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## The European Democrat Union and the Revolutionary Events in Central Europe in 1989

First, this article will explain the role of the “European Democrat Union” (EDU) within the framework of European Christian Democrats and Conservatives and its importance for the year of change 1989. Second, it will touch on a few aspects on the leading figures; third, on the promising contacts between the EDU and the Communist Party of the USSR; fourth, on the role played by the EDU in Central Europe, especially vis-à-vis the events in Poland and Hungary, which were its priorities; and finally, on the developments in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) regarding the German Question.<sup>1</sup>

### I. The Origins of the European Christian Democrats and Conservatives

After 1945, Catholic-conservative and Christian democratic people's parties played an increasingly more important role in Western Europe than before. There was no lack of new incentives nor of necessary challenges for transnational contacts and organized party cooperation. Nevertheless, the secret meetings of the “Geneva Circle” (1947–56) as well as cooperation within the “Nouvelles Equipes Internationales” (NEI), which were formed in 1947,<sup>2</sup> up through their renaming and transformation into the “European Union of Christian Democrats” (EUCD) in 1965, were characterized by continuous debates about how far the coordination should go in both political and ideological matters.<sup>3</sup>

1 Due to the contribution by Michael Gehler, this chapter is—in part—a result of the FWF-project P 26439-G15 “Aktenedition: Österreich und die Deutsche Frage 1987 bis 1990.”

2 Michael Gehler, Der „Genfer Kreis“: Christdemokratische Parteienkooperation und Vertrauensbildung im Zeichen der deutsch-französischen Annäherung 1947–1955, in: *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 49 (2001) 7, 599–625; id., The Geneva Circle of West European Christian Democrats, in: Michael Gehler/Wolfram Kaiser, *Christian Democracy in Europe since 1945*, Vol. 2 (London/New York: Routledge, 2004), 207–220; Michael Gehler/Wolfram Kaiser (eds.), *Transnationale Parteienkooperation der europäischen Christdemokraten: Dokumente 1945–1965* (Munich: Saur, 2004); Michael Gehler/Marcus Gonschor/Hinnerk Meyer/Hannes Schöner (eds.), *Transnationale Parteienkooperation der europäischen Christdemokraten und Konservativen. Dokumente 1965–1979* (Berlin/Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2017).

3 Thomas Jansen/Steven Van Hecke, *At Europe's Service. The Origins and Evolution of the European People's Party* (Berlin et al.: Springer, 2011), 21–28.

The NEI and the EUCD expressly referred to Christian principles, and, thus, civil parties of the center with related but not identical platforms, were excluded. This concerned states with a different political culture and only small parties that declared themselves Christian, such as the United Kingdom and the Scandinavian countries.

In contrast to the NEI, in the EUCD only one party could be represented per country. It is worth noting that within the EUCD over the course of years, the so-called “Political Committee” was formed from the Christian democratic parties of the EC states. This committee had the function of creating a lasting institutional connection between the parties and factions of the Community at the European level. In addition, the Committee also laid the foundations for the European People’s Party (EPP). The transnational EPP federation of Christian democratic member parties in the European Community, which was founded on 29 April 1976, clearly differed from earlier forms of Christian Democratic cooperation. The official inaugural assembly took place on 8 July 1976, in Luxembourg. The aim of the EPP foundation was to create a parliamentary faction.<sup>4</sup>

It was the intention of the German CDU and the Bavarian CSU to include British conservatives and French civil groups in the party alliance, but they ran into categorical rejection from the Italian, Belgian, and Dutch parties. Against this backdrop, the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP) with Josef Taus and Alois Mock, together with the support of the German union parties of the CDU (Helmut Kohl) and the CSU (Franz Josef Strauß), and the British Conservatives made efforts to extend the narrow ideological framework of “Christian Democracy” and to create a broader spectrum of cooperation of European parties of the center, both within and outside the EC. The CDU/CSU and the ÖVP stood for an increased European-conservative orientation which, with the EDU that was founded in 1978, attempted to create an equivalent for the EPP and consequently with the intention of creating a broader base.<sup>5</sup>

## II. Some Explanations of the EDU within the Framework of European Christian Democrats and Conservatives and its importance for the “Year of Change” 1989

Starting in 1978, conservative and Christian democratic parties joined together for common work in the EDU. This new organization did not, however, lead to a consensus with respect to a forced policy of integration. The term “European integration” was hardly used; rather, the discussion was of “European coopera-

4 Thomas Jansen, *Die Entstehung einer Europäischen Partei. Vorgeschichte, Gründung und Entwicklung der EVP* (Bonn: Europa-Union-Verlag, 1996); id., *Die Europäische Volkspartei. Entstehung und Entwicklung* (Brussels: EDP, 2006).

5 Cf. Andreas Khol/Lars Tobisson/Alexis Wintoniak (eds.), *Twenty Years European Democrat Union 1978–1998* (Vienna: EDU, 1998).

tion.” Nevertheless, in the view of the EDU, the Europe of that time should not be isolated by its existing borders. The goal was for a greater Europe in the sense of an ideological and geopolitical homogeneity of civil democratic parties with an intended influence on opposition groupings in the communist sphere.<sup>6</sup> The EDU was intended not only as a catch basin for the center-right parties, especially as a counterweight to the Socialist International (SI) but also as a substitute for those Christian Democratic and conservative parties that had not been accepted into the EPP as a result of their ideological or programmatic points of difference or because of their countries not being members of the EC. The ideological rifts between Christian democrats and center-right parties, especially the British conservatives and French neo-Gaullists, were in no way reconciled with the two-track (EUCD-EDU) arrangement. The relationship between the EDU and the EUCD or the EPP—which, since the founding of the EDU, had been from time to time also designated as dualist—continued to exist. In any case, more and more European parties attempted to overcome this dilemma within the framework of the EPP as a faction in the European Parliament. The EDU acted more as a Working Group or Working Community of Conservatives and Christian-democrats than as a European Party. The EDU documented all its activities and published a regularly appearing yearbook. Starting from this background we may ask: How can we define the EDU within the context of 1989? What did it do with regard to Central Eastern Europe? What solutions did the EDU propose? What did it achieve and what could it do?

Those who are involved in evaluating the importance of EDU policy in the years and months preceding the beginning of the “*annus mirabilis*” in 1989 have to consider the changes in East-West policy in light of the new Soviet policy. The chronology of the “year of change”—including the period 1987/1988—represents an adequate longitudinal cross-section describing the work of the EDU, its focus, its contacts, and its expectations. After all, in 1989 the EDU was already able to look back on a ten-year development and trial period as a “Christian democratic party family.”

And in contrast to the European People’s Party, founded two years before the EDU in 1976, the EDU saw itself from the beginning neither as the extended arm of a military alliance nor as a strictly defined economic area. Rather, mutual cooperation and collaboration with sometimes divergent (Christian democratic and conservative) parties were at the center of its political work. This distinction would prove crucial in the “changes” during 1989.

Only the hegemony of Christian democratic and conservative parties in Western Europe made possible the increased importance of the EDU as well as the EDU member parties. If Glasnost and Perestroika had been initiated ten years earlier, socialist parties would have prevailed in the governments of most

6 “Das Europakonzept der EDU, Dokumente zur ÖVP-Außenpolitik.” (The European Concept of the EDU. Documents on ÖVP Foreign Policy), Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, Sign. 2358.

Western European countries. It was only national governmental responsibility that enabled the EDU to act as a relevant partner against the Soviets and the governments of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) countries.

Party visits by the EDU and/or EPP delegations to the same partners in the Central and Eastern European countries often followed one after the other. This race to the East was also reflected in the fact that, in the meantime, the party foundation of the US Republicans had established a political office in Poland (Warsaw) before the Adenauer Foundation in 1989.<sup>7</sup>

### III. Aspects on the Leading Figures

Who were the key players in the EDU? Founded in 1978, the EDU was administered and represented by the Austrians EDU President Alois Mock and Executive Secretary Andreas Khol from Vienna's central office.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the Austrian Christian Democratic People's Party (ÖVP) was also a leading figure within the EDU. The actual influence of Christian democratic and conservative parties, however, came from the parties' spectrum within the European Community. The two

7 See the memoirs of Dieter A. Schmidt, head of the CSU Foreign Policy Department: "[...] After the historic turnaround in 1989/90, a great number of parties from CEE pushed into the European political parties' associations. In the case of the socialists, as well as in the case of the EPP, less liberal, conservatives, greens, and communists. The motives for this were clear. It was expected that this membership would provide support and benefits in bringing the respective countries closer to the EU and the EU and their subsequent membership. The national party programs were adapted to the requirements and wishes of the EPP accordingly. If the EPP was an important and solid basis for the joint work of EP members and the EPP Group, the EDU had always seen more than the EC and the EU. That was extremely important prior to the decisive expansion moves. [...]", in: Michael Gehler/Marcus Gonschor/Hinnerk Meyer/Johannes Schöner (eds.), *Mitgestalter Europas. Transnationalismus und Parteiennetzwerke europäischer Christdemokraten und Konservativer in historischer Erfahrung* (= Schriftenreihe der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung; St. Augustin/Berlin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2013), 436.

8 Michael Gehler/Johannes Schöner, Transnationale christdemokratische Parteienkooperationen in Europa 1965–1989. Der Beitrag österreichischer Ideen und Initiativen, in: Helmut Wohnout (ed.), *Demokratie und Geschichte. Jahrbuch des Karl von Vogelsang-Instituts zur Erforschung der Geschichte der christlichen Demokratie in Österreich* 11/12 (2007/2008), (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 2009), 271–318. In total, the following parties were members of the EDU during the period under investigation: Austrian People's Party (Austria), Dimokratikos Synagermos (Cyprus), Det Conservative Folkeparti (Denmark), Kansallinen Kokoomus (Finland), Rassemblement pour la République (France), Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (Germany), Nea Demokratia (Greece), Progressive Citizenship/Patriotic Union (both of Liechtenstein), Hoyres Hovedorganisasjon (Norway), Partido del Centro Democrático e Social (Portugal), Alianza Popular (Spain), Moderata Samlingspartiet (Sweden), Anavatan Partisi (Turkey) and Conservative and Unionist Party (United Kingdom).

German parties, the CDU and CSU, the British Conservatives, and the French Rassemblement pour la République (RPR), as well as the Scandinavians Høyres Hovedorganisasjon (Norway) and the Moderata Samlingspartiet (Sweden), formed the gravitational center of the EDU.

It is no secret that the defining figure of Christian Democratic party cooperation especially within the EPP since the early 1980s was the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.<sup>9</sup> How he was received and perceived in the EPP, whether there were critics of his assertive manner and dominant role, and in what respects he differed from his predecessors like Mariano Rumor or Leo Tindemans and successors like Jacques Santer are questions that must still be resolved through research. One expression of the leadership role of Kohl was that, for example, he was always the first to speak at the meetings of party leaders and heads of state, the EPP summits, and what he said gave the ensuing discussion its tone and direction. Thomas Jansen, EPP and EUCD General Secretary from 1983 to 1994, recalls that Kohl was usually present at the EPP meetings. The dates were initially always coordinated with him. His presence also guaranteed the participation of all the other party leaders. His assessment of the situation and his recommendations hardly ever met with resistance. He was occasionally opposed by Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers or the Chairman of the Belgian French-speaking Walloon Parti Social Chrétien (PSC), Gérard Deprez. The political weight, charisma, and the powers of argumentation in what Kohl said nevertheless regularly assured him “the broadest possible following,” as Jansen recalls: “His leadership role was universally acknowledged, because his involvement was perceived as motivated by European concerns; he always spoke in the interests of the EPP.” On the one hand, because of “the brusqueness he display[ed] when in a bad temper,” some members felt offended by Kohl. “He made it apparent to his surroundings if he was dissatisfied with something or with someone. On the other hand, he could be very courteous and pleasant when in a good mood. The EPP had no comparable leadership personalities during my term of office.”<sup>10</sup>

Next to Kohl, the other leading EDU-representative was Alois Mock. In 1979, Mock became President of the EDU and from 1983 to 1987 also of the International Democratic Union (IDU). Following the 1986 elections, Alois Mock was Austrian Vice Chancellor in the government of Franz Vranitzky (SPÖ) from 1987 to 1989. He held the position of foreign minister from 1987 to 1995, leading

9 Martin Eichinger/Helmut Wohnout, *Alois Mock. Ein Politiker schreibt Geschichte* (Vienna/Graz/Klagenfurt: Styria, 2008), 148–152, here 155.

10 Information from Thomas Jansen to Michael Gehler (27 May 2010); id., *Die Entstehung einer Europäischen Partei*, 233–234; Jansen/Van Hecke, *At Europe's Service*; Thomas Jansen, „Die Sozialisten haben auf europäischer Ebene immer nachgehinkt“, in: Michael Gehler/Marcus Gonschor/Hinnerk Meyer/Johannes Schöner (eds.), *Mitgestalter Europas. Transnationalismus und Parteinetzwerke europäischer Christdemokraten und Konservativer in historischer Erfahrung* (Sankt Augustin/Berlin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2013), 267–269.

Austria into the European Union.<sup>11</sup> Kohl and Mock had a very close relationship in the EDU. It is not too far-fetched to argue that Mock acted very loyally along the political lines of Kohl who felt himself not only as a patriarch but also as a protector of Austria's European policy ambitions and interests.<sup>12</sup> Mock established close contacts with Jacques Chirac and Margaret Thatcher who joined the EDU meetings in the 1980s.

#### IV. The Promising Contacts between EDU and the Communist Party of the USSR

In order to properly classify the revolutionary events of 1989, it is necessary to work out the shift from 1987/1988 to 1989. Without a doubt the policies of the EDU member parties and the whole organization have been re-weighted in many areas, irrespective of all the continuities evoked. Official political contacts with the leaders of the Warsaw Pact and socialist state parties were unimportant—in contrast to the Western European parties of the Socialist International.

It was even considered practically immoral to maintain contacts with the Eastern heads of state if there were no contacts with civil society groups or even dissidents at the same time. Along with this, “party foreign policy” was always determined under the premise of tense East-West relations before 1989, and in particular on issues of disarmament and security. Only with CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev did this diplomatic taboo change. The Kremlin suddenly became “sexy.”

In 1988, “Germany’s policy” was still basically identical to “security and disarmament policy.” When, in June, the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces/INF (Reduction and Destruction of the Nuclear Medium Range)-Treaty became valid through the ratification in Moscow, the EDU also welcomed this step as contribution to confidence building and stabilizing the political situation in Europe.<sup>13</sup>

11 On this topic, cf. Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Helmut Kohl. Eine politische Biographie* (Munich: DVA, 2012).

12 “Mock’s Discussions with Helmut Kohl and Hans-Dietrich Genscher, 6–7 October 1987,” Information, Johann Plattner, Vienna, 12 October 1987, ÖStA, AdR, BMAA, II-Pol 1987, GZ. 518.02.42/18-II.1/87.

13 Cf. Curt Gasteyger, Europa nach dem INF-Abkommen, in: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 10 (4.3.1988), 3–10. The question of incorporating British and French missile systems had paralyzed US-Soviet negotiations on disarmament since the beginning of the 1980s. The Soviets always demanded the English and French warheads to be attributed to the American arsenals. This was also one of the reasons why, from 1983 onwards, US medium-range missiles Pershing were stationed in the FRG. As a direct consequence of the failure of the disarmament negotiations, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was also affected by these tensions until 1987.

Already in 1987 the negotiations had largely moved forward—not least on the personal initiative of Gorbachev. The two German states had a special role when the treaty came into effect. GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) were potential target areas for a first blow and therefore particularly threatened by the rockets. Bonn and East Berlin therefore urged their respective coalition partners to give up their weapons.

But what was a feint and what was honest diplomacy? The economically disastrous situation of the Soviet Union was in essence for the reactions of the West. Thus, Soviet economic growth was supposed to be eight percent to meet the current five-year plan. In 1988 it was only two percent, which was described as “Stalinist cosmetics” by EDU founding member Franz Josef Strauß at the meeting of the EDU Steering Committee in Madrid on 15 April 1988, just as the dominant mood between cautious curiosity and pessimism, based on the experiences of the past. Most of the EDU leaders saw in Gorbachev someone who was only aiming at an improvement of the communist system, but not at fundamental change. The fact that the Soviet economy not only stagnated but also fell into ruin, that civilian research was not taking place, and that the life expectancy of the “Soviet citizens” fell significantly from the mid-1980s onward was only worked out in detail later by analysts and historians.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, within the framework of its own analyses, the EDU tried to at least ask questions about the possible economic and political alternatives for the Soviet Union under Gorbachev. This was the purpose of the intensive East contacts. The EDU’s strategic arm for all “European-ideological” questions was the so-called Committee No. 1 for European Structures and European Policy, chaired by the Prime Minister of Rhineland-Palatinate, Bernhard Vogel. This committee met every three months. In 1988, the main focus was on European agricultural policy, EC-EFTA (European Free Trade Association) negotiations, as well as the 1989 European elections. Although the changes in the Soviet Union and Central Eastern Europe were carefully registered in 1988, the EDU-representatives did not expect any serious shifts in power. Word of the military balance and the “transparency of the military activities” went through all requirements for the current East-West dialogue talks as a common threat until the year 1989.<sup>15</sup>

14 For the most recent literature on this subject, see Stefan Karner, *Von der Stagnation zum Verfall. Kennzeichen der sowjetischen Wirtschaft der 1980er Jahre*, in Hanns Jürgen Küsters (ed.), *Der Zerfall des Sowjetimperiums und Deutschlands Wiedervereinigung* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2016), 15–45, here 15–18.

15 See for example, the EDU Strategy Paper for the 10th IDU Party Leaders’ Conference, Berlin, 24 September 1987 (“The party Leaders call for verifiable and comprehensive agreements which established a stable ratio between the conventional forces of NATO and Warsaw Pact throughout Europe through elimination of existing imbalances in favor of the Soviet Union. Such agreements must not lead to increased pressure from conventional forces in other directions or parts of the world [...]. The Party Leaders also call for militarily significant and politically binding agreements on further confidence and security

On the occasion of the eleventh Party Leaders' Conference in Rhodes on 23 September 1988, EDU-representatives discussed the domestic developments in the Communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The Steering Committee was asked to observe and analyze the development of democratization and the formation of new political groups in these countries. Moreover, the Committee on European Structures and European Policy was ordered by the Party Leaders' Conference to keep track of the political development in Eastern Europe in the light of the domestic policy changes in the countries of the Warsaw Pact. In this context, special attention was to be paid to the development of new democratic groups in these countries. At its 36<sup>th</sup> Meeting (General Meeting), which was held in Vienna in November 1988, the Steering Committee discussed the more recent developments in some countries of Central and Eastern Europe. There was a first exchange of opinion with representatives of new democratic movements from Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. As a result of its discussions, the Steering Committee decided to take the following course of action: Since a clear distinction had to be drawn between the developments in the individual countries, pursuing a different course of action in each country was recommended. The two EDU Committees (Steering Committee and Committee on Europe) were to harmonize their further procedures and expected to reach their decisions on the basis of information gathered on site, in an open dialogue with government bodies and private social organizations.<sup>16</sup>

The Austrian People's Party attempted to come into closer contact with opposition movements in Central and Eastern Europe. European socialist countries were closely observed by the East German Ministry for State Security (MfS). The Mielke apparatus knew that these activities were organized within the framework of the EDU. According to the MfS the ÖVP had established contacts especially to the Hungarian Democratic Forum. East-Berlin was also informed about the Austrian People's Party establishing connections with growing new party groups in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia.<sup>17</sup>

Personal contacts with Mikhail Gorbachev had been a central aspect of EDU's strategic work and planning since 1987–1988. The contacts of the EDU leadership to the Soviet Union under Gorbachev were reflected in several visits, the most important of which were those in May and September 1989. Under Gorbachev, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was very interested in establishing contacts with conservative parties in Western Europe. On the conservative and Christian democrat sides, at the outset of Glasnost and Perestroika

building measures in Europe based on those agreed upon in Stockholm 1986, to increase the transparency of military activities." Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. EDU/1987/1434, 4

16 See the protocol for the 36th General Meeting in Vienna, 26 November 1988, Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. EDU/1988/1583, 5.

17 Maximilian Graf, *Österreich und die DDR 1949–1990. Politik und Wirtschaft im Schatten der deutschen Teilung* (= Internationale Geschichte 3; Vienna: Verlag der ÖAW, 2016), 603.



there were particularly strong doubts about the sincerity of the reform will of the Soviet leadership.

From 1985 to 1989, contacts with the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union for the purpose of an exchange of information and ideas on topical issues of international politics were not uncommon for representatives of Western countries and non-Communist parties. Most of these contacts were of an ad-hoc nature. Some of the social democratic parties in Western Europe, such as the German Social Democrats (SPD), maintained institutionalized relations.

The EDU discussed the issue of relations between EDU members and the Communist parties of Warsaw Pact countries within its Steering Committee on several occasions. In general, such relations were subject to criticism, particularly in view of the fact that the victims of human rights violations in these countries might interpret such contacts as a kind of legitimization of the Communist single-party system. No decisions were taken regarding an official EDU policy vis-à-vis Communist parties.

In 1989, the situation had changed in that relations between the EDU member parties and communist parties could no longer be considered according to the aspect of legitimization. This argument could now clearly be refuted by stating from the very beginning and in public that the issue to be discussed concern democracy, human rights and other matters, and that contacts were also to be established with opposition groups. Thus, from this point of view, there were no basic objections to informative talks and non-institutionalized contacts with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Apart from a few exceptions, this was fundamentally new both for the EDU and its member parties. A joint approach of all EDU member parties appeared to be more meaningful than bilateral party-to-party talks. A joint approach was coordinated properly from the outset, and thus, the risk of misunderstandings in bilateral contacts could be eliminated.<sup>18</sup>

Any new contacts were to demonstrate the implementation of the principle of free movement, as laid down by the Vienna Follow-up Meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in its Vienna Concluding Document.<sup>19</sup>

18 Cf. the protocol of the EDU Steering Committee on 7 December 1989 in Munich/Munich Statement; ("The EDU Steering committee notices with satisfaction that also in the GDR and in Czechoslovakia reforms of real socialism have now been initiated. The EDU will support these developments, and has instructed its committee on 'European Structures and European Policy' under the chairmanship of Dr. Bernhard Vogel, to undertake a Fact Finding Mission to Czechoslovakia and to hold the next meeting of the Committee in Berlin.") Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. EDU/1989/1083, 1–4.

19 Peter Matthias/Hermann Wentker (eds.), *Die KSZE im Ost-West-Konflikt. Internationale Politik und gesellschaftliche Transformation 1975–1990* (Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2012); Benjamin Gilde, *Österreich im KSZE-Prozess 1969–1983. Neutraler Vermittler in humanitärer Mission* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2013); Wilhelm Bruns, Mehr Substanz in den Ost-West-Beziehungen. Zur dritten KSZE-Folgekonferenz in Wien, in: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 12 (17.3.1989), 3–9; Stefan Lehne, *The Vienna Meeting of the Conference on*

The EDU could not pursue contacts in the Soviet Union, unless EDU member parties were guaranteed the right to meet any individual and any group anywhere and at any point in time.

Since its reorganization at the end of 1988, the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union acted as a general coordinating and controlling body in all international affairs, i.e. its functions were not limited to party contacts. Thus, the Department was in charge of relations with Communist parties all over the world. Institutionalized contacts with other parties as well as fundamental issues of foreign, security and foreign trade policies were also part of its responsibility.

On the one hand in the EDU meetings with Soviet representatives in May and September 1989, a strong downward trend and changing expectations were documented. As early as spring, many conservative observers questioned the irreversibility of the Soviet reform course. On the other hand, at the beginning of 1989, the Soviet leadership felt that it was enough to convince conservative circles in the West of the seriousness of the Gorbachev course to win the entire political spectrum of the West and the remaining critics and doubters on the fringes.<sup>20</sup>

Regarding the Soviet attitude towards maintaining these contacts with EDU bodies, conservative circles in the West were often also the key to economic and scientific-technological cooperation. Gorbachev had attempted to establish a good relationship with Christian Democrats and conservative politicians in the United States, including US President Ronald Reagan, Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and Franz Josef Strauß, the Bavarian Prime Minister until his death in 1988.<sup>21</sup>

Thatcher, as is well known, was the first Western top politician to spontaneously declare in December 1984 on the occasion of a London visit of the then-second man in the Kremlin: "I can do business with him."<sup>22</sup> Rightly, the Austrian EDU representatives recognized the opportunity to promote an under-

*Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1986–1989. A Turning Point in East-West Relations* (Boulder/San Francisco/Oxford: Westview Press. 1991); Hans-Heinrich Wrede, *KSZE in Wien. Kursbestimmung für Europas Zukunft* (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1990).

20 On this, see Stefan Karner/Mark Kramer/Peter Ruggenthaler/Manfred Wilke (eds.), *Der Kreml und die deutsche Wiedervereinigung 1990. Interne sowjetische Analysen* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag 2015), 13–16.

21 See the protocol of the Statement of the EDU Party Leaders on the EDU Conference in Rhodos, 22–24 September 1988 ("[...] Since the last meeting of EDU Party Leaders on the occasion of the EDU and IDU Party Leaders Conference in Berlin in September 1987, there have been decisive changes concerning the relations between the West and the Soviet Union. The arms race cannot be won and requires sacrifices the East-European countries with their less efficient economies are unable to make. The superiority of market economic models has been proven a hundred times.") Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. EDU/1988/1141, 2–5.

22 See the autobiography of Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (London: Harper Collins 1993).

standing of Austrian EC policy during these talks. At the same time, Austrians were one of the largest (external) critics of the slow-moving internal market within the framework of the EDU.

From the perspective of 1988, the finalization of the Internal Market and the simultaneous creation of a larger European Economic Space (EES) merely remained a vision. On the one hand, it should be taken into account that the EDU consisted of parties that belonged to the EC, but, on the other hand, not only to the EC but also to the EFTA. Thus, East-West contacts also developed during these tensions. As early as 1988, the EDU Party Leader Conference gave a very strong recommendation to all of its member parties that it would be welcomed if individual states were to cease any contact with the Eastern Economic Organization in "the EFTA Countries and the European Community." Above all, the German and French representatives at the EDU considered it more opportune for the EC to act as the main Western negotiating partner with COMECON.<sup>23</sup>

This also resulted in the individual EFTA countries and parties that were represented in the EDU, such as Austria and Sweden, approaching the idea of full membership in the European Community. This fundamental consideration of further EC membership led Brussels itself to make additional bilateral concessions to reduce pressure on the Community. The European Union's market position was deliberately emphasized. As a result, all rapprochements within the framework of EDU integration negotiations and conferences were to be viewed exclusively from a market-economic perspective. Moreover, the discussion on market integration clearly describes the issue within the EDU on the eve of 1989. In 1988, the realization of a Western European single market was still being sought for 1992.<sup>24</sup>

The importance of an interface between market-economic considerations (EC-EFTA negotiations) and the new foreign policy developments in the East becomes clear in the person of Bernhard Vogel. The former CDU Minister President of Rhineland-Palatinate was Vice President of the EDU in 1988/89 and

23 See the Report on the EFTA-Countries and the European Community, in: EDU Yearbook 1988, 167–178.

24 From this point of view, this was also not a contradiction. For example, in the context of the "Debate on Questions of European Integration," Fritz König (ÖVP) asked for the realization of the four freedoms (with the inclusion of Austria), while at the same meeting, Elmar Brock (CDU) formulated: "[...] Different social services in Community countries are competitive factors on the internal market. If it is not possible to progressively approach the different social levels of the countries by means of minimum standards at a high level, the internal market cannot be realized without social conflict. The aim is to increase the economic performance of the less developed countries. [...] If we do not see this context, there is a great risk that national social systems could be harmonized in such a way that they could be regarded as social dumping by trade unions and large parts of the population, as a reduction in acquired workers' rights and the like [...]." Both of these findings were, as far as Western Europe is concerned, visionary and correct: After the year 1989, however, they were overtaken as short-term short-listed. Bibliography of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU, EDU Protocol, Party Steering Committee, Rhodes September 1988; Sign. JB 1988.

as such responsible for foreign policy negotiations with Alois Mock. Thus, Vogel warned persistently of a painful division of Europe by competition between the EC and EFTA, when foreign policy conditions in crucial areas began to change at the same time. As a German, Vogel also knew that German “reunification” was conceivable only through pan-European integration. As always, the key to East Berlin was in Moscow. From January to May 1989, relations between Bonn and Moscow underwent a further intensification. The shift from distance to an intense neighborhood policy—most impressively manifested by Helmut Kohl and Mikhail Gorbachev—put the GDR under pressure, especially in the East at the Oder-Neisse border in Poland. Even in Hungary and the Soviet Union, the signals of democracy could not to be ignored.

At this point, there was a small but significant anticipation of the crucial year 1989: On 8 May 1989, a meeting between Bernhard Vogel and the foreign policy adviser of Soviet Party Leader Gorbachev, Valentin Falin, was held in Vienna. In this discussion, the Soviet side made it clear that the EDU was preferred to the Socialist International as a dialogue partner since EDU member parties had more skills in Western Europe. The EDU assessed this as “new, hitherto unknown realism in the communist countries.”<sup>25</sup>

Already at this meeting in May 1989, it was agreed that the EDU would continue this talk under the leadership of EDU Executive Secretary Andreas Khol in Moscow in September 1989. In fact, in September 1989, Khol, at the head of the EDU delegation, did not meet with Mikhail Gorbachev, but with Falin and other senior members of the Politburo, as well as representatives of dissident groups and representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church. It was a fundamentally different attitude from that which still prevailed in 1988. In other words, there was nothing more that could be conceived in 1988, not even that a year later there would no longer be any “ideological fear of contact.”<sup>26</sup>

EDU-Eastern Europe policy was primarily information policy in 1988/89. Findings from EDU contacts with Eastern politicians, also from fact-finding missions, were incorporated into the foreign policy of the Western European states. The EDU representatives also had close ties with individual democratic

25 Cf. the Lisbon Statement, EDU Steering Committee, 10 March 1989/Lisbon. Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Protocol Lisbon 1631.

26 After the EDU meeting with Valentin Falin, head of the International Section of the Central Committee of the CPSU and a full member of the Central Committee, on 10 May 1989 in Vienna, Bernhard Vogel answered journalists’ questions: “[...] After years of no contact, the time is now ripe to hold talks with this important part of Europe. In any case, there is no longer any fear of ideological contact at all within the EDU.” Valentin Falin said at the same press conference that “the conversation is not only a positive beginning to a hopefully productive collaboration, but also a symbolic sign of the profound changes in the political landscape of Europe. I emphasize the importance of human contact for the solution of common European problems, even if it is likely to take longer to understand each other beyond ideological boundaries. How does the Chinese proverb go? ‘A long journey begins with the first step’.” Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, press releases and press conferences, sign. JB 1988.

civil rights groups and later parties. In the case of the Hungarian contacts, the race with the Socialist International became clear, which in turn soon turned into a “road map” for securing a leftist partner from the party bankruptcy. However, this was linked with the risk of dealing with reformed communists who had become involved as partners.

However, the divergent experiences with these countries’ contacts and the pronounced visit-diplomacy also led to divergent analyses. Even in June 1989, many EDU party leaders believed in different developments in the “Eastern Bloc.” There were also different moods in the populations of the respective homelands, ranging from “politically lethargic” to “euphoric.” This balancing act between European responsibility and national interest was reinforced by the year 1989—and not just created. At the prominent meeting of the EDU Steering Committee in Stockholm at the end of June 1989, it was assumed that Hungary and Poland would be most likely to achieve a lasting change in their political systems, while in the GDR, Czechoslovakia and the Balkans, the persistent socialist forces were viewed as reform-resistant.<sup>27</sup>

At its 37<sup>th</sup> meeting, which was held on 10 March 1989 in Lisbon, the EDU Steering Committee decided with regard to Poland that an EDU delegation was to visit Warsaw in May 1989, in order to analyze the political and constitutional changes after the “round table talks” between the Communist government and the representatives of new political groups. The EDU delegation was to meet with representatives of both the government and these new political groups to discuss the future political, economic, and cultural relations.<sup>28</sup>

But still, the negative voices had not declined, especially among the Scandinavian member parties, which warned against too offensive openings and reforms in individual Eastern states and as a result against a fate such as the “Prague Spring” and consequently against risky diplomatic incidents. The Executive Committee of the EDU tried to interpret the internal power shifts within the Soviet system. These included the plenum of the Central Committee and the meeting of the Supreme Soviet since November 1988. But even these observations had in the past only revealed the well-known strategic game of “doves” and “hawks” in the Kremlin. Western contacts had always failed. What was different in 1989? On 26 March, elections to the Congress of People’s Deputies of the Soviet Union took place in the Soviet Union, and it was not concealed from the West that numerous prominent party representatives were being punished, and representatives of the internal party opposition were being given consent, which had previously seemed impossible.<sup>29</sup>

27 Cf. the protocol of the 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the EDU Steering Committee in Stockholm, 30 June 1989, Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. EDU/1989/1931, 1–3.

28 Report on the 37<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the EDU Steering Committee in Lisbon, 9–10 March 1989. Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. EDU/1989/1820, 4–7.

29 See “Discussions between the EDU and the Soviet Communist Party,” Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, EDU Protocol, Parteiführerkonferenz; Sign. JB 1989/EDU 127–135.

## V. Poland and Hungary as priorities

Seen from this perspective, the meeting of the EDU European Committee in Budapest from 19 to 21 June 1989 was a turning point in the entire EDU policy. During these June days, the EDU, as an organization, began to realize that the political upheavals in the East were not a singular event. The fact that Alois Mock and Andreas Khol had taken key positions underlines the scope of action of the President and his Executive Secretary. While Hungary and Poland had been at the center of the observations up to then, the decision was made to send observation missions to as many Eastern and Central Eastern European countries as possible. The focus of the new EDU-Ostpolitik was to explore the extent to which reforms were occurring in the individual countries and in what ways these reforms could be supported by the EDU.<sup>30</sup>

It was the aim of the EDU missions to investigate how far the democratic reforms and transformations had already progressed, and moreover, how to support further reform steps. The Budapest meeting was organized completely by the Austrians and the ÖVP-foreign policy expert Rainer Stepan. Due to Stepan's personal contacts, the EDU was able to get in touch instantly with opposition groups.

When, in July 1989, the Hungarian opposition groups had forced elections, EDU contacts, provided by the Austrians and especially Rainer Stepan, were suitable "keys" to electing later non-communist parliamentarians. It was evident now that a large number of partners had previously failed due to lack of both suitable candidates and contacts in West. The EDU was able to achieve a "rich political harvest" in 1989.<sup>31</sup>

In Budapest, the EDU's clearly defined aim was to explore the new political structures and provide organizational and policy support to the new political forces. The EDU emphasized that discussions should now be held with all new opposition groups. In the case of the Hungarian host country, this meant, in June 1989, not only talks with the leaders of the state and the communist state party and the president of the parliament but also with the churches, ecclesiastical journalists, and the new parties, the Hungarian Democratic Forum, the Alliance

30 See the correspondence and protocols concerning the contacts between the EDU and the Representatives of Political Parties in Poland, in Hungary, and others in Summer 1989. Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, (for Example) Sign. EDU/1989, 1937, 2–12; Sign. EDU/1989, 1838, 1–10, or Sign. EDU/1989, 1902, 6–8.

31 Beyond all its contacts to Czechoslovakian, Polish, Hungarian opposition, the EDU had also partners in the Soviet Union. For example, in the Ukraine, there was very close contact to the Ruch-Movement. Founded in the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy, the Ruch-movement was forbidden after 1918. Illegal throughout all the intervening decades, the Ruch-Movement took over responsibility for Ukrainian self-government in 1990/1991; Cornelia Göls, *Die politischen Parteien in der Ukraine* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2008).

of Free Democrats, Fidesz, the Independent Smallholders, the Agrarian Workers' and Civic Party (Független Kisgazda-, Földmunkás- és Polgári Párt), and the Hungarian Social Democrats. It was a deliberate political decision by the EDU Office to hold the EDU Committee's meeting "European Structure and European Policy"—in terms of ideological relevance, the most heavily weighted platform within the EDU—in Budapest. The signal sent out was clear: The EDU was ready to support citizens' movements in Eastern Europe and to enter into discussions with them at the same level as the state communist parties.<sup>32</sup>

The EDU understood how to predict the key economic figures as far as they were available from Eastern Europe. The true drama of the Soviet economy, which was close to insolvency, however, was not known in the summer of 1989. State and party leaders in the West knew very well that political reforms in the COMECON countries were directly related to their economic weaknesses. Consequently, Budapest's economic problems with the leading economists and economic journalists were also discussed in Budapest. In order to keep pace with the political developments, the EDU increased the number and frequency of its meetings. All information and assessments were supposed to be communicated quickly within the party platform.

But even at the thirty-eight meeting of the EDU Steering Committee in Stockholm on 30 June 1989, the "Stockholm Declaration," published afterwards, did not reveal any prospects for an impending overthrow of the communist system in Central and Eastern Europe. Under the leadership of Mock, the Christian democrats expressed their support for the reductions and restructuring of Western troops in Europe, initiated at the last NATO summit with US President George Bush, as "these would be on the ongoing East-West talks Security and trust building." In the summer of 1989, the aim of EDU's East-West policy was "to achieve a stable and secure balance in Europe, with lower troop levels [...]"<sup>33</sup>

As far as contacts with the Soviet Union were concerned, future decisions were made in Stockholm. The EDU Steering Committee agreed to accept the invitation of the EDU Executive Secretariat to Moscow in the autumn to discuss political reforms in Europe, cooperation in economics and environmental protection between East and West. The EDU, through this offensive commitment to maintaining contacts, stood out from other West European party groups, that had not advanced their contacts into the "lion's den."

Still, caution and skepticism—perhaps even the thought of impossibility—limited far-reaching changes in Eastern and Central Europe. A few days before this Stockholm Declaration, on 27 June 1989, a memorable event occurred.

32 Cf. the protocol of the Meeting of the EDU Committee Nr. 1 in Budapest, 19–21 June 1989 (Title of the Meeting: New Political Initiatives in Central Europe), Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. EDU/1989/1624, 1–17.

33 Stockholm Declaration, Protocol of the 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the EDU Steering Committee, 30 June 1989 in Stockholm. Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, Collection, Sign. EDU/1989/1668.

Mock cut through the border fence with his Hungarian colleague Gyula Horn at the Burgenland-Hungarian border. These memorable media images of cutting through the border fence made it clear to the European public in East and West that the erosion of the existing power division had become unstoppable.<sup>34</sup> Mock was acknowledged in the international media for his personal courage and farsightedness. The general symbolism, which Austria played in this, remained little recognized in many places however.<sup>35</sup>

In the later memoirs of US President George Bush, Mock is not even mentioned, and even his close companion within the EDU, Helmut Kohl, did not regard this act as part of a courageous all-Austrian European policy. In the West German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the cutting of the barbed wire and the Austrian attitude throughout the year were only praised as “showing solidarity and being helpful.”<sup>36</sup>

In this historic phase, the European party leaders were urgently looking for guidance, which at least enabled a “policy-based view” in the medium term. In the summer of 1989, from 24 to 26 August, an EDU parliamentary conference took place in Antalya, Turkey. The choice of topics is interesting in the middle of the “year of change.” In a total of eight resolutions, the EDU parliamentarians attempted to give a direction to their own interests.<sup>37</sup>

A few days before the EDU conference in Prague, a peaceful bourgeois demonstration memorialized the suppression of the “Prague Spring” by Warsaw Pact troops on the twenty-first anniversary. Through this demonstration—blended with the current demands of 1989, such as human rights and freedom of speech and expression—the Czechoslovak single-party state saw itself challenged in all of its own certainty. Numerous Czechoslovak and foreign demonstrators were beaten and imprisoned. In a sharp resolution, the EDU Parliamentary Conference condemned this demonstration of power in Prague. Interestingly, the Polish

34 Maximilian Graf, *Die Welt blickt auf das Burgenland. 1989 – die Grenze wird zum Abbild der Veränderung*, in: Maximilian Graf/Alexander Lass/Karlo Ruzicic-Kessler (eds.), *Das Burgenland als internationale Grenzregion im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert* (Wien: Neue-Welt-Verlag, 2012), 135–179; Maximilian Graf, *Ein Musterbeispiel der europäischen Entspannung? Die österreichisch-ungarischen Beziehungen von 1964 bis 1989*, in: Csaba Szabó (ed.), *Österreich und Ungarn im 20. Jahrhundert* (= Publikationen der ungarischen Geschichtsforschung in Wien IX; Wien: Institut für Ungarische Geschichtsforschung, 2014), 261–280.

35 Eichtinger/Wohnout, *Alois Mock*, 145–166.

36 Quoted in Marcus Gonschor, *Die USA und der Umbruch in Mittel- und Osteuropa 1989/90. Eine Analyse der autobiographischen Darstellungen von Ronald Reagan, Helmut Kohl und George H. Bush/Brent Scowcroft*, in: Andrea Brait/Michael Gehler (eds.), *Grenzöffnung 1989. Innen- und Außenperspektiven und die Folgen für Österreich* (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 2014), 163–184, here 173.

37 The first three resolutions can be described as politically relevant in the context of the “year of change”; the remaining resolutions concern specific topics, which were destined for the West as well.



Parliament and individual Hungarian opposition politicians also criticized this approach.<sup>38</sup>

The second resolution was devoted to the EU membership of parties from Central and Eastern European countries and clearly defined the admission criteria (“[...] the parties must be democratic and like-minded [...] must be of national importance [...] must operate in a democracy or an emerging democracy”). In the summer of 1989 there was no formal membership of any party from the East, but alone that one was possible, even postulated, suggested a sensational development.

A third resolution attempted a political balancing act: The potential new members of the EDU were to be wooed, but at the same time, the EDU tried to bring them up to Western European standards. Self-reliance, individuality, financial responsibility, and the importance of the family were emphasized as cornerstones of Christian Democratic politics (“Principles of a rational policy: welfare society instead of welfare state”). The EDU leadership consciously emphasized not only individual responsibility but also the new, emerging parties at that time of development.<sup>39</sup>

Any long-term strategic planning was evidently made difficult at this stage of development, possibly even impossible. The external political situation, and the drama within the real socialist hemisphere, which occurred almost weekly, blurred the boundaries between action and reaction. This also applied to an intergovernmental grouping like the EDU. From 21–23 September 1989, the EDU party leadership conference took place in Tokyo. Within the framework of this meeting—and not to waste any time—the further course of action within the EDU was discussed. The party chairmanship commissioned the EDU Steering Committee to draw up an aid program for newly-formed democratic parties in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The Steering Committee was also called upon to “seek ways of making contacts to such parties, including the possibility of membership or other institutional links.” In Tokyo, EDU President Alois Mock presented the results of recent analyses of inner-Soviet relations.<sup>40</sup>

The EDU office in Vienna had added four states of the “Eastern Bloc” to its political agenda: Rapid contacts were to be established, especially with 1. The Soviet Union, 2. Poland, 3. Hungary and finally 4. Slovenia, where the political changes had developed at incredible speed. The fact that the EDU wanted to

38 See the Resolution Nr.1 of the Plenary Meeting on the 2nd EDU Parliamentary Conference, Antalya, 24–26 August 1989 (Call for the Release of Demonstrators by Czech Authorities), in: EDU Yearbook 1989, 75.

39 Summary of the Second EDU Parliamentary Conference in Antalya, 24–26 August 1989, Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. EDU/1989/1696/1.

40 “[...] How can the Soviet Union and its allies in Eastern Europe be persuaded to implement the necessary political, economic and humanitarian reform which must necessarily precede fundamental agreements on arms control [...]” Protocol Party Leaders’ Conference 21–23 September 1989/Tokyo, Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. EDU/1672–1674.

cooperate directly with opposition forces in the Soviet Union and also explicitly mentioned Slovenia—instead of Yugoslavia—still appears remarkable even decades later.<sup>41</sup>

The fact that one wanted to go directly to the situation in the Soviet Union, and thus to Gorbachev, showed not so much the degree of agreement on negotiation as the mutual trust that had been expressed. The contacts of the “Vogel-Commission,” which had already begun in the spring of 1989, to the official Soviet state and party apparatus as well as to the public groups continued seamlessly. In the EDU analysis of possible Christian-oriented Russian cooperation partners, there were obvious uncertainties and fundamental difficulties in transposing Western European definitions to Russian conditions. However, these EDU assessments had produced names, figures who would intervene actively in later historical events. Despite the establishment of an explicitly named “Christian Democratic Party of Russia” in the summer of 1989, the EDU leadership considered it unlikely that a real party system would develop in the near future.<sup>42</sup>

The EDU, especially Mock, paid more attention to an interregional group led collectively by Andrei Sakharov, Yuri Afanasyev, Victor Palm, former chess world champion Anatoly Karpov, and Boris Yeltsin. In the view of the EDU, this group fulfilled the function of an opposition group, although its members could not be categorized by specific political parties or ideologies. Some of them, according to EDU analyses, were described as “communists,” who were not reformable. Some from this interregional group still believed in a “kind of reform communism,” others were “liberal,” some were considered “conservative.”<sup>43</sup>

The historical assessment of the EDU mission to Moscow in early September 1989 is therefore not easy to judge. Neither can this trip be seen as generally successful or a failure. From 5 to 9 September Secretary-General Khol, Antti Peltomäki and Bernd Fischer visited the capital of the Soviet Union, not least in the hope of meeting Gorbachev. This hope finally crumbled. There was no meeting. Nevertheless, this second mission was important for the EDU Executive Secretariat in reaffirming the seriousness of the Christian-democratic commitment to the Soviet side, led once again by Falin.

In a total of three working sessions, both sides prepared a joint statement, which, however, was not supposed to be published in the Soviet media at the

41 EDU Basic Report, Soviet Union, Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. EDU/1639–1650.

42 Cf. the Background Paper for the Negotiations with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Meeting of the EDU Delegation with the Soviet Representatives Valentin Falin and Gennadij Shikin on 5th May 1989 in Vienna (“[...] the EDU cannot pursue contacts in the Soviet Union, unless EDU Member parties are guaranteed that they will be able to meet any individual and any group anywhere and at any point in time.”), in: EDU Yearbook 1989, 135.

43 EDU Aid Program for newly founded Democratic Parties in the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, and Slovenia, 30 October 1989, Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, EDU/1989/1706.

request of the EDU. In September, the EDU delegation was the first Western group to meet with the Russian Christian Democratic Party, led by Alexander Ogorodnikov, which was founded in August 1989. A detailed discussion between Khol and the Russian metropolitan Filaret Denyssenko, responsible for the external relations of the Russian Orthodox Church, was also permitted by the Soviet leaders.<sup>44</sup>

As early as the spring of 1989, the Baltic States had become a special feature of the contacts with the Soviet Union. In the case of the Estonian SSR, the Latvian SSR, and the Lithuanian SSR (all of them struggling for independence from the Soviet Union), the uncertainty and the hesitation of the EDU was shown. These Soviet republics were in principle to be treated separately. The Baltic People's Fronts, which were founded in the first half of 1989 (considered by the EDU to be popular movements in support of Gorbachev's Perestroika), were not organized on a party basis, although they were ideologically independent and opposed to Soviet communism. As noted in the EDU Steering Committee minutes, "[...] The main intention must be to include as many democratic groups as possible. The EDU wants to keep the rules as they were originally agreed among all parties. This means the expansion of contacts or membership. There will always be discussions about these principles in the light of specific problems."<sup>45</sup>

In the case of Poland and Hungary, it was very clear that it was sometimes difficult to find bourgeois and Christian-democratic groups from the multitude of supposed opposition groups that would fit the content and structure of the Western European Christian Democrats. It was above all here that the German Chancellor and CDU chairman Helmut Kohl, who had already argued for a pragmatic approach for years, sought to promote all relevant groups evenly. Accordingly, the attempt was made to address the entire democratic party

44 Report on the EDU Secretariat's Mission to Moscow, 6–8 September 1989. "[...] it had been discussed already in Stockholm, at the end of the meeting between EDU Party Leaders and leaders of the Soviet Communist Party, some sort of common declaration will have to be published. In view of experiences with Soviet negotiators, the Executive Secretary put together in advance a draft statement, on the basis of the Stockholm declaration and EDU programmatic instruments. This draft, after having been agreed to by Dr. Fischer and Mr. Peltomäki, was presented upon request to the Soviet hosts. Apparently, they could not agree amongst themselves on their text beforehand, not knowing how much to ask from the EDU [...] This put the EDU delegation in the favourable position that the basis for negotiations was our draft. After a general discussion on Thursday morning, the EDU Delegation presented this draft and it was immediately well received by the Soviet hosts. [...] The common statement is based on the Stockholm Declaration, as regards environmental protection, it is based on the EDU expertise. It should be mentioned that although the Soviets proposed to issue a communique on our visit to Moscow in the Pravda, the EDU Delegation made clear that they would prefer to have no communication to the press, and so it was agreed, our visit was not in the soviet or any other press." Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. EDU/1989/1697.

45 Steering committee/minutes, Lisbon, March 10th 1989/budget-report 1989–1990, Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institut/EDU-Materials, EDU/1989/1614 1631.

system equally and from the same level on the part of the Western European parties. A departure from this support policy would only take place through clear internal political shifts in these countries themselves, but, in principle, there was the distinction between contacts on the one hand and financial support on the other. From the point of view of the leading EDU member parties, one condition was not yet the other.<sup>46</sup> In the Steering Committee minutes, it was made clear, the “EDU supports an activist position as regards new members or contacts. Seeking new contacts and members is essential. We share the respective financial recommendations put forward in the various reports.”<sup>47</sup>

In Poland, from the summer of 1989 onwards, the lack of unity within the Christian Trade Union had become more and more pronounced. The separation between the Solidarity Trade Union movement as an electoral block and the group of (party) functionaries had also been highlighted at the EDU office in Vienna. As a result, political parties were only able to develop slowly in the autumn of 1989. Even in the middle of October, the fog had not yet lifted for the EDU because cryptically the analysts wrote that currently there were

“two Christian Democratic groups [...] currently in Poland. [...] In the spring of 1990, an EDU mission to Poland is to be carried out in order to analyze the development of the party system more closely. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation will open an office in Warsaw in the near future, and the CDU will be asked to explore ways of cooperation between the EDU and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in this area.”<sup>48</sup>

The example of Poland reveals already the Western struggle for influence in the summer of 1989. The Adenauer Foundation was not the only Western party foundation that was looking to establish roots in the East. The National Repub-

46 See the correspondence and protocols concerning the contacts between the EDU and the Political Parties in Poland, in Hungary, and others in Summer 1989. Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, (for Example) Sign. EDU/1989, 1836, 2–4; or Sign. EDU/1989, 1902, 6–8; In particular, see the recommendations for Action, Meeting of the Committee Nr. 1 in Budapest, 19–21 June 1989 (“[...] these general recommendations for action apply in particular to Hungary and Poland where there is need to give spiritual, material and structural aid to the democratic groupings in these countries. Special training and similar assistance ought to be primarily confined to followers of an EDU-oriented ideology. The EDU should recommend that on governmental level all-out efforts be made so that Hungary may be in a better position to institute economic reforms.”), in: EDU Yearbook 1989, 181–182.

47 See Steering Committee, Minutes, Lisbon, 10 March 1989, Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institut/EDU-Materials/Treasurer, EDU/1989/1631.

48 The note refers to a group outside the Parliament led by Sila-Nowicki, while the other group refers to Sejm deputy Marek Jurek. After all, the EDU Office in October 1989 recommended inviting Marek Jurek to be on the next EDU Steering Committee and to provide financial support for his party whatever happened. See the basic paper of the EDU office in Vienna. Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. EDU/1989/1706.

lican Institute for International Affairs from the United States also produced a Polish program as well as the Socialist International. The EDU Office in Vienna was careful not to support parties that had already been funded by other Western party organizations. Since the Budapest meeting, the EDU coordinators surrounding Mock and Khol urged that a mutual exchange of information between EDU members be established and institutionalized after numerous EDU and IDU parties and party detachments had dealt with the issue of Eastern contacts individually.<sup>49</sup>

On 17 December 1989, Mock repeated the demonstrative gesture of cutting the previously insurmountable border fence, this time on the Czechoslovak border near Laa/Thaya. Now Mock's counterpart was the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, Jiří Dienstbier, who, for his part, had urged him, like Hungary, to put an end to the deadly border in a symbolic act with his country.<sup>50</sup>

The EDU was the only Christian Democratic force to maintain contacts with opposition groups, especially in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland, as early as the beginning of the 1980s. From the emergence of the *Solidarność* (Solidarity) in Poland in 1980, EDU was in close contact with Polish Christians. When, in Czechoslovakia, a sign-up campaign was organized for the Prague Cardinal František Tomašek in Czechoslovakia in 1986—also with the support of Charta 77—the EDU tried to provide logistical and political assistance under Mock and Stepan. After all, this democratic petition was signed by 600,000 people—well aware that it could be associated with personal reprisals.<sup>51</sup> The third emphasis in the policy of the EDU—besides the Soviet Union and Poland—was Hungary. In comparison to the other two countries the disruption of the ruling communist system was advanced comparatively well in 1988/89 in Hungary.

As already mentioned above, the party spectrum was pluralistically developed. The efforts of Austrian politicians and human rights activists to establish contacts with dissidents in the East have already been described. The Austrian Minister of Science and later Chairman of the ÖVP, Erhard Busek and the Director of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute—located at the Political Academy of the ÖVP—in Vienna, Rainer Stepan, were early pioneers and “scouts” for keeping in touch with civil groups in the Communist system. In the course of 1989, these

49 See also the recommendations for Action, Meeting of the Committee Nr. 1 in Budapest, 19–21 June 1989 (“[...] Also, as a matter of principle, any reform movement ought to be given general support. However, some caution is needed when offering help to communist reformers. This may ultimately nourish a dominating role of the Social Democrats, a process greatly encouraged by the Socialist International.”), in: EDU Yearbook 1989, 182.

50 Helmut Wohnout, *Vom Durchschneiden des Eisernen Vorhangs bis zur Anerkennung Sloweniens und Kroatiens. Österreichs Außenminister Alois Mock und die europäischen Umbrüche 1989–1992*, in: Andrea Brait/Michael Gehler (eds.), *Grenzöffnung 1989. Innen- und Außenperspektiven und die Folgen für Österreich* (Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 2014), 185–220, 196.

51 Cf. the protocol of the 31st EDU Steering Committee on 13 November 1987 in Paris, Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. EDU/1987/1460, 1–15.

contacts became politically meaningful for the EDU. Stepan, a close political adviser of Mock, offered his support to opposition groups often under personal risk, fostered young democratic movements, and began to educate students in Budapest and in Vienna.

The Hungarian Democratic Forum under the leadership of József Antall saw itself as an EDU-like party, which had similarities to the CDU/CSU and ÖVP. From the side of the EDU, this basic attitude was expressed as a desire to join the Christian Democratic party family as soon as possible. At the initiative of Alois Mock, as well as Helmut Kohl, the Democratic Forum of the EDU Steering Committee was held from 6 to 7 December 1989. With financial support from the Hungarian parties, the EDU leadership established the Hungarian Democratic Forum. The Independent Smallholders' Party, the Christian Democratic People's Party and Fidesz, the later dominant power on the bourgeois side in Hungary, were to be supported with small financial sums.<sup>52</sup>

## VI. The upcoming German Question

In the meantime, in the autumn of 1989, political developments in the GDR had become unpredictable and radically changed. Within the EDU, too, the changes of the year 1989 unleashed a dynamic, which never had happened before, and again this was within the framework of the integration process. However, the "turnaround" also made it clear that even the strongest euphoria could only cover a few expectations in the long run. In the autumn of 1989 the events were finally over. The EDU had established itself as a stage for transnational contacts, which were quite comparable to those of the institutionalized meetings within the EC.

In St. Augustin near Bonn on 13 November 1989, Parliamentary Group Leader Fritz König (ÖVP), at the request of the absent Chairman Bernhard Vogel, chaired the 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of EDU Committee "European Structures—European Policy." Lothar Kraft, Director of the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation, opened the meeting and explained that Vogel was in Poland accompanying Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl. The Manager of the CDU Parliamentary Group, Friedrich Bohl, MP, reported on the latest developments in the GDR. He let the EDU Committee know that during the past weekend three million GDR citizens out of 16 million had visited West Germany. Not more than two percent remained in the Federal Republic of Germany. From the beginning of the year until that

52 See the recommendations for Action, Meeting of the Committee No. 1 in Budapest, 19–21 June 1989 again. ("[...] With respect to Hungary, the EDU support would relate to the groups and/or parties listed below: Hungarian Forum, Free Democrats, FIDESZ, Smallholders Party, Christian Democratic People's Party. In this connection a party caucus of the respective members of parliament as well as scholarships for a selected group of journalists might be envisaged."), in: EDU Yearbook 1989, 181–182.

point, a total of 250,000 emigrants from the GDR had come to the FRG. A total of 300,000 emigrants from other countries (ethnic Germans) were also received. The big migratory movement from the GDR to the FRG was only possible in view of the opening of the Hungarian border to Austria in September 1989. This had been achieved with the help of the EDU's Chairman Mock. Bohl expressed the gratitude of the Germans to the Austrians for their assistance. The SPD was now trying to profit from the developments and attempting to show that these changes had all been due to their policies, Bohl argued. They were trying to make the public forget that they and the SED had only recently signed papers of cooperation together. Social Democrats now wanted to jump on the running train and get themselves into the driver's seat of the locomotive. Nevertheless, the CDU's policy would have been decisive anyway. The West needed to be firm: "Now it is our duty to underpin the reform process through economic assistance. At the suggestion of Margaretha af Ugglas, MP, the Committee congratulated its German friends on these historical developments."<sup>53</sup>

The Committee deliberated the recent developments in Central and Eastern Europe. The opening of the borders of the GDR to the West was warmly welcomed as were the signs of reform in this state. The Committee especially congratulated Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his government on the developments in inner-German relations:

"The firm insistence on the Basic Law and its implication by the CDU/CSU contributed to this success just as much as their adherence to the principle, unlike the SPD, of not entering into friendly relations with the SED, the communist party, which bears the responsibility for the old regime of terror. Only a few weeks ago, the SPD was still trying to conduct top-level talks with the SED, thus stabilizing this party. The EDU welcomes and supports the courageous and far-sighted attitude of Chancellor Kohl in responding to the crisis in the GDR with a broad offer of aid, if those in power initiate a process of democratization. The Committee will support Chancellor Kohl and his government in all further steps that lead to a peaceful development as well as to more freedom and democracy in the GDR. The EDU supports the desire of the Germans to complete the unity of Germany in freedom and peace in exercising the right of self-determination."<sup>54</sup>

The EDU Committee then adopted a declaration under the heading "For a unified Europe in peace and freedom." It supported the demand of the federal government for reunification and pointed out the central role of the Western European integration process in the present changes within the Warsaw Pact.<sup>55</sup>

At a meeting of the EDU from 2 to 3 December in Salzburg, with participation of Christian Democratic politicians from eight countries of the EC, Italian Prime

53 Minutes 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting St. Augustin/Bonn, 13 November 1989. Statement of EDU and CPSU, Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU/1989/1698.

54 See Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. EDU/1989/2001, 11–13.

55 Ibid.

Minister Giulio Andreotti informed German Chancellor Kohl about the visit of the Soviet head of state Gorbachev from 28 November to 1 December 1989 in Italy. The West German irritation about Italian reservations to a possible German “reunification” began to become clearly visible.<sup>56</sup> At this conference in Salzburg, the “German Question” was discussed for the first time by a larger circle of EDU party leaders. A few days earlier, Helmut Kohl had presented his ten-point program for a confederation of the two German states, which received no objections from the other members of the EDU, but dealing with Andreotti was most difficult on this issue. It took German policy-makers months to dispel this Italian skepticism.<sup>57</sup>

The fact that the EDU deliberately set up initiatives and statements within the scope of its meetings to present German reunification as a legitimate wish of the entire German people and, thus, also as a democratic demand for European Christian Democracy is recognizable.<sup>58</sup> After all, since its founding in 1978, the EDU had raised German reunification to a political postulate. In its realpolitical abstractness before 1989, this goal was unreservedly supported by all EDU member parties. It is therefore all the more surprising that the German historiography has virtually stifled this EDU achievement and this pan-European, Christian-Democratic contribution. At the same time, this also transcends its own Federal initiatives and Christian-Democratic commitment.<sup>59</sup>

56 Cf. Christdemokratische Spitzenpolitiker aus ganz Europa berieten in Salzburg. Kooperationen mit Gruppen im Osten, in: *Salzburger Nachrichten*, 4 December 1988, 15.

57 “Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Kohl mit Präsident Bush,” Laeken bei Brüssel, 3 December 1989, in: Hanns Jürgen Küsters/Daniel Hofmann (eds.), *Dokumente zur Deutschlandpolitik: Deutsche Einheit. Sonderedition aus den Akten des Bundeskanzleramtes 1989/90* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1998), 603.

58 See Bonn Statement 1990. Adopted by the EDU Steering Committee on 25 October 1990. The Steering Committee of the EDU held its 43rd meeting in Bonn, on October 25th, 1990. Under the chairmanship of the Austrian Foreign Minister and EDU-Chairman, Dr. Alois Mock, the representatives of 18 Christian Democratic, conservative, and other like-minded parties from Europe deliberated on questions of European policy. The Steering Committee expresses its satisfaction to hold the first meeting after the German unification on October 3, 1990, in Bonn, at the seat of the Federal Government of the unified Germany. Since its founding in 1978, the EDU had always supported German unification in word and deed. Thanks to the firmness of the free Western democracies, Atlantic solidarity, and the success of the social market economy, especially in the Federal Republic of Germany, the smooth and unexpected unification of Germany had now come about. The mandate of the Bonn Basic Law is herewith fulfilled. Germany is now in the position to pursue at full power its political aims, which are the further European integration in the framework of a new all European architecture according to the construction plans of the European Community and of the global European peace order. Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. JB 1990/22.

59 Even in the most recent publications of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation on “The Fall of the Berlin Wall” and “German Reunification” from 2016, one does not find relevant mention of the role of the EDU. See Hanns Jürgen Küsters (ed.), *Der Zerfall des Sowjet-*



The year 1989, however, cannot be viewed as detached from developments in Western Europe and only reduced to events in the East. The outcome of the elections to the European Parliament in 1989 was important, and this should not be ignored for the general question of this essay.<sup>60</sup> Notable was the low electoral participation, which was basically a disgrace for all of the participating and “European” parties. EDU member parties were not in the least exempted. The fact that the euphoria of the Central and Eastern European reform initiatives and upheavals had pushed this lack of democratic legitimacy was quietly regretted, but without any other kind of self-reflection, this was dismissed as a very early “system error” by both the EDU and the EC.

This did not alter the fact that the CDU and the CSU as well as the Democrazia Cristiana (DC) had relatively successfully won these elections with their candidates. However, from the point of view of the “Year of Change 1989,” the European elections showed no special thematic features. On the contrary, it was pointed out in June that questions of nuclear disarmament and foreign-policy stability, maintaining the status quo in the sense of a “balance of power” had priority over the support of Eastern reform efforts. Once again, the European elections proved to be a “protest” and it is, therefore, not surprising that the Greens as well as the right-wing parties, e.g. the German Republicans (*Die Republikaner*), succeeded in an above-average fashion. The main political theme of these elections to the European Parliament in 1989 was the development of the internal market and the further convergence of the EC and COMECON. The fact that the Joint Declaration, adopted on 25 June 1988, included the EFTA states as well as Malta and Turkey had been the result of EDU pre-planning.<sup>61</sup>

## VII. Conclusion and Final Remarks

The year 1989 was a new beginning in many respects. This also included the fact that for the first time the EDU was able to adopt a pan-European policy, a policy which for the first time allowed freely chosen Christian Democratic parties in a previously unknown degree of freedom with parties and peoples of the East together. For the first time since 1945, Europeans were able to directly make European party politics.

*imperiums und Deutschlands Wiedervereinigung. The Decline of the Soviet Empire and Germany's Reunification* (Cologne/Weimar/Vienna: Böhlau, 2016).

60 The European Parliamentary Election took place on 18 June 1989.

61 Since its founding but especially since 1987/88, the EDU had argued for including Turkey in the EC. The argument was the mutual bilateral ability to profit economically for Turkey, but above all for the Western European states, under the leadership of the Federal Republic of Germany. This became the mantra for the expansion promises to Ankara. See Madrid Meeting, adopted by the EDU Steering Committee on 15 April 1988, Archives of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, Sign. JB 1988/280.

From then on, the EDU spoke for Christian Democratic and Conservative parties in Western and Eastern Europe. It is well known that representatives from all Yugoslav national groups and national states participated in this meeting. The tensions within the Yugoslav ethnic groups represented at this conference were also apparent to the EDU. Although it took place before other party mergers, this EDU initiative could still not alter the political and human disaster of Yugoslavia in the following year, 1991.

That the EDU, under the organizational leadership of the ÖVP, became the “stage” for the “European Round Table” on the Danube ship *Mozart* in January 1990, underscores this pioneering Austrian activity. For the first time since the end of World War II, Western and Eastern European Christian-democratic party representatives, along with the participation of Americans and Russians, gathered here and discussed their future together. Freedom of speech and freedom of movement as well as the emotional uptick of parties from Eastern and Western Europe were never again achieved in this form within the framework of a common party network.<sup>62</sup>

The “West” and the “East” had already recognized differences in economic policy during the irreversible developments after reunification. While the West saw new markets and areas for production in the countries of Central Europe, the Eastern European countries believed in a disinterested construction of their countries, which would soon lead them to attain the same level as Western countries. The history of most European joint venture programs proves the correctness of this misunderstanding.

An example of this is the relationship between Austria and Hungary. The role of supporter quickly changed to the role of “competitor,” which did not shy away from “hostile takeovers,” as seen from the Eastern perspective. The tense relationship in the field of oil processing and the wide field of the energy industry is still significant today. Nevertheless, it did not take long—an advance in time—and at the end of August 1990 “A Free Europe for All” was proclaimed at the EDU party leadership conference.<sup>63</sup>

Now, within the framework of the EDU, two Eastern and Central Eastern European like-minded parties, namely those from the Czech and Slovak Federal

62 The EDU Executive Secretary informed the EDU Committee that Austrian Deputy Prime Minister Josef Riegler had invited Eastern Europeans and Western Europeans to attend the “Round Table on Europe,” to be held on 11–12 January 1990, on a ship at the Danube. EDU Party Leaders would get the respective invitations in the course of the week, and they were invited to nominate four parliamentarians for the conference. The Austrian People’s Party organized this Round-Table together with the International Cooperation Fund (London), and bore all costs. Cf. Invitation, program, and protocol of the first Round-Table-Europe Meeting in Vienna, Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, Material related to the ÖVP at the Federal Level, Sign. 2836

63 Minutes of the 13<sup>th</sup> Party Leaders’ Conference in Helsinki, 29–31 August 1990, “A free Europe for all.” Helsinki Declaration, Archive of the Karl von Vogelsang-Institute, EDU Collection, EDU 1990/1848, 5–13.

Republic and Hungary, were formally invited, and their leaders were equally represented. At the same time, the parties from the three Baltic States had already been invited to send representatives as observers.

Regarding security policy in 1990, there was the deceptive opinion that the economically defeated Soviet Union as a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) or Russia would henceforth only appear as a regional power. The permanent advancement of European political politics was regarded as the ultimate maxim, but the EDU was not able to clearly define the boundaries of the European part of Europe, as was the case with the EC. In the euphoria of the almost weekly dramatic developments in the East, the EDU saw the geographical boundaries of Europe and future political space as identical.

At the Helsinki conference in August 1990, there was confidence that the integration of the European states would surely succeed in overcoming the economic heritage of “real socialism.” Little attention was paid to cultural and psychological differences. The assessment of the future of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1990 was also noteworthy. The EDU conference clearly highlighted the emerging economic gaps, nationality struggles, and political unrest. Even at this time, however, the political imagination within the EDU lacked the desire to recognize a complete disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1990. On the contrary, a fundamental economic policy reform of the giant empire was perceived in an approach, and no more than a democratic “change within the Soviet Union” was expected.<sup>64</sup> At least with this assessment one was—as would soon be seen—wrong in the Summer of 1990.

Before 1989, the Christian Democratic and conservative parties acted at the individual and bilateral levels vis-à-vis Central and Eastern Europe. A stronger coordination started in the spring and summer of 1989.

When looking at the agenda, goals and priorities of the EDU, the discussion of various topics shows that East-Central Europe took priority, especially Poland, Hungary and the USSR. The Baltic states, the GDR, and Czechoslovakia were only second or third in importance. Then, there were also EC-EFTA relations, which were of interest to the EDU as well as European Security (Arms Control and Measures of Confidence Building between NATO and the Warsaw Pact). What did the EDU do with regard to Central Eastern Europe?

1. Discussion of and Decisions on different topics (supporting and strengthening of the ongoing reform processes in Poland, Hungary and the GDR; welcoming the opening of borders, underscoring a policy of durable stability of peace and freedom in Europe; underlining Germany’s unity as a precondition for stability and peace in Europe, the acceptance of the right of self-determination of the Germans);
2. Fact Finding Missions to Hungary, Poland and the Soviet Union;
3. Searching for candidates for EDU membership and the founding of future Christian-conservative political parties;

64 Ibid., 14–15.

4. Looking for forms of institutionalized relations: Coordination of future EDU members in the various European assemblies and institutions especially the Council of Europe;
5. Developing guidelines for economic and technical assistance programs for East-Central Europe—though the EDU served as a predecessor of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

Did this work at all levels? The observations, perceptions and judgements of the political developments in Central and Eastern Europe by EDU groups were dependent on the fast-occurring revolutionary events, including incalculable and unpredictable outcomes. From a Christian democratic and conservative point of view, some contacts established with political personalities were misleading and unsuccessful. In Poland the EDU could be of help in the preparations for the round table before the elections, but the political system remained insecure and unstable. The political development was in flux and the party political system remained fragile and splintered. The coalition partners in the government changed. Tadeusz Mazowiecki could not be won for the conservative EDU working group. Poland in 1988–89 was more US than Europe oriented. The US Republicans dominated the scene and opened a foreign office in Warsaw earlier than the Adenauer Foundation. For reasons of stability, the US Republicans first set their priorities on the old party political system. Therefore, Republican goals differed from EDU intentions. The case of Hungary was judged as too optimistic by EDU representatives. The Fidesz was more or less neglected while József Antall was supported. He became prime minister of the first freely-elected Hungarian government but died of cancer in 1993. With regard to Croatia and Slovenia, the EDU judged the centrifugal tendencies in Yugoslavia correctly.

The subject presented here stresses the necessity of also focusing on non-governmental and non-state-actors and the role they played during the revolutionary events of 1989. In the sense of political-network research and networking studies, a player such as the EDU has to be considered, also to better understand the diplomatic and political decision-making process during that crucial year.