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De Gaulle-Mitterrand-Macron

The European Political Community through the lenses of its
historical precedents

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Glossary of abbreviations

CEECs: Central and Eastern European Countries

CoE: Council of Europe

CPSU: Communist Party of the Soviet Union

EEA: European Economic Area

EC: European Community

ECB: European Central Bank

ECSC: European Coal and Steel Community

EDC: European Defense Community

EEAS: European External Action Service

EEC: European Economic Community

EFSF: European Financial Stability Facility

EPC: European Political Community of 1952

EPoC: European Political Community of 2022

ESM: European Stability Mechanism

EU: European Union

MLG: Multilevel governance

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization

POTUS: President of the United States

UK: United Kingdom

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

1. Objectives

The objective of this thesis is to explore the historical precedents of the European Political Community put forward by Emmanuel Macron in 2022 in order to be able to better understand the nature of the proposal. Foreign policy initiatives cannot be analyzed in a vacuum as if they were isolated from historical developments, preconceived ideas, and previous experiences. Therefore, it is important to provide a comprehensive historical framework through which to approach Macron's European Political Community (EPoC).

In the months following its proposal, scholars pointed to the similarities between the EPoC and Mitterrand's failed European Confederation. In fact, President Macron himself acknowledged his inspiration on his predecessor's initiative. However, so far there have been very limited efforts to try to go beyond this basic relation and frame the EPoC as the product of the evolution of a set of common ideas about European design. The hypothesis of this paper is that the European Political Community can be understood as part of a wider French conception of European integration that originates with de Gaulle and his Fouchet Plan from 1962, then resurfaces with Mitterrand's European Confederation of 1989, and culminates with the most recent effort to build this shared idea of Europe: the European Political Community brought forward by Macron in 2022.

Through this analysis I will attempt to determine to which extent it is possible to find specific common elements between the three proposals that can amount to a single vision of European integration across five decades, and to which degree has each initiative shaped the design and outcome of the following one.

2. Methodology

The analysis of this paper follows a simple and standard methodology based on two main strategies: bibliographical revision and comparative analysis. To prove the hypothesis established in the previous chapter, it is necessary to command an in depth understanding of the motivations, characteristics, and results of the initiatives put forward by de Gaulle, Mitterrand, and Macron, as well as keeping up with the most recent developments of the European Political Community whose bibliography is in constant motion.

The first element of the research process for this paper is the revision of the relevant literature on the Fouchet Plan and the European Confederation. The review of the bibliography is centered on trying to extract the key underlying elements of each proposal. In the case of Macron's European Political Community, the objective is the same, but it also involves a certain amount of prospective work given that the proposal is still very young, and its final form has not been achieved yet. The state-of-the-art chapter does a brief overview on some of the main works that were useful for this part of the analysis.

The second element of the research is a process of comparative analysis between the proposals of de Gaulle, Mitterrand, and Macron. The analysis of this paper has an important comparative aspect to it, but the greatest comparative effort is done beforehand in order to be able to identify the four common elements of the three proposals that vertebrate the essay. The comparative analysis between the Fouchet Plan, the European Confederation and the EPoC, is possible only as a second step once the key elements of each proposal have been identified. To facilitate the process of comparison, it has been useful to look for cross references of the three initiatives in the bibliography.

This essay uses a wide variety of sources. In the case of de Gaulle's and Mitterrand's initiatives, there is an abundance of long-format bibliography either in the form of books or extensive essays. In the case of Macron's European Political Community, given that it still is an early-stage proposal, most of the sources are shorter policy papers and news articles. While the majority of the bibliography of this paper is composed of secondary sources,

primary sources are still central to the analysis mainly in the form of speeches and interviews, but also in the form of memoirs and recollections.

3. Theoretical framework: Theories of European integration

The theories of European integration were born to explain the rather surprising evolution of Western European nations which, from 1957, started gradually to surrender their national sovereignty in certain policy areas in favor of a still loosely defined vision of a *new old continent* (Jing & Shiyong, 2017). The competing visions of European integration resulted in a convoluted process still ongoing today, and, in parallel, the theoretical basis of the topic has evolved rapidly to adapt to these transformations. Antje Wiener and Thomas Diez proposed in the first chapter of their book *European Integration Theory* three phases of integration theory: a first phase since the 1960s in which neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism were the main competing explanations for the early steps of the process, a second phase from the 1980s in which multi-level governance theory gained strength, and a last one from the 1990s in which constructivism started to make its own contributions on the topic.

3.1 Neofunctionalism

Ernst Bernard Haas was the first scholar to lay down a theoretical explanation of the early European integration process. In 1957, he published *The Uniting of Europe*, where he developed the theory of neofunctionalism and applied the economic concept of “spillover effect” to the process of political and economic integration in Europe. Functional spillover refers to the way in which integration in one particular area leads to increased integration in another. The most cited example of functional spillover as well as the phenomenon that originated the concept itself is how the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) led to a number of needs that triggered the development of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) in Rome. These

three institutions are also the only ones that Haas considers to have initiated the concept of “supranationality” (Haas, 1958, p. 32). Another relevant contribution of neofunctionalism to the understanding of European integration is that it is a self-reinforcing process. That is, as integration progresses, it creates a new political reality in which further integration is more likely or even necessary. This is referred to by scholars as the “logic of integration.” Finally, from these principles, one can already infer that neofunctionalism emphasizes the importance of supranational institutions which are seen as a necessary vehicle to promote integration and overcome the limitations of the nation-state.

3.2 Intergovernmentalism

3.2.1 Traditional intergovernmentalism

Intergovernmentalism was born just a few years later as a realist counterargument to the more liberal-leaning theory of neofunctionalism. Stanley Hoffman, a French political scientist and professor at Harvard University, is credited for being the first scholar to advance an intergovernmentalist perspective on European integration (Verdun, 2020). Hoffman’s publications *The European Process at Atlantic Cross Purposes* (1964) and *Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of West Europe* (1966) are often cited as the foundations of this theory (Jing & Shiyong, 2017). The latter is particularly relevant for understanding the principles of intergovernmentalism and the criticism of neofunctionalism.

Hoffman’s thesis in his long article of 1966 is, in essence, a “vindication of the nation-state as the basic unit” in international relations. A big part of the argument in favor of the nation-state relies on the lack of a well-defined alternative. For this purpose, Hoffmann cites French philosopher Auguste Comte’s “old maxim” *on ne détruit que ce ce qu’on remplace*. But why

has it not been possible to substitute the nation-state as happened with the feudal system? Hoffman presents in his article what he labels two *obvious* responses and two *real* responses. As for the former, he argues, firstly, that “the legitimacy of national self-determination is the only principle which transcends all blocks and ideologies” and that it is the unit that provides the foundation for the United Nations, the “only universal actor of the international system” (Hoffman, 1966, p. 864). Secondly, Hoffman argues that, in a historical context in which a considerable number of countries have just gained independence, the dissolution of the nation-state is unlikely. Regarding Hoffman’s *real* answers, he argues, in the first place, that “regional subsystems have only a reduced autonomy” since domestic policies are often dominated by global problems rather than regional ones. Through the metaphor of a *common home*, he explains that the states which apparently share an independent living space, “find themselves both exposed to the smells and noises that come from outside through all their windows and doors and looking at the outlying houses from which the interference issues.” (Hoffman, 1966, p. 865). It is therefore impossible to consider that those regional subsystems ruled by supranational institutions operate as unitary and independent entities in international relations. Hoffman’s second *real* answer focuses on the post-World War II restrictions on the use of force. The author argues that in an international system in which war of conquest is both increasingly dangerous and rare, the nation-state remains “protected by the relative tameness of the world jungle.” While conquest was crucial to understanding the end of the feudal system, the end of the (current) international system could hardly arrive through the same means.

In *Obstinate or Obsolete?*, Hoffman also lays down the central aspects of the dichotomy neofunctionalism-intergovernmentalism, which he calls *logic of integration* vs. *logic of diversity*. The article establishes four perspectives in which both logics clash (see Table 1). The author concludes the comparison of both *logics* with the following insight that is key to understanding the intergovernmentalist perspective:

Functional integration's gamble could be won only if the method had sufficient potency to promise a permanent excess of gains over losses, and of hopes over frustrations. Theoretically, this may be true of economic integration. It is not true of political integration (in the sense of "high politics") (Hoffman, 1966, p. 882).

Hoffman believed that integration could only work in the domain of what he labeled “low politics,” which includes agricultural or trade policies. Therefore, the economic integration of Europe, which at the time was already starting to take shape, was not unfeasible. However, this logic could not extend to the political domain, which includes key national interests or “high politics” such as national security and foreign policy.

Table 1

LOGIC OF INTEGRATION	LOGIC OF DIVERSITY
The necessity of pushing towards the integration of new sectors (spillover effect) and the action of supranational agents will render nationalism obsolete.	The scope of the spillover effect is limited, and governments retain freedom of action.
Works like a blender that crushes all the different flavors (including key national interests) in the hope of creating one single “delicious juice.”	In areas of “ key national interest ” national governments will prefer to retain sovereignty and self-controlled certainty.

<p>Governments will continue to integrate because the occasional losses caused by the integration process will be exceeded by the overall gains.</p>	<p>In vital areas of national interest, losses cannot be offset by gains on other areas (especially on those less vital).</p>
<p>The uncertainties of the supranational function process are creative (when there are high benefits, low costs, and considerable expectations).</p>	<p>Past a certain threshold, uncertainties are destructive (when there are slow benefits, high losses, and the expectations deferred).</p>

Source: Self-elaboration from Hoffman, 1966, pp. 881-882.

All in all, the primary concern of Hoffman's early outline of intergovernmentalism, as well as its later developments, was to relocate the nation-state as the central actor in international relations and push back against the emphasis neofunctionalism had put on supranational institutions. The Empty Chair Crisis that took place during the second half of 1965 was in many ways the manifestation of the hypothesis put forward by Hoffman in 1964. De Gaulle was a vocal proponent of intergovernmentalism in European integration and refused to accept the limitation of nation-states to the role of managing the unintended consequences of integration without having a say in the actual direction of the process. The clash between de Gaulle and the Commission was used by Hoffmann in 1966 to illustrate the negative results of Monnet's and Haas' vision of European integration (Hoffman, 1966, 882-885), and it has remained a recurrent example of governments' jealousy of national sovereignty in the integration process of the continent.

3.2.2 New intergovernmentalism

After Maastricht, the European Community became more institutionally robust, and this posed a challenge to the traditional conception of intergovernmentalism. New intergovernmentalism argues that the European Council has gradually gained relevance in the EU and that member-state leaders are now much more legislatively active (Schmidt, 2016). Proponents of new intergovernmentalism still highlight the central role of the nation-state in the process of European integration but criticize the traditional intergovernmentalists' perception of the process as solely driven by the pursuit of power. Instead of focusing on power dynamics, the new intergovernmentalists emphasize the importance of consensual agreements reached through deliberation in the European Council (Schmidt, 2016).

The 2008 financial crisis is seen by many scholars that favor the new intergovernmental approach as proof that the nation-state is the main driver of EU governance (Hodson, 2019) (Bickerton, Hodson, & Puetter, 2015a, p. 101). The response to the crisis was the product of the decisions of Member States and not supranational institutions such as the Commission. New intergovernmentalists differ from their traditional counterparts in that they consider that the European austerity policies were the result of consensus-based agreements reached in the European Council rather than Germany and the frugal countries imposing their preferences.

Proponents of the new intergovernmentalists also argue that in recent decades, instead of granting additional powers to the Commission, member-state governments within the Council have intentionally established new EU bodies and mechanisms outside the primary EU institutions as a means to retain control. Examples of such newly created bodies include the European Central Bank (ECB) which is independent from the Commission, new financial entities like the temporary European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and the permanent European Stability Mechanism (ESM), or the European External Action Service (EEAS), whose High Representative is Vice President of the Commission but also chairs the Foreign

Affairs configuration of the Council (Bickerton, Hodson, & Puetter, 2015b, p. 2) (Schmidt, 2016).

3.3 Multi-level governance

During the decades following Ernst B. Haas' postulation of neofunctionalism, the theory was "overcome" in academia, having been declared obsolescent on at least two occasions by Haas himself (Haas, 1975, p.25) (Schmitter, 2002). However, it is not intergovernmentalism either that has become the most accepted theory to explain the developments of the European Union since 1992, but instead multi-level governance (MLG). The concept of MLG emerged from the attempts of Gary Marks and Liesbet Hooghe in the early 1990s to explain the acceleration of European integration post-Maastricht. Hooghe published *Cohesion Policy and European Integration. Building Multilevel Governance* in 1996, and the same year Marks published *Governance in the European Union* along with Fritz Scharpf, Philippe Schmitter, and Wolfgang Streeck. In 2001, Hooghe and Marks jointly published *Multi-level Governance and European Integration*, which synthesized and extended the theory they had developed years before. Other authors have made very relevant contributions to the theory. American political scientist Philippe C. Schmitter, for instance, argued in favor of explaining European integration through "the "poly-centric" as well as the "multi-level" nature of the EU in order to include its functional dimension along with the territorial one (Schmitter, 2002, p. 7).

MLG challenged intergovernmentalist and neofunctionalist perspectives by emphasizing, as its name suggests, the importance of governance at multiple levels, including the EU, national, and sub-national levels. This idea is very much in line with the principle of subsidiarity, adopted for the first time in 1992 with the amendment of the Treaty of Rome introduced in Maastricht. The theory recognizes that actors at each level of governance have their own interests, resources, and constraints, and that effective governance requires

coordination and cooperation across all these different levels (networked governance). MLG also highlights the idea that not all actors at the different levels participate in every aspect of integration, but instead have different weights depending on the policy area. Finally, without going much further in depth with the specifics of multi-level governance, it is important to point out that MLG is a dynamic theory that is not only well-accepted in academic circles, but it has also been widely embraced by European institutions themselves. In 2009, for instance, the Committee of the Regions published a *White Paper on multi-level governance* in which they stressed their commitment to the idea (The Committee of the Regions, 2009), and in 2014, the Committee went a step further and adopted the *Charter for Multilevel Governance in Europe*.¹

3.4 Intergovernmentalism as the preferred framework for the study of the EPoC

Given that multi-level governance seems to be better suited than any previous theory to explain the nature of the European Union, why is it not the preferred framework for this paper? As I will argue later on, I believe that the backbone of the European Political Community (EPoC) has its roots in the early decades of the integration process and particularly in de Gaulle's vision of Europe as laid down during the 1960s. Taking this into account, choosing intergovernmentalism instead of MLG as the lens through which to explore the EPoC and the evolution of its core ideas is the sensible choice.

Although intergovernmentalism is rarely considered anymore the most suitable theory to explain the evolution of the European Union, it is nonetheless idoneous to approach a vision

¹ Resolution 2014/C 174/01. Resolution of the Committee of the Regions on the Charter for Multilevel Governance in Europe. Retrieved from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XR1728>

of European integration that was in great part conceived by de Gaulle, advanced in the late 1980s by Mitterrand, and reinvented by Macron in the form of the European Political Community. The main reason for choosing intergovernmentalism as the preferred theoretical framework is that, as I will develop later, intergovernmentalism is itself one of four key characteristics that unite these different projects into a shared vision of Europe with historical continuity. This essay will repeatedly make reference to the central role of the three French governments in the conception and development of the three integration proposals, as well as the determining role of other European governments in shaping or terminating such proposals.

4. State of the Art

The European Political Community was born as a largely undefined idea of French President Emmanuel Macron in a speech addressed to the European Parliament on May 9, 2022. The EPoC is, therefore, a very new project still in the process of defining even its most basic characteristics, from its institutional design to its Members States or its fundamental goals. Given this novel and vague nature of Macron's proposal, it is not surprising to find that the literature on the topic is still considerably limited both in the number of publications and in their scope. The bulk of the academic publications on Macron's European Political Community are, to this date, research and policy papers published by EU-centered think tanks. The European Parliamentary Research Service does a very valuable job of compiling in different documents the bibliography of relevant EU-related topics for the members of the European Parliament. In their last publication of "What Think Tanks are Thinking" on the European Political Community from October 20, 2022, they gathered a total of 22 publications on the topic, which is a good compilation of everything relevant published between May and October of 2022.

The literature on the European Political Community is marked by two clear catalysts: the original Macron proposal in May, and the first EPoC Summit in Prague in October, both of which generated significant discussion and analysis. Taking this into consideration, I have classified the publications on the European Political Community into two large groups: early literature (reacting to the first proposal of the EPoC) and Prague Summit literature (reacting or preparing for the first summit of the community).

4.1 Early EPoC literature

Publications on the EPoC between May and October 2022 are generally focused on two aspects. Firstly, the comparison between the EPoC's *cousin* proposals (the European Geopolitical Community of Charles Michel, and Enrico Letta's European Confederation) and secondly, many publications by think tanks focus on making their own proposals for the materialization of the Community. Bruegel published in September the most comprehensive proposal in a paper titled *Enlarging and deepening: giving substance to the European Political Community*, written by Franz Mayer, Jean Pisani-Ferry, Daniela Schwarzer, and Shahin Vallée. The paper makes specific suggestions in anticipation of the Prague Summit of October and even offers a roadmap for the configuration of the Community.

4.2 Prague Summit literature

Publications from October 2022 focus largely on the assessment of the first summit of the EPoC which took place in Prague on October 6, 2022. The literature from this moment is less centered on the historical or theoretical origins of Macron's proposal and more on the possible steps forward during the following months. The European Policy Center, which has paid close attention to the EPoC since the beginning, published on October 3, 2022, just three days before the summit, a very complete policy paper with suggestions for Prague written by Corina Stratulat. Some examples of literature assessing the success or failure of the Prague Summit are the brief publications *Five Takeaways from the European Political Community Summit* published by Carnegie Europe and written by Marc Pierini, and *The European Political Community: A Successful Test?* published by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and written by Sissy Martinez and Mathieu Droin.

4.3 EPoC's historical background: de Gaulle and Mitterrand

This paper focuses on the historical origins of the European Political Community and how such experiences already have or might in the future shape Macron's project. Many articles have referenced superficially Macron's inspiration on Mitterrand's European Confederation but few have gone deeper in the attempt to study the EPoC's *parent* proposals (mainly François Mitterrand's European Confederation and de Gaulle's Fouchet Plan, but also the Council of Europe, the Ring of Friends of Romano Prodi or the Union of the Mediterranean). Among this type of publications, it is worth mentioning *European Confederation: A much-maligned concept* published by the Jacques Delors Institute and written by Marie Moulin. This paper is the only one to clearly draw a common line not only between Macron's EPoC and Mitterrand's European Confederation but also with de Gaulle's Fouchet Plans and his general vision of European integration. Although the relationship between the three projects is only tackled superficially in Moulin's paper, it is the closest publication to the thesis of this essay.

The paper *The Failure of a Grand Design: Mitterrand's European Confederation, 1989-1991* written by Frédéric Bozo and published in 2008 does a rigorous job in establishing the Gaullist influence in Mitterrand's European Confederation and is very useful to complete the connection between the three French proposals for the reorganization of Europe.

5. Analysis

On May 9, 2022, after almost two hours of ceremony, President Emmanuel Macron walked toward the lectern of the European Parliament to deliver the closing speech for the Conference on the Future of Europe which had lasted for about a year. “I have some bad news; I’m going to give a speech,” he said, “but I also have some good news. I am going to try not to repeat what has already been said so well here today before me.” Indeed, President Macron was not planning on reiterating previous remarks from Ursula Von der Leyen or Roberta Metsola about the results of the Conference. Macron’s speech would serve as an opportunity to present to the world his latest “brainchild.” He started by quoting Robert Schuman: “World Peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it,” and after a few minutes, he made explicit the results of his own “creative efforts”:

Let’s be clear: the European Union, considering its level of integration and ambition, cannot, in the short term, be the only way to structure the European continent. [...] Faced with this new geopolitical context, we very clearly need to find a way to think about our Europe, its unity, and its stability, without weakening the closeness built inside our European Union. We therefore have the historic duty, not to do what we have always done and say the only solution is accession, [...] but rather to open up a historic reflection commensurate with the events we are experiencing, on the organization of our continent. [...] In 1989, President François Mitterrand opened up this reflection when the Soviet Union collapsed, proposing the creation of a European confederation. His proposal did not bear fruit. It was most certainly ahead of its time [...] But it raised the right question, and this question remains: how can we organize Europe from a political perspective and with a broader scope than that of the European Union? It is our historic obligation to respond to that question today and create what I would describe here before you as “a European political community” (Macron, 2022).

Macron’s proposal, however, was not the first revival of Mitterrand’s European Confederation in 2022. On April 19, just three weeks before Macron’s speech, Italian ex-prime minister Enrico Letta had published a brief article in the Italian newspaper *Corriere*

della Sera in which he called for a European confederation meant to achieve a double result: allow candidate countries to “participate in European public life and have subjectivity in a common political and strategic space,” and uphold the orderly process of accession with its appropriate timing (Letta, 2022). Such confederation would be composed of the 27 EU members plus Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Kosovo, making a total of 36 potential members. On April 29, Letta had the opportunity to elaborate on his idea in an interview with the European Council on Foreign Relations’ director Mark Leonard (Leonard, 2022).

Days after Macron popularized the idea of a European Political Community, Charles Michel, president of the European Council, made public his own approach to the project in a speech at the plenary session of the European Economic and Social Committee, in which he talked about a “European Geopolitical Community” quite in line with what the French president had described in Strasbourg (Michel, 2022).

Table 2

Aims at the time of the proposal	Enrico Letta European Confederation	Emmanuel Macron EPoC	Charles Michel EGC
Create a continent-wide political community in Europe			
Cooperate in common strategic areas such as energy, security and migration			
Reestablish ties with the UK			
Deal with EU enlargement			
Move toward greater European sovereignty			

- Stated aim.
- Not an aim.
- Implicit or unclear.

Source: Self-elaboration.

Among the three versions of the project, Macron's European Political Community emerged as the most widely embraced option in the months that followed their respective announcements, and the overall idea of the project has been closely linked to the French President. However, the three of them are similar enough to be considered jointly, and this chapter will make reference to the three proposals in the attempt to analyze the EPoC.

In his speech to the European Parliament on May 9, Macron made explicit his inspiration from Mitterrand's unsuccessful proposal for a European Confederation in 1989 (Macron, 2022). The similarities between both proposals are evident and many publications on the EPoC link Mitterrand's and Macron's initiatives. It is, however, more difficult to find analyses that refer to the European Political Community as the product of a broader tradition of French foreign policy. In this analysis, I will make the case that the EPoC envisioned by Macron is part of a common thread that starts with Charles de Gaulle's proposal of the Fouchet Plan in 1962 and his vision of France's role in the construction of Europe, continues through Mitterrand's European Confederation of 1989, and ends with Macron's European Political Community in 2022. The idea of a common link between the three projects can be grounded in the existence of a number of common fundamental characteristics. I have identified the following four elements of Macron's European Political Community which are shared by its predecessors and that have had an influence, to a lesser or greater extent, on the proposal:

1. Intergovernmental structure.
2. Politically oriented community.
3. Pan-Europeanism.
4. European sovereignty and autonomy.

These four common characteristics form the basis for organizing the analysis into four distinct sections.

I. Intergovernmental structure

De Gaulle, Mitterrand, and Macron have all resorted to intergovernmentalism as a way to organize the European continent, albeit with varying degrees of commitment and different motivations. In this section, I will argue that de Gaulle, an unshaken champion of intergovernmentalism, was the direct precursor to Mitterrand's intergovernmental conception of the European Confederation. Mitterrand and de Gaulle shared a concern about France's relative loss of power in Europe, but the former also had to face the new challenge of Eastern enlargement. Macron would resurface the failed European Confederation in great part as a means to deal with a new wave of enlargement, but the definite intergovernmental structure of his European Political Community would be determined by the convergence of other factors.

A) *Charles de Gaulle*

Intergovernmentalism was the cornerstone of Charles de Gaulle's idea of European integration, to which he referred as the *Europe des États*. An intergovernmental Europe had been on his radar even before the Treaty of Paris and before his decade as French President. Already in 1950, de Gaulle had declared that "a European confederation [was] perhaps the last chance for the West" (Teasdale, 2016, p. 7). In fact, as it was previously pointed out, the theory of intergovernmentalism itself was heavily influenced by, or even born from, de Gaulle's doctrines.

De Gaulle became president of France on January 8, 1959. A few months earlier, his predecessor, Gustave Jules René Coty, had brought him out of retirement to lead a "*Gouvernement de Salut National*" capable of saving a country at the brink of civil war. The

General, whom René Coty had called “the most illustrious of the French” in his speech to the *Assemblée Nationale* on May 29, was faced with a monumental challenge (Coty, 1958). Within a span of four years, de Gaulle managed to address internal instability by establishing the Fifth Republic in 1958, and successfully negotiated an end to the Algerian War in 1962 while containing the tensions within the French military. In spite of the context of French colonial sunset, de Gaulle was not willing to accept the perceived decline of France in the world and found in the European integration project the template to reconceive the *grandeur* of France. De Gaulle’s idea of Europe was subordinate to his idea of France’s pivotal role in international affairs and, therefore, a federal Europe with powerful supranational institutions was a threat rather than an asset for his objectives. In order to ensure that France retained its dominant position in the continent, it was necessary to pursue a foreign policy that upheld the principle of the nation-state. This is precisely what de Gaulle's Fouchet Plan (1961-1962) aimed to achieve.

The Fouchet Plan represented a significant diplomatic endeavor to revise the institutional structure of the European Community from the supranational model championed by its Founding Fathers in the 1950s, towards a looser, intergovernmental approach predicated on cooperation among sovereign nation-states (Teasdale, 2016, p. 1). On October 19, 1961, Christian Fouchet, the then-French Ambassador to Denmark, submitted the first draft of the Fouchet Plan (also known as Fouchet Plan I) to the six members of the European Community (EC). The plan aimed to establish an indissoluble union of States based on intergovernmental cooperation and on the “respect for the individuality of the peoples and of the Member States” (CVCE, 2014). Institutionally, the draft proposed the creation of three bodies: Articles 5 and 6 referred to a Council comprising Heads of State or Government as the core institution, which would convene thrice annually and adopt decisions by unanimity; Article 7 reiterated the need for a European Parliament which already had been proposed in the Treaty of Rome four years before; Articles 9 and 10 proposed the establishment of a “European Political Commission” tasked with assisting the Council. The Fouchet Plan was rejected by the EC members on two occasions for a number of reasons, one of which was the marked intergovernmental institutional design. The other five members of the Community were wary of de Gaulle’s dogmatic intergovernmental approach and his unconcealed aim to

position France as the *de facto* leader of the EC. German and Italian governments preferred, in general terms, more pragmatic sovereignty-sharing on a sectoral basis, while the Benelux countries went even further by favoring the dissolution of national sovereignty into a supranational Europe (Teasdale, 2016, p. 16).

The Fouchet Plan was de Gaulle's most tangible effort to steer the development of European integration. However, his rigid intergovernmental vision is best remembered through his speeches and comments. In a press conference on September 5, 1960, he stated the following:

What are the pillars on which it [Europe] can be built? In truth, they are States that are certainly very different from each other, each with its own soul, its own history, its own language, its own misfortunes, its own glories, and its own ambitions, but States that are the only entities that have the right to order and the authority to act. To imagine that something can be built that is effective for action and approved by the people outside and above the States is a chimera (Gaulle, 1970).

On many occasions, he was much blunter. During another press conference five years later, on September 9, 1965, de Gaulle stated the following:

Now, we know — heaven knows that we know! — that there is a different concept of a European federation in which, according to the dreams of those who conceived it, the countries would lose their national personalities, and in which, furthermore, for want of a federator — such as, in the West, Caesar and his successors, Charlemagne, Otto I, Charles V, Napoleon and Hitler tried to be, each in his fashion, and such as in the East, Stalin tried to be — would be ruled by some technocratic, stateless and irresponsible Areopagus. We know also that France is opposing this project, which contradicts all reality, with a plan for organized co-operation among the States, evolving, doubtless, toward a confederation. (Western European Union Assembly-General Affairs Committee, 1966).

B) François Mitterrand

De Gaulle's flagship project failed definitively in April 1962 but, while the Fouchet Plan was soon largely forgotten, his ideas and vision of the role of France in Europe remained very much alive. As a socialist and long-time opponent of de Gaulle, François Mitterrand was far from a Gaullist (Bozo, 2008, p. 394). The president was not nearly as skeptical about a closely integrated European Community, and during his presidency, the EC would grow up to 15 Member States. However, along his two terms as president of the Republic, Mitterrand would end up embracing many of de Gaulle's foreign policy principles.

Faced with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the foreseeable political opening of Eastern Europe, during the traditional New Year address of 1989, the President floated the idea of creating a "European Confederation" which would "bring together all the states of [the] continent in a common and permanent organization for exchanges, peace, and security." A concern that Mitterrand shared with de Gaulle was the loss of France's preeminent position in Europe and, with the potential reunification of Germany, that prospect seemed at that time more likely than ever since the Second World War. The proposal of a new confederation with an intergovernmental structure was partly born to try to prevent this loss of relative power in the EC. In fact, the French were even hesitant to collaborate closely with the Germans on the design of the Confederation. So much so that a Franco-German working group proposed in 1991 never got off the ground (Bozo, 2008, p. 406). However, for Mitterrand there was also a new motivation for an intergovernmental confederation: the prospect of enlargement.

As the Cold War started coming to an end, the idea of the union of all European countries did not seem as far-fetched to Mitterrand as it seemed to de Gaulle three decades earlier. Moreover, in parallel to the proposal of the European Confederation, Mikhail Gorbachev had started talking about a "common European home," and the rapprochement of Eastern and

Western Europe gradually became part of the *zeitgeist*. However, the pace and the form in which this rapprochement would take place were still up for debate.

In 1989, Quai d'Orsay was reluctant to extend the EC beyond its current twelve members and firmly believed that there would not be new memberships for the next ten or even twenty years (Bozo, 2008, p. 397). In this context, the dichotomy between *deepening* and *enlarging* quickly came to the forefront of the European debate. Just days after Mitterrand announced his idea of the Confederation, his advisor Élisabeth Guigou highlighted that the organization had “the immense advantage of making visible the possibility of intermediate formulas between membership of the Community and the present status quo.” (Bozo, 2008, 398). It was clear from very early on that Mitterrand conceived an institutionally light European Confederation as a means to safeguard the EEC from the destabilization that a fast entry of Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) would cause (Moulin, 2022). To try to solve this problem, Mitterrand envisioned a European architecture very similar to the “concentric circles” of the then-president of the Commission Jacques Delors. Jean Mustelli, the diplomat in charge of sketching out the first draft of the European Confederation proposal, thought it should be an organization without any transfer of sovereignty and with light organizational structures (Favier & Martin-Roland, 1999, p. 173). In an interview from 1990, Mitterrand explained his idea in very clear terms:

I see the Community as the central element of any construction, and Europe, as defined by history and geography, a natural area where every European will feel at home. The first circle (the community), will have very solid unitary structures and the second (the confederation), rules of life in common ensuring the development of exchanges and guarantees of security (Mitterrand, 1990).

Hence, Mitterrand favored supranational institutions and deepening integration among the EC members but preferred minimal intergovernmental structures for cooperation with other European states. Unsurprisingly, Central and Eastern European countries were not so keen

on the idea and started to perceive the European Confederation as a mere waiting room for the EC (Moulin, 2022, p. 3). On June 12, 1991, the first day of the Prague Conference meant to launch the European Confederation, Mitterrand was asked in an interview if his confederation was just a means to keep countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia at the doors of the Community. Although the president denied that that was his intention, he talked about an “intermediary phase” for CEECs that could last for “decades and decades.” (Mitterrand, 1991). These declarations and the overall perception of the Confederation as a lifeless antechamber to the Community was a crucial cause for the eventual failure of Mitterrand’s proposal.

C) Emmanuel Macron

Macron took direct inspiration from Mitterrand to conceive his European Political Community. The EU in 2022 found itself in a similar position to the EC in 1989 in the sense that there was a shared generalized perception that they needed to find new ways of organizing the continent as a consequence of important geopolitical shifts: Mitterrand faced the consequences of the disintegration of the USSR and Macron the consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In this sense, both conceived their new organizations as a way of dealing with enlargement to the East (albeit a different East). Both Mitterrand and Macron were also forced to rethink their relationship with a key partner: the new unified Germany in the case of Mitterrand and the new post-Brexit United Kingdom in the case of Macron. However, besides the similarities, the early proposals of Macron, Letta, and Michel were not necessarily betting on a clear intergovernmental structure such as the one Mitterrand advocated for. I will argue that, rather than a clear bet on intergovernmentalism from the outset, the agreement on an intergovernmental structure is the outcome of the convergence of three key factors: the input of EU candidate countries, the UK factor, and institutional saturation.

Firstly, regarding the input of EU candidates, it is important to highlight that the early initial proposals for the EPoC were more tightly inspired by Mitterrand's European Confederation and therefore primarily centered on enlargement. Enrico Letta's idea of a European Confederation was particularly concerned with this issue. In the face of Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia as potential new candidates, he imagined a confederation aimed at solving the main limitations of EU enlargement policy. Letta described in his original proposal the experiences with the integration of CEECs during the 1990s as "big promises at first; then years of cold showers" (Letta, 2022), and saw in Mitterrand's failed confederation a potential solution to avoid making the same mistakes. However, in the European Union of 2022, a purely intergovernmental structure such as the one Mitterrand had conceived was not the obvious choice for improving enlargement. For Letta, the Confederation would kick off as soon as possible with a light institutional structure but it would eventually require a treaty, its competencies would grow with time, and the EU institutions would work as pillars for the Confederation (Leonard, 2022). The issue of EU enlargement was also at the center of Macron's EPoC, and during the first months after the proposal many French and EU officials advocated for a more robust EU-centered community that would serve to integrate pre-accession countries by giving them access to economic and infrastructure benefits (Grant, 2022). In other words, a less intergovernmental community. The push for a more supranational model of the EPoC would, however, soon lose momentum when Eastern European countries received with indignation the whole idea of a new organization aimed at "solving" enlargement. It is important to keep in mind that when Macron's speech in May 2022 took place, Ukraine and Moldova had not yet been granted EU candidate status, and the French government (like many others) remained non-committal on the matter. It did not help either that Macron explicitly referenced Mitterrand's European Confederation, and that he practically quoted his infamous remarks about an intermediate phase that would go on for "decades and decades" when he stated in his speech that the accession process would likely last "several decades." Therefore, the idea of the EPoC, which had not been all that controversial for Western governments (Noyan, 2022), sounded alarms among CEECs, considering it, once again, a diluted alternative to real membership of the EU. In the European Council meeting on 23 and 24 June 2022, it became evident that the CEECs, and

particularly the new candidate countries, felt more comfortable with an intergovernmental community that favored “strategic cooperation” on an equal footing, rather than a model centered around the EU institutions and enlargement (Nguyen, 2022).

The “strategic cooperation” model was quickly embraced in June, but the candidate country’s input was not the only reason. Another issue that pushed in the direction of intergovernmentalism was the desire to include the United Kingdom in the Community. Macron had made his intentions explicit when he stated in his May 9 speech that the European Political Community would “not be closed to those who have left the EU.” At the moment of Macron’s proposal, many foreign policy officials in Paris believed that a core goal of the EPoC should be to find ways to better socialize with the British (Grant, 2022); (future) Prime Minister Lizz Truss’ doubts about whether to consider Macron as a “friend or a foe” in an interview in August became proof that the concerns were founded. It was clear from the outset that the UK would not be willing to join a club dominated by the EU, but there were doubts that it would even accept joining a new European club at all. However, the decision to adopt an intergovernmental model in June, along with Turkey’s inclusion in the EPoC, made the prospect of joining the organization less daunting for the British. Finally, Truss did attend the Prague Summit on October 6, and clarified what the EPoC meant to her: “This is not about moving closer to Europe. (...) What this is about is about working with all of our European partners to challenge Putin’s appalling war in Ukraine, but also to work together on the issues that we all face – huge energy costs, rising inflation and also migration across our continent.”

A third and last cause for the definite shift towards an intergovernmental EPoC was a generalized perception, particularly in Germany and Eastern EU countries, that there were already more than enough European institutions and that the EPoC should not become another *quasi-zombie* organization with grand aspirations and modest accomplishments. Furthermore, some in Berlin worried that Germans would have to foot the bill for the new institutions (Grant, 2022). The definite manifestation of an intergovernmental European Political Community became apparent to all when Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala went out of his way during his welcoming remarks to the Prague Summit, to stress that they were

“certainly not going to establish another European organization” and that the aim was to “create an informal platform for all democratic countries in Europe, [to] cooperate, share ideas, and develop solutions to return prosperity and peace to [the] continent” (Fiala, 2022). The degree of looseness of the future EPoC is still up for debate as a majority still argues for more formalization than what Fiala suggested in October. In any case, a heavy EU-tied community is already off the table.

II. Politically oriented community

The Fouchet Plan, the European Confederation, and the European Political Community were all proposals aimed to establish a common space for political cooperation in the continent. In this section, I will argue that Europe has historically struggled to integrate politically and has instead relied on the economy to drive integration in other areas. However, this historical lack of political coordination in foreign policy, defense, and other sectors, has had considerable consequences.

A) Charles de Gaulle

As part of his personal crusade against the supranational Europe, de Gaulle was instrumental in the failure of the European Defense Community (EDC) which had been proposed by French prime minister René Pleven in 1950. During the 1951 French legislative elections, the Gaullists (RPF) emerged as the dominant faction in parliament, securing 121 seats, and in the decisive vote to ratify the treaty in August 1954, the Gaullists, along with the communists and a faction of the socialists, were able to reject the ratification with 319 votes against 264 (CVCE, 2016c). The sudden failure of the EDC necessarily meant the end of the

European Political Community (EPC) which had started to develop in parallel as a necessary complement to the new security dimension of the Community.

In the eyes of European federalists, the Council of Europe (CoE), the largest European institution at the time, was perceived as lacking political muscle and, after some fruitless attempts, they had soon abandoned all hope of ever seeing the CoE become a real European political authority (CVCE, 2016b). Instead, they saw in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), smaller and more homogeneous, the best foundation for the construction of the new Europe. It was the ECSC assembly that drew a first draft of the potential European Political Community, which would have combined the existing structure of the ECSC with the new EDC, becoming a strong supranational entity. However, their bet died at the hands of de Gaulle. After the rejection of the EDC and EPC, advocates for closer European integration decided to focus their efforts on developing the economic dimension of Europe and were careful not to address the political and defense areas. The Treaty of Rome successfully established the European Economic Community in 1957 and marked decades of European integration driven primarily by economic integration.

Contrary to what is commonly believed, while de Gaulle was an explicit opponent of the EDC and the EPC, he was not against building a political community in Europe; only against building it in the terms of the federalists. In a letter sent to French general Antoine Béthouart in 1954, he expressed the following:

Obviously, you cannot expect me to rally behind this E.D.C. which, in my eyes, is a colossal farce and an attempt at national abdication. I am - the first one - convinced of the necessity to unite Europe. For there to be union, the institution must have a soul, a body, and members. Europe can only be built upon nations. (Gaulle, 1985)

De Gaulle was favorable to bringing like-minded European countries together to coordinate their foreign policy but only under an intergovernmental framework, and the Fouchet Plan was his proposal to achieve precisely that. The states that favored a more supranational construction of Europe, mainly Belgium and the Netherlands, became fierce detractors of de Gaulle's proposal and effectively thwarted its success. However, others with similar views

decided on a completely different strategy. None other than Jean Monnet, a convinced federalist, saw the Fouchet Plan as a second opportunity to finally consolidate the political dimension of the Community, and prove that Europe was not only economic but political (Teasdale, 2016, p. 2). In the same line, former French President Válerý Giscard d'Estaing wrote in *Le Figaro* in 1995 the following key reflection on how the rejection of the Fouchet Plan in the early 1960s effectively meant the deferral of a political Europe until Maastricht:

With the passage of time, one can see how the rejection of the Fouchet Plan was a serious political error. It is true that the Community would have been endowed with two institutional structures: one federal, to manage external trade and the economy; the other intergovernmental, to conduct foreign policy and defense. But the essential unity of these two policies would have been asserted from the early 1960s onwards, instead of having to wait three decades for this to happen. And it would have been done in the compact and homogeneous framework of the then Six member states, guided by a common political will (Giscard d'Estaing, 1995, p. 10).

For many years the Fouchet Plan was retrospectively regarded as a failed effort to trump European integration but, to the contrary, de Gaulle's proposal could have accelerated the creation of a political union in the continent capable of coordinating foreign policy and defense. The first Fouchet Plan included a provision for a common foreign policy and aimed to establish a Council with the capacity to enforce binding decisions in which the foreign ministers of member states would meet once every four months (European Parliament, 1982). De Gaulle, who had developed his political instincts in pre-WWI Europe, dismissed the EEC as a mere commercial treaty without real political power and thought that only the political actions of states would matter (Warlouzet, 2010, p. 28). While he clearly underestimated the real power of the EEC, he was right in that the European Communities lacked a more explicit political dimension, particularly regarding its capacity to act as a single international actor. The refusal by de Gaulle to embrace a supranational political community, along with the rejection of the intergovernmental alternative represented by the Fouchet Plan by the Benelux countries, resulted in Europe being fairly politically disunited for several decades longer than it would have been otherwise.

B) François Mitterrand

François Mitterrand's 14 years as president of the French Republic from 1981 to 1995 witnessed an enormous transformation of the European Community from a quasi-dormant common market to a full-fledged economic and monetary union with increased legislative and political competencies. A decisive boost to European integration was already underway during the mid-1980s since the Single European Act (SEA) of 1986 had established the commitment to achieve a single market before 1993 and set the foundations for a new treaty. When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and then the USSR was dissolved in 1991, the inertia of European integration provoked a struggle in the Community to adapt to the crucial geopolitical transformations and, although the Maastricht Treaty tried to establish the framework for the EU's future enlargement, it was clear that, in the medium term, integration would only take place inside the EU without the new Eastern states.

At the beginning of the 1990s, a rushed economic integration with the ex-soviet republics was technically unfeasible, but the desire of these countries to integrate with Western Europe was clear and explicit from the outset. Mitterrand and others saw in this context the need to offer something to the CEECs as soon as possible and, given that the economic harmonization that had driven integration between the members of the EC since the 1950s was not workable in a short timeframe, Mitterrand decided to revive de Gaulle's proposal of a political community to bring Eastern Europe closer. The idea's rationale was straightforward: while economic integration is a gradual process, political alignment can be established instantly; hence, there ought to be a political arena in the continent where these political affinities can materialize and develop.

Three decades earlier de Gaulle had also favored a model of European integration that was driven by cooperation in foreign policy and defense, and he had been skeptical about the spillover effect that economic integration could have in the integration efforts in other areas.

De Gaulle was wrong in the sense that economic convergence did eventually result in closer integration in other areas, and Maastricht was proof of it. However, this process had been long, tortuous, and slow. Repeating the same model with the CEECs did not seem the most sensible option in the eyes of Mitterrand. The French President saw the soon-to-become European Union as the core of European integration, and his proposed European Confederation as a second wider circle including the rest of the states in the continent and concerned with political exchanges and security guarantees (Moulin, 2022, p. 2).

Mitterrand's Confederation eventually failed due to the opposition of CEECs previously explained and other reasons that will be studied later on. From 1994, Jacques Delors tried to implement Mitterrand's ideas of a political Europe in what he called a Federation of Nation States (Moulin, 2022, p. 4). The concept was seen by many as contradictory as it emphasized the federal process of integration while reasserting the relevance of the nation-state, and it did not crystalize into anything tangible.

C) Emmanuel Macron

As it has been previously established, European construction has historically been predominantly focused on economic integration, leading the current EU to primarily perceive its relationship with the surrounding environment through an economic lens. A significant portion of the EU had heavily relied on the concept of economic interdependence as a means for promoting peace. Notably, Germany had been steadfast in its determination to enhance commercial ties with Russia for at least two decades, despite growing criticism from the United States.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine was a wake-up call for the Union and its members, revealing the limitations of using the economy as one of the central instruments for foreign policy. The trade ties with Russia promoted by Germany had not prevented war but, instead, put Europe in a weaker strategic position. Two days before the Russian tanks entered Ukraine through

the northeast, Chancellor Olaf Scholz finally announced that Germany would halt the process of certifying the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, and two months later, German president Frank-Walter Steinmeier admitted that they “should have taken the warnings of [their] eastern European partners more seriously, particularly regarding the time after 2014” (DW, 2022). The generalized lesson in the EU was that political objectives could only be addressed through political means and the Russian invasion of Ukraine evidenced the lack of a common space for political cooperation in the continent outside the EU.

The proposal presented by Letta and, particularly, the proposals advocated by Macron and Michel, were aimed at filling this political void in the continent. Chopin, Macek, and Maillard make a compelling argument in this respect in their article *The European Political Community: A new anchoring to the European Union*. They argue that, on the one hand, the European Union currently has a structured and credible offer for those countries outside the EU that want to cooperate closely economically. For example, the European Economic Area (EEA), which joined the EC and the EFTA in 1992, allowed for the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people between them. Therefore, countries such as Norway or Iceland which do not wish to participate actively in the EU institutions or be bound by them can still integrate economically. However, on the other hand, the EU lacks the opposite offer for political integration without the economic dimension. The result is that countries that cannot integrate economically yet but align politically with the EU (like Montenegro, Albania, or Ukraine) and countries that simply do not want to fully integrate economically with the EU but hold common political stances (like the United Kingdom or Switzerland), lack a common space in which to cooperate politically in areas such as foreign policy, security, energy, or migration (Chopin, Macek, & Maillard, 2022). The European Political Community is the forum or organization that could make up for this absence, but why did it take more than three decades and a war for someone to resurface Mitterrand’s idea of a common continental space for political cooperation?

After the collapse of the USSR and the failure of the European Confederation, the framework for relations with the East revolved predominantly around EU enlargement and NATO accession. Under the leadership of Putin, Russia became increasingly hawkish regarding its

political area of influence and paranoid about Western expansion. Many European countries, including Ukraine and Moldova, did not show a clear desire to be part of the European integration efforts for many years and the EU was not particularly concerned with the issue either. It was not until the 2014 Russian invasion of Crimea, and particularly the 2022 war in Ukraine, that there seemed to emerge a renewed sense of European unity in the continent. On March 2, 2022, 45 European countries² voted in favor of United Nations General Assembly Resolution ES-11/1 which condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine and demanded the former to immediately cease its use of force. Russia and Belarus were the only European states to vote against the resolution. This political alignment in the continent against Russia was an unprecedented phenomenon, and many European leaders, notably Macron, saw the opportunity to leverage the situation and give substance to the unlikely political consensus.

In his speech on May 9, Macron mentioned the “new geopolitical context” as one of the main triggers for his EPoC, and Charles Michel emphasized this aspect by rebranding it as a European *Geopolitical* Community. Enrico Letta’s proposal in the *Corriere* in April of 2022, proposed a new European Confederation which would be “the place of political dialogue” and lamented that such an “ambitious architecture [had not] been built from the outset” in the 1990s (Letta, 2022). In 2022, the conditions were ideal for the proposal, and other European leaders, although they often disagreed on the institutional structure of the EPoC or the relationship it should have with regard to the EU, agreed nonetheless on the usefulness of inaugurating a forum for multilateral political cooperation in the continent.

III. Pan-Europeanism

Pan-Europeanism advocates for the union of the European continent. Although their geopolitical contexts were very different, in this section I will argue that de Gaulle,

² Armenia abstained and Azerbaijan was absent during the vote. Also, Turkey is counted as European among the 45 other states.

Mitterrand, and Macron all envisioned a European continent that came together in its entirety to allow for close cooperation. The three French presidents took steps, in a greater or lesser degree, to move toward such objective.

A) Charles de Gaulle

De Gaulle is perhaps not the archetype of the pro-pan-European politician as his conception of Europe is often caricatured as a form of nationalistic Euroskepticism. On the contrary, de Gaulle was in fact quite close to pan-Europeanism, albeit with a significant emphasis on the nation-state as its foundation, in line with what has already been described in the two previous sections.

Perhaps the most relevant figure in the development of pan-Europeanism was the founder of the Pan-Europa Union Richard Graf Coudenhove Kalergi. Coudenhove-Kalergi was an Austrian-Japanese politician who published in 1922 the article “Pan-Europa – a proposal,” in which he laid down the principles of his vision of a pan-European continent. The Pan-Europa Union grew over the years and gathered the support of prominent intellectuals such as Thomas Mann, Stephan Zweig, Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein, and Ortega y Gasset among others. De Gaulle was linked to Coudenhove-Kalergi’s idea of Pan-Europa since 1941 and he even had the initiative to found the French branch of the Pan-Europa Union under the presidency of his successor Georges Pompidou (Paneurope, 2023). The Fouchet Plan had a prominent role in the evolution of pan-Europeanism, as it definitely split the Europeanist movement between those who considered the proposal a step toward integration or, to the contrary, a threat to a united Europe. The Pan-Europa Union clearly settled in on the side of de Gaulle, as Coudenhove-Kalergi had already warned in 1957 after the treaty of Rome about the risk of uniting Europe solely based on unilateral economic policy (Paneurope, 2023).

The vision of Pan-Europeanism that de Gaulle had was, in any case, not very concretely defined. It is important to bear in mind that in the geopolitical context of the 1950s and 60s,

at the height of the Cold War, the idea of overcoming the East-West divide in Europe in order to form a continental confederation could not be much more than a utopia. However, despite its medium-term unfeasibility, de Gaulle openly expressed his aspiration on more than one occasion to establish a European confederation encompassing the entirety of the European continent. Perhaps his most renowned statement in this respect occurred during a press conference in 1965 in which de Gaulle declared that Europe should “establish herself from the Atlantic to the Urals” (Gaulle, 1965).

Under de Gaulle’s presidency, Europe did not come close to anything resembling a pan-European configuration. However, de Gaulle had proven that pan-Europeanism was not necessarily at odds with intergovernmentalism, and made clear, even in the midst of the Cold War, that the European integration project transcended Western Europe, with the ultimate goal of encompassing the entire continent to achieve its full realization.

B) François Mitterrand

In the famous New Year speech of 1989 in which Mitterrand announced his proposal of a European Confederation, he prophesized that Europe would “recover its own history and its own geography.” This perception that the fall of the iron curtain could mean the recovery of Europe’s true and complete form was widely held, yet very few leaders other than Mitterrand showed the resolve to take concrete actions to promote and accelerate this *reunion* process. From 1989, the French president started to promulgate the concept of pan-Europeanism through his foreign policy rhetoric.

Mitterrand's pursuit of a continent-wide European Confederation was fueled by a hopeful outlook on the transformations taking place in the USSR, but also a deep fear about the potential for these rapid developments to plunge Europe into a state of geopolitical turmoil. The French president referred to the European status quo during the Cold War as the Europe of Yalta, and since 1989 he repeatedly expressed his concern that the continent could slide

back to what he called the “Europe of 1913” (or of “1914” or “1919” or “Europe of Sarajevo”) (Bozo, 2008, p. 395). Therefore, Mitterrand saw the necessity to quickly substitute the decaying Europe of Yalta with a new continental geopolitical framework that prevented the fatal tensions of the first half of the century. The decade of Yugoslav Wars that would break out just one year and a half after his New Year speech is proof that Mitterrand’s fears were not unfounded.

In addition to his worry about continental backsliding, there was another factor that induced Mitterrand to put forward a pan-European Confederation: the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev. Gorbachev had become the leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1985 and was immediately perceived as a more moderate leader by most of the West. Since before his appointment as General Secretary of the CPSU, Gorbachev had promoted publicly a rhetoric of openness toward the rest of Europe, and he had become known among Western leaders since the early 1980s. In April 1984, Margaret Thatcher invited Gorbachev, at that time chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Soviet legislature, to the UK as she had heard rumors of him being a potential reformer of the USSR (Medvedev, 1986). In another visit in December of that same year, Gorbachev concluded a speech to the British Parliament stating the following:

Whatever is dividing us, we live on the same planet and Europe is our common home, a home, not a theatre of military operations. (Rey, 2004, p. 34)

After this moment, the concept of the “common European home” became increasingly popular in the discourse of Soviet elites. At first, the idea was perceived by the West, and probably intended by the USSR, as a part of a mere public relations campaign and it was only used in declarations in front of the press (Rey, 2004, p. 34). However, during the following years, the Common European Home gained substance and became a serious proposal on the part of Gorbachev. In 1989, the now leader of the CPSU, addressed the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and talked about how in recent meetings with European leaders (including Mitterrand), questions had been raised about the “architecture of our *common home*, on how it should be built and even on how it should be *furnished*” (Council of Europe, 1990, p. 201). Without Gorbachev’s new rhetoric about Europe, it would have

been inconceivable for Mitterrand to propose a continent-wide confederation, but in the context of the late 1980s, the possibility of close political cooperation between Western Europe and the USSR seemed within reach for the first time in decades. In many ways, Mitterrand's European Confederation and Gorbachev's Common European Home developed jointly as a single project which aimed to provide a new political framework for the whole of Europe in substitution of the system of Yalta.

The pan-European dimension of the European Confederation was not as well received by Central and Eastern European countries as Mitterrand had hoped. By the time the key Prague Summit on 12 June, 1991, was about to take place, it was clear to many that the project was already doomed. Mitterrand's proposal had been fairly well received in Russia and the Balkan countries, but Central states such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary remained deeply unconvinced about sharing a new political space in Europe with Russia (Bozo, 2008, 408). When the USSR definitely dissolved in 1991 and the Soviet republics became independent, the pan-European community became definitely inconceivable.

Some scholars have raised doubts about Mitterrand's real commitment to the idea of a pan-European Confederation. Julie M. Newton, for instance, argues in her paper *Gorbachev, Mitterrand, and the Emergence of the Post-Cold War Order in Europe* that the European Confederation was, in essence, a "conceptual decoy" whose pan-European dimension was simply a tool to further Mitterrand's own narrow objectives, including Soviet consent for German reunification. Even if this was the case, Mitterrand did bring the concept pan-Europeanism to the forefront of the continent's political discussions in a way that was unprecedented. The French president came close to making De Gaulle's idea of a Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals" a reality, and although it ended up failing, the vision of a wider continental configuration remained in the DNA of French foreign policy and would eventually return with Macron's proposal of the European Political Community.

C) *Emmanuel Macron*

While the proposals of Enrico Letta and Emmanuel Macron were similar in many aspects which have previously been discussed, the pan-European dimension of the European Political Community is a clear contribution of the latter. Letta's European Confederation would have been an EU-centered community of just 36 members, but Macron aimed at a continent-wide political architecture. It was precisely the wide geographical scope of the EPoC which drew widespread attention for Macron's proposal. Over the course of several decades, the term "Europe" had become synonymous with "European Union" in the political rhetoric of the continent. However, the war in Ukraine served as a powerful reminder that there was still a substantial and relevant part of Europe existing beyond the boundaries of the EU. This realization emphasized the necessity of establishing a comprehensive framework that accurately reflected this broader European reality.

The European Political Community counted 44 members in its first summit in Prague and currently has 47 participating states, becoming in less than one year since its proposal the single largest European international forum in terms of membership.³ However, the EPoC departs significantly from de Gaulle's and Mitterrand's Pan-European conception in that it does not intend to reach the Urals and extends only up to the Caspian Sea. In his May 9 speech, Macron stressed Mitterrand's error of pretending to include Russia in its Confederation and made clear that he would not make the same mistake. Nonetheless, despite leaving Belarus and Russia out of the EPoC, Macron maintained Mitterrand's pan-European rhetoric in his speech and seemed to attempt to redefine the boundaries of Europe itself when he talked about the EPoC "respecting [Europe's] *true* geography" even without these two countries (Macron, 2022).

The quasi-continent-wide membership of the EPoC is obviously a necessary condition for the accomplishment of the political goals of the community as described in the previous section. If Macron attempted to create a space for political cooperation in Europe, he could not resort to anything other than a pan-European configuration. While the EU had made

³ The Council of Europe currently has 46 members since it does not recognize Kosovo.

efforts in the last couple of decades to move away from a model of bilateral relations with its neighborhood, the frameworks it created were eminently regional, such as the Union for the Mediterranean and the Eastern Partnership. Those initiatives might have been useful to accomplish their own objectives, but they do not solve the problem of a politically fractured continent that lacks a common forum for political discussion. Firstly, the Union for the Mediterranean is composed of 43 members of which at least 12 are non-European countries and therefore cannot properly fulfill the aims of the EPoC. Secondly, the Eastern Partnership, born in 2009, was an intermediate attempt to build a space for political discussions and cooperation in Europe, but it is comprised of only the EU + six eastern countries (five after the suspension of Belarus), leaving the Balkan countries, Turkey, Norway, Switzerland, recently the UK, and others, out of its scope (EEAS, 2023).

Some have pointed to the Council of Europe as an organization that could serve the purpose of the EPoC given its almost identical membership. The CoE could indeed introduce regular summits for member-state leaders in a format inspired by the EU's European Council, but that would come at the same cost as building the EPoC from scratch, while losing the symbolic power and repercussion that a new organization can bring. In October, 2022, the president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the CoE Tiny Kox, reaffirmed that "there [was] no confrontation" between the Council of Europe and the EPoC given that the main focus of the CoE, the defense of fundamental human rights, is not part of the scope of action of the new community, and proved that there is no intention of adapting the Council of Europe to meet the objectives laid down by Macron in May 2022 (Agence Europe, 2022). Instead, the intergovernmental, political, and pan-European dimensions of the EPoC have set the community to become something like a United Nations of Europe, as ex-euro parliamentarian Alexander Graf Lambsdorff noted after the Prague Summit.

IV. European sovereignty and autonomy

Throughout history, Europe has grappled with a recurring debate between Atlanticism, which advocates for a close alliance with the United States, and the idea of a sovereign Europe capable of acting autonomously. De Gaulle and Mitterrand were clear proponents of the latter to the point that such a conception of transatlantic relations became known as “gaullo-mitterrandisme” and permeated French foreign policy for decades until the arrival of Sarkozy. Macron has been the most recent president to revive the spirit of "gaullo-mitterrandisme" driven by a complex geopolitical context. The Fouchet Plan, the European Confederation, and the European Political Community were all initiatives aimed at fostering a more autonomous and sovereign Europe.

A) Charles de Gaulle

As a conservative, French nationalist, and democrat, de Gaulle saw himself as part of the Western camp during the Cold War. However, during his presidency, he would try time and again to promote a “third way” by distancing himself from the United States and trying to build a France that had its own voice in foreign affairs. De Gaulle’s reservations with the United States found their roots in his own personal experience. During the Second World War, de Gaulle had been treated with persistent hostility by President Roosevelt who considered the French general a potential dictator, and the US did not recognize the Free French government that de Gaulle led from exile until after the Normandy landings in 1944 (Warlouzet, 2010, p.26). On top of that, de Gaulle was outraged for not having been invited to the Yalta conference in 1945 along with Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin, which he interpreted as an attempt by the big three powers to isolate France and prevent the country from having a say in the design of the post-war global order (Warlouzet, 2010, p.26).

Given his reservations with the United States and his nationalist conception of French *grandeur*, de Gaulle was skeptical about the idea of a powerful US-controlled organization like NATO. In 1958, in an attempt to reduce the American grip over the military organization, the French president proposed a reform of the alliance which would redistribute power by creating a “nuclear directory” composed of its three members with nuclear capability (US, UK, and France). After repeated rejections of his reform proposals, de Gaulle would eventually decide to pull out from NATO’s integrated Command Structure in 1966 and order American and other NATO troops to abandon the military bases in France. As a result of the poor transatlantic relations, de Gaulle was determined from early on in his presidency to find alternative defense and political configurations for France, and he saw in the embryonic European community a perfect canvas to fulfill his ambitions of rebuilding a France that was a global power instead of a regional one. De Gaulle understood that France could have more international weight if it was part of a confederation of European states while not losing sovereignty nor power given its hegemony over the other five members of the ECSC. French Historian Georges-Henri Soutou puts it the following way: “De Gaulle’s concept of Europe was rather like that of a holding company: France would dominate the Franco-German couple, and through that relationship assure itself of the leadership of Europe (...) [it] could then transform the Atlantic Alliance without actually breaking with the United States” (Soutou, 1990). This is also the reason why de Gaulle repeatedly rejected the UK’s accession to the EEC, as that would end French preeminence in the community.

The Fouchet Plan embodied de Gaulle’s attempts to transform Europe into what he thought could become one of the three global powers along with the Soviet Union and the United States (Teasdale, 2016, p. 7). The General tried to convince the members of EEC of the benefits of building a union of states for cooperation in foreign policy and defense that was autonomous from the United States, and he referred to this vision of the continent as a “European Europe” (Warlouzet, 2010, p. 28). For some time, it seemed like this aspect of de Gaulle’s proposal could help the Fouchet Plan gain some traction as German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was sympathetic to the idea of a more autonomous continent. In his memoirs, he expressed that at the time he also thought “it was necessary for Europe to stand on its own feet” and that “one could not regard America as committed forever to the idea that

defending Europe was necessary” and therefore “Europe should not fall into a position of being entirely dependent on America for its defense” (Adenauer, 1967, p. 252). However, Adenauer’s own advisers and the other EEC members were not as convinced as de Gaulle about the benefits of distancing Europe from the US. Italy was cautious about the perceived anti-American inclination of the Fouchet Plan, and ultimately, it fell upon the Benelux countries to once again unequivocally reject de Gaulle's efforts to steer Europe away from Atlanticism. (Teasdale, 2016, pp. 21-22).

B) François Mitterrand

Mitterrand had been for years de Gaulle’s main political adversary, but he understood that his predecessor’s search for a “third way” and the promotion of French diplomacy had allowed France to punch above its weight internationally. During his presidency, Mitterrand followed de Gaulle’s steps in building a transatlantic relationship that left France room to maneuver and adhered closely to his idea of a “European Europe.” Throughout Mitterrand’s decade as president of the Republic, he repeatedly showed his inclination to distance France from the United States in matters of foreign policy. Mitterrand resisted all of Reagan’s attempts to exert unilateral leadership over the European NATO countries, he stated that the organization should not become a “holly alliance,” and he even went as far as to supply weapons to Nicaragua when the Sandinista government was attacked by the US-backed Contras in 1981 (Boniface, 2021).

Mitterrand’s policy toward the United States was so clearly continuist of de Gaulle’s that the diplomatic doctrine based on the promotion of French strategic independence and autonomy became known as “gaullo-mitterrandisme.” Gaullo-mitterrandisme, which defines the relationship between France and the US, as “allied but non-aligned,” should be understood as opposed to “Atlanticism,” which advocates for Western unity and promotes closeness with America to benefit from military protection (Boniface, 2021). The European Confederation

was conceived as the vehicle through which to accomplish the European autonomy proposed by gaullo-mitterrandisme. In 1989 France had lost its hegemony over the European Community which now had 12 members including the United Kingdom, but Mitterrand still found value in a self-reliant Europe, and following the fall of the Berlin Wall he believed that the US would gradually withdraw from the old continent, paving the way for the rise of a new independent Europe. The Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals that de Gaulle had imagined which included Russia but excluded the United States seemed for the first time realistic under Mitterrand's rule, once Gorbachev had proven more open to dialogue with his Western neighbors than any of his predecessors had ever been.

The Central and Eastern European countries, which were already skeptical of the European Confederation because they viewed it as an alternative to EU membership and because they were wary of Russia's participation, were further displeased by Mitterrand's intention to leave the United States out of his new grand European design. In advance of the first meeting to discuss the European Confederation which was set to take place in Prague on June 12, 1991, Czechoslovak president Václav Havel was very insistent on US participation in the Summit (Bozo, 2008, p.405). Reluctantly, Mitterrand eventually agreed to the participation of the United States and Canada in the Prague meeting, but this political concession was not enough. Most former Soviet republics were not enthusiastic about the prospect of the United States withdrawing from Europe now that they had regained their freedom, nor was the US itself interested in doing such a thing either, contrary to what Mitterrand had predicted. The 1990s would become, in fact, a decade of strong American re-engagement in the old continent and, therefore, the US government was not sympathetic to Mitterrand's scheme. The French president soon had to come to terms with this disheartening reality when Czechoslovakia went back on the initial commitments they had made during the Prague summit. In July 1991, only one month after the Prague meeting but already certain of the failure of his confederation, Mitterrand told Romanian president Petre Roman that "the Americans [had] led a campaign against the Confederation (...) and [that] the Czechs could not oppose this." (Bozo, 2008, p. 411). Atlanticism was still big in Eastern Europe and, once again, the promise of a sovereign and autonomous continent crumbled under its own weight.

C) *Emmanuel Macron*

François Mitterrand was succeeded as president of the Republic by Jacques Chirac in 1995. As a Gaullist politician and member of the *Rassemblement pour la République*, Chirac gave continuity to gaullo-mitterrandisme in French foreign policy during his years in office. Perhaps the most blatant example of this was his unequivocal and forthright opposition to the American invasion of Iraq which severely strained Franco-American relations for years. However, Chirac's tenure marked the end of gaullo-mitterrandism. Nicolas Sarkozy spearheaded a pro-Atlantic France and embraced his nickname "Sarko the American," while his socialist successor François Hollande did not seem too interested in shifting the new course of French foreign policy. It was not until the arrival of Emmanuel Macron to the Élysée that the discussion around gaullo-mitterrandism reemerged in the French political arena. Macron came to power in May 2017 just a few months after Donald Trump had taken the world by storm by beating Clinton in the US presidential elections. An American foreign policy that had gradually distanced the US from Europe during Obama's administration with the famous "American Pivot to Asia," became openly hostile during Trump's time in office. In an interview with CBS Evening News in July 2018 Trump pointed to the European Union when he was asked about the "biggest foe globally right now" for the United States. During the following years, POTUS ramped up the debate on Europe's contribution to NATO threatening to not comply with Article 5, to which Macron responded calling the alliance "braindead" in an interview to The Economist in 2019.

In this context, an increasing number of voices within the EU began pondering the degree to which the EU could maintain its reliance on the United States, and Macron started championing his not-so-new idea of "European Strategic Autonomy" which quickly grew into a buzz term in EU circles and became recurrent in Macron's speeches. Speaking to the Atlantic Council in 2021 the French President argued that the EU had to be "much more in control of [its] neighborhood" and that "the Middle East and Africa is [Europe's]

neighborhood and not the US's" (Grady, 2021). More recently, in April 2023, Macron reiterated the idea of European strategic autonomy during a trip to China and even mirrored Mitterrand when he talked about the potential of the EU to become a "third pole" in international relations, although this time the French presidency was referring to China as the second pole instead of Russia (China Daily Global, 2023).

During its short lifespan, the European Political Community seems to have been more effective in promoting European autonomy than the Fouchet Plan and the European Confederation. It must be noted that the conflict in Ukraine revitalized NATO, dispelling notions of its brain death, and that Eastern European countries remain largely aligned with Atlanticism. However, in May 2022, Macron put forward a comprehensive community model that encourages Europeans to address their own concerns autonomously, and the response thus far has been relatively positive both in the old continent and in the United States, which has not raised any objections to these developments. On May 9, 2022, Macron concluded his speech in Strasbourg by painting a picture of an ambitious and sovereign Europe going even beyond what de Gaulle and Mitterrand envisioned before him:

Act decisively. Move swiftly. Dream big. These words are not only the prerogative of China or the United States of America. We are making these ambitions our own. Let us keep in mind that Europe would be nothing without this extra touch of European spirit that makes us unique, sets the course, gives meaning, and makes our Europe this singular continent where great celebrations are held while speaking all of our languages and while translating them through our universal language, through music, and our European anthems.

So this path that we have begun to map out here and now in Strasbourg requires a pledge. This Strasbourg pledge for a sovereign, united, democratic and ambitious Europe. It is up to us to remain true to it, all of us together.

Macron pledged in the European Parliament a sovereign Europe, proposing the European Political Community as the vehicle to attain this objective. This time, in a geopolitical landscape where the US aims to pivot towards China, the idea of a European continent assuming a proactive stance in its security and self-determination may not be met with disapproval like three decades ago, but rather with encouragement.

6. Conclusions

The established aim of this essay was to better understand the European Political Community through the framework of two previous proposals of a new European design: the Fouchet Plan and the European Confederation. After a close review of the bibliography and a comparative exercise between the three initiatives, this paper presented four elements which are considered transversal to all of them: the commitment to an intergovernmental structure, the perceived need for increased political cooperation in Europe, the vision of a pan-European design, and the emphasis on a sovereign Europe capable to act autonomously. The European Political Community can be better understood after we have laid down the link with de Gaulle's and Mitterrand's projects.

Firstly, regarding the light and intergovernmental structure of the EPoC, we established that de Gaulle had been the precursor and champion of the intergovernmental Europe, considering it the only acceptable way to integrate the continent. In 2022, Macron's government did not share anymore such skepticism about the supranational European institutions, but the post-Brexit United Kingdom did. Dusting off de Gaulle's original idea of an intergovernmental framework for cooperation in the continent was an effective way of making the EPoC bearable for the British and accomplishing Macron's objective of rebuilding closer relationships with the UK. Additionally, we have seen how Mitterrand envisioned an intergovernmental European Confederation as an intermediary space for CEECs for which formal accession to the EC could take decades. Enrico Letta and Macron found this proposal useful to approach the similar challenge of EU accession of Ukraine, Moldova, and the Balkan countries. The memory of Mitterrand's unpopular proposal from 1989 motivated Eastern states to push for an EPoC that was not centered on the EU or enlargement but instead

built as an intergovernmental community in which members had an equal footing and based on strategic cooperation.

Secondly, we have established that one of the EPoC's main objectives was to create a space for political cooperation in Europe beyond the EU. The argument of the essay in this respect is that Europe was historically unable to find satisfactory formulas to integrate politically in domains such as foreign policy or defense. Therefore, integration efforts focused for decades on the economy, hoping that it would eventually spill over to other areas. De Gaulle, Mitterrand and Macron understood that economic cooperation was insufficient and that a framework for political cooperation was necessary to address the challenges they faced in their different contexts. De Gaulle's Fouchet Plans proposed a form of cooperation in foreign policy and defense which did not entail the cession of national sovereignty nor required previous convergence in other areas such as the economy. Year's later, Mitterrand found such a formula useful in a context in which it was necessary to forge quick political closeness with the ex-soviet republics while economic integration was not possible in the short term. In 2022, Macron faced a very similar situation. The Russian invasion of Ukraine pushed Ukraine and Moldova decisively toward the West, but besides the vague promise of EU accession, there was no immediate formula to materialize the political closeness in the continent. The EPoC is the rebirth of the European Confederation, which had already attempted in vain to prevent the difficult and long process of formal integration that Eastern countries had to undergo before they were able to become members of the EU in 2004.

Thirdly, Macron's EPoC proposal drew attention due to its bold ambition of bringing together the whole European continent with the exception of Belarus and Russia. The idea of a pan-European configuration is often portrayed as a far-fetched Federalist utopia, but this essay establishes that, to the contrary, the belief in a continent-wide European community was shared even by someone like de Gaulle, granted that it respected the sovereignty of the nation-state. De Gaulle's hopes for a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, give political

credibility to pan-Europeanist projects which could otherwise be condemned or dismissed by skeptics of increased European integration. Mitterrand put forward his European Confederation which materialized a European community that reached the Urals, and Macron resorted once again to pan-Europeanism while redefining the limits of the full extent of the continent. However, in both cases, their ambition to extend the political borders of Europe, were part of a shared vision that had gained political validation with de Gaulle.

Fourthly, the proposal of the European Political Community incorporated one of Macron's mantras in European politics: European strategic autonomy. The EPoC constitutes a space for European states to deal with European problems including security, energy, and defense. Macron arrived to power in a context of difficult transatlantic relations during President Trump's administration, and resurfaced a vision of European autonomy from the US that is deeply ingrained in French foreign policy. This policy was championed specifically by de Gaulle and Mitterrand and become known as gaullomitterrandism. It is not fortuitous that the three French presidents that favored the most the idea of an autonomous Europe are the ones to have proposed grand alternative designs for the organization of the continent. The Fouchet Plans, the European Confederation, and the European Political Community are all designed as steps in the direction of constructing a continent that can garner strategic independence and fully become a global power.

This essay has managed to draw four connecting lines between de Gaulle's, Mitterrand's, and Macron's visions of the European continent. On the one hand, it has proven that the European Political Community is a French proposal in nature, not because it is the "brainchild" of Emmanuel Macron, but because it incorporates a long inheritance of French conceptions of Europe and visions of its ideal design. On the other hand, this essay has laid down the groundwork for a more complete analysis of European Political Community in which the experiences of its "parent proposals" can be taken into consideration. While this essay is focused on proving the relationship between the three studied proposals, it does not dive into

applying the specific lessons of the Fouchet Plans and the European Confederation to an in-depth analysis of the European Political Community. Once this essay has shed some light on the influences and historical connections between the proposals, it opens the door for a comprehensive study or prospective analysis of the European Political Community which takes into consideration its historical precedents and therefore is based on a deeper understanding of the nature of Macron's proposal.

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