.

The contents of the compromise were essentially: a) the widening of majority vote on matters relating to the completion of the single market, with the exception of taxation and people; b) the integration of the Treaty with new chapters; c) a limited strengthening of social policy; d) the abandonment, for the time being, of the idea of monetary union. As mentioned, the powers of the Parliament grew, which ceased to be a consultative body, but not by much: the British were satisfied even though they would realize only eventually the inexorable, albeit slow, mechanism of unification triggered by the Single Act. Equally satisfied Germans and Benelux for the substantial even if small progress achieved on the road to common integration; not very satisfied instead the Italians and Delors (at least in the declarations) who expected growing contrasts with the Parliament after the proposals of the latter had not been listened to at all. In short, it can be said that the renunciation to the federalist approach of the Parliament document, already implicit in the Dodge Committee text, was the political price to pay to stop the opposite intergovernmental way that Great Britain wanted instead. The work of the Conference ended, with the adoption of the Single European Act (SAE), which was signed on 17 February 1986. On that occasion Andreotti declared that he was

present at the ceremony " *to show that we are not withdrawing to the Aventine* " but that he would not sign for protest and to await the important Danish popular referendum called in the meantime, given the vote against the ratification of that Parliament. Thus Italy signed 11 days later together with Greece and Denmark, declaring that with the Single Act a great opportunity had been lost.

The Single Act was a small first step towards the institutional reforms wanted by many, but it introduced two major innovations: the enlargement of the issues on which decisions could be taken by majority vote and the willingness of all, in the common path towards the Single Market and the European Union as it had been proclaimed, to identify a wide range of areas of Community cooperation. Evidently, the Single Act had all the characteristics of a transitional document towards more ambitious objectives, namely to arrive at a political union through the completion of an economic and monetary union. It was at this point that Delors's skillful action began. Having obtained the Single Act, the single document that everyone had undertaken to support, Jacques Delors understood very well that the time required to be shortened in order for it to become a reality.

Thus, In June 1989, at the Madrid Council, Delors did present the possibility of a single currency by setting three conditions for continuing along that path, which was inevitable: 1) the total convertibility of European currencies; 2) the complete liberalization of capital movements; 3) the elimination of the fluctuation margins of the various currencies and a system of fixed exchange rates. The route was thus fixed. Apart from Thatcher's foreseeable opposition, the other states were not against it, but it was decided to launch a generic "first phase" on the road to monetary union, which would start on 1 July 1990. Important statement but made without much conviction, it was said. At that point, what no one expected happened in an area of the world that had been politically immobile for decades: Eastern Europe under Soviet control. In a few months the communist regimes and governments in the area of Soviet influence collapsed after decades of absolute power and complete control of civil society; shortly afterwards the USSR itself collapsed and the great question of a possible German reunification also opened up, unexpectedly. The discussion on the implementation of the Madrid proposals was therefore taking place while the whole world, and Europe first and foremost, was

focusing on what was happening in Germany and, in general, in the East. It was so in that particular climate, in which everything seemed easy and inevitable, that serious and realistic discussion began again on the possibility of possible European political unification, as had not happened since the '50s. The changes were fast. The last months of 1990 were also the months of the Italian semester and the Rome Council in December of the same year completed the preparatory work for two historic conferences to be held in the following year: one on economic and monetary union and the other on the political union of Europe.

The event that had completely changed the cards in Brussels and in Europe in general was the German unification that exploded in November-December 1989. In a few days, after the clear will expressed by the German government to achieve the old dream of a united Germany, it seemed clear to everyone that this triggered a major issue. The fact was that a united Germany actually altered the European balance, with its 80 million inhabitants in the center of the continent, with its strong economy and with its natural, historical, economic expansionism to the east and towards the Balkans. The French were particularly worried (at the end of 1989 it was their six-month presidency of the EEC), official supporters of the German ally and its legitimate unitary aspiration but in reality concerned about the consequences of this on the European balance, while, on the contrary, Italy was favorable to the reunification as it emerged from the favorable position taken by Andreotti during the “informal dinner” with the Community partners on 18 November 1989.

About a month later, at the final summit of the French semester, Mitterrand, whose reservations on Germany had certainly not fallen, stated that before reunification "it would be wise to further develop and strengthen the structures of the Community. Shortly afterwards, Kohl and his foreign minister Genscher had abandoned all reservations about the rapid implementation of a European Economic and Monetary Union: for the Germans, that is, at that point, working hard for integration was the only way to obtain the green light for their reunification. In the weeks and months following German reunification, the European green light went hand in hand with strengthening the Community towards its transformation into a political Union. In short, the general idea was to have a united Germany firmly anchored to the European institutions. And so, with very fast times for the history of community integration, for example compared to the accession of Spain and



Portugal (it had taken 7 years and more), the five East German Lander entered Germany and then Europe. An historic event that took place in just one day: when the Treaty between the two Germanies came into force on 3 October 1990 and unification was proclaimed. At the same time, the road to Maastricht began, where the European Union, the new name of the EEC, would be born. It was the conclusion of a process that began in 1947, or, if it preferred, in 1950 and 1957.

If there is one possible conclusion, in relation to the question asked at the beginning of this report, it is that the commitment and foresight shown by our political and diplomatic elites in the important events that took place in the process of European integration in the 1980s has certainly been noteworthy and, perhaps, of no small importance. This reflection therefore observes, for the 1980s, a clear change of direction compared with the first thirty years of Community life, in which our country was often accused, particularly by foreign historiography, of being a weak negotiator within the Community and of overlapping its own internal interests with those of the integration process.