The Netherlands and the Oil Crisis:
Between European Political Cooperation and Atlanticist Tradition

Candidate number: 72319
Word count: 9,998
Supervisor: Dr. N. Piers Ludlow
MSc History of International Relations
2014-2015
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historiography</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. European Integration &amp; Energy Policy</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. European Crisis or ‘Sauve Qui Peut’?</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. The Copenhagen Summit</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. The Washington Conference</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Abbreviations

## Dutch National Archives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BZCA          | Foreign Affairs - Code Archive 1965-1974  
*Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken: Code-archief 1965-1974* |
| KMP           | Archives of General Affairs (Cabinet’s Office)  
*Ministeries voor Algemeene Oorlogvoering van het Koninkrijk (AOK) en van Algemene Zaken (AZ): Kabinet van de Minister-President (KMP)* |
| MR            | Council of Ministers  
*Ministerraad* |
| PAFR          | Dutch Representation in France  
*Nederlandse Ambassade in Frankrijk te Parijs, Consulaten te Nice, La Rochelle en Straatsburg* |

## Online Archives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AEI</td>
<td>Archive of European Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVCE</td>
<td>Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPH</td>
<td>Delpher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## In-text Abbreviations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BZ</td>
<td>Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DES</td>
<td>Department for Economic Cooperation (Foreign Affairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECG</td>
<td>Energy Coordinating Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1. All the archives listed are housed in the National Archives in The Hague. Abbreviations have been based on the Dutch archive names, and are of the author’s making. Both the English translations as well as the original Dutch names are provided here.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPC</td>
<td>European Political Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEA</td>
<td>International Energy Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBZ</td>
<td>Minister of Foreign Affairs M. van der Stoel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Prime Minister J. den Uyl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAPEC</td>
<td>Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPEC</td>
<td>Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REZ</td>
<td>Dutch Ministerial Council for European Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEF</td>
<td>United Nations Energy Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

On the 21st of October 1973, Algeria informed the Dutch government that all oil deliveries destined for the Netherlands would be suspended. The decision followed an official gathering of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) from the 16th until the 21st of October, where at an earlier stage a unilateral reduction of supplies and increase of prices had been announced. The official reason for these actions was the alleged support given by Western countries to Israel in the Yom Kippur war, which had started with the Egyptian and Syrian invasion of Israeli-held territory earlier that month. As Algeria announced its boycott, the Iraqi government decided to nationalise the Dutch part (60%) of the Royal Shell's shares in the Basra Petroleum Company. Over the next few days, fears in The Hague materialised as the Arab OPEC members, united in the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), one by one joined the oil embargo, throwing the Netherlands into a crisis that would last far into 1974.

While the use of the oil weapon did not come as a complete surprise, an embargo was thought to be unlikely in The Hague as late as July 1973, and virtually no national or European emergency response was in place. Rather than serving as a catalyst for further European political cooperation, the targeted use of the OAPEC oil weapon only seemed to exacerbate existing differences between the European countries. The situation also put a strain on the already tense Atlantic relationship during what had been proclaimed as the Year of Europe. For the West, and the Netherlands in particular, the situation appeared critical. Even though hindsight shows that Western

---

3 MBZ, Circulaire 275, 22 October 1973, copy of government press statement regarding uncertain situation Iraqi nationalisation, PAFR 2.05.177, 927.
4 Ambassador in Tunisia D. van den Brandeler to MBZ, Memo no. 1558/290, 5 July 1973, ‘Olie als wapen in Midden Oosten conflict’, BZCA 2.05.313 inv. nr. 8479.
energy supplies were never actually in great danger, oil did account for more than half of Europe’s energy requirements at the time, and fears of an economic shutdown due to acute energy shortages were very real. As G. John Ikenberry wrote in 1986, “states are confronted continually with international dilemmas, and in recent years none has been more serious or confounding than the oil shocks of the 1970s”.

Looking at the crisis from a Dutch perspective, this paper will primarily seek to analyse in what way the energy crisis influenced the attitude of the Dutch government towards increased political cooperation in Europe, and the relation of this attitude to its transatlantic loyalties. Through an examination of the European Community’s response to the crisis, moreover, this paper also hopes to provide an insight into the influence of the oil crisis on European political integration in general. To understand any influence the oil crisis might have on European political cooperation and the Dutch attitude towards it, it is necessary to have an understanding of the situation before November 1973. Therefore, this will be briefly discussed in the first chapter. Having set the scene, chapter two will then take a closer look at the early Dutch campaign for European solidarity, followed by an analysis of the Copenhagen Summit in chapter three. Finally, chapter four will consider the impact of the Washington conference and its aftermath on European political cooperation and the Dutch position therein. Considering all these factors, it will become clear that, for most of the energy crisis, the Dutch government pursued a careful balance between further European integration and the maintenance of strong transatlantic relations, prioritising a solution of the crisis through European solidarity while avoiding that these developments would go at the expense of relations with the US.

---

Historiography

While several valuable works have appeared, the literature of the energy crisis from a European perspective has been limited. Despite the central role in world affairs the crisis provided the Netherlands with, Duco Hellema, Cees Wiebes and Toby Witte remark that “relatively little has been written on the role of the Netherlands during the oil crisis … [and] an extensive study covering the whole range of different aspects has been lacking”.6 Attempting to fill part of this gap with their well-researched The Netherlands and the Oil Crisis: Business as Usual, first published in Dutch in 1998, the authors have produced the only major work on the Dutch perspective of the oil crisis so far, providing a detailed and mostly descriptive overview of the crisis. Other important contributors, specifically on the Dutch attitude towards European integration in the years leading up to the oil crisis, have been Anjo Harryvan, Joris Voorhoeve and Jan van der Harst. Regarding the French experience of 1973, the most significant and recent contributions have come from Aurélie Gfeller, who has written on French-European as well as French-American relations during the energy crisis, and whose work has taken on a guiding role for this paper. In addition, particularly useful to the understanding of the oil crisis has been a set of articles written as part of the H-Net “1973 Energy Crisis Anniversary Discussion” compiled by Tammy Nemeth, including insightful works by Francesco Petrini, Henning Türk and Fiona Venn.7

With an increased body of literature in recent years, the influence of the oil crisis on European political integration has been subject to debate. While some scholars argue that the crisis demonstrated the inability of Europe to develop a common political approach to international affairs, others have proposed that the events of 1973-74 only proved the necessity of closer political

---

7 Published online in the H-energy network of H-net.org, the documents can be found here:
European integration and laid the groundwork for such increased cooperation in the future. Speaking of a “failure of French objectives”, Hellema et al. write that, at the end of the crisis, “there was no more question of a European power-combine, independent from the USA, linked to any Euro-Arab dialogue”. They argue that “the oil crisis showed once again that the EC ... was not prepared to close ranks”, and that it indeed “heralded a turning point in the development of international relations [with] the failure of the EC’s effort to develop a greater political independence from the USA”. In this view, the Netherlands did not significantly alter the traditional Atlanticist attitude that has been ascribed to it, and was pleased with the establishment of the International Energy Agency (IEA). Anjo Harryvan, on the other hand, has argued that “the country’s isolated position during the 1973-74 Middle Eastern crisis and oil boycott was instructive in teaching interdependence the hard way”, as for once “the Atlantic bond failed to give the Netherlands the desired protection”. From the French perspective, Gfeller argues that, even though the use of the oil weapon “put intra-EC relations under strain”, it had also “helped foster a single European voice in Arab and Middle Eastern matters”. Rather than depicting the crisis as an American victory only, Gfeller stresses minor French victories during the crisis and “the long-term significance of EPC’s early forays into the Middle East and the Arab world”.

The result of thorough archival research, this paper has been based almost exclusively on the National Archives in The Hague, where all governmental archives are housed. Since the oil crisis took place a little over forty years ago, virtually all relevant archives are currently open to access. For the purpose of this paper, the most valuable archive has been that of the Ministerraad (MR), which

---

8 Hellema, Business as Usual, p. 251.
9 Ibid., pp. 257, 263.
shall be referred to as the cabinet meeting.\textsuperscript{13} Within this council, Ministers would meet once every week to discuss amongst themselves a wide range of important issues, including foreign affairs, and to decide on the policy that had to be pursued. Due to the lively discussions during these meetings, in which otherwise secret issues could be openly discussed, a very detailed picture of government considerations can be created. Besides the general Ministerraad, there also exist regular, theme-specific councils, of which the Council for European Affairs (REZ) has been especially instrumental to this paper. Dutch newspapers have been consulted through the online collection of Delpher: a project of the Royal Library in The Hague and the universities of Groningen Leiden and Delft, containing millions of digitalised texts from Dutch newspapers, books and journals. Finally, documents relating to the European Community such as communiqués, official statements and other publications have been consulted through two online archives: the Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l’Europe (CVCE) and the Archive of European Integration (AEI).

\textsuperscript{13} Literally translated as Ministerial council, the Ministerraad is, in principle, attended only by the Ministers, whereas the term cabinet also includes state-secretaries. Since 'cabinet meeting' appears to be the standard translation of Ministerraad within English-language historiography, however, this paper will also use it as such.
I. European Integration & Energy Policy

In the years leading up to 1973, the development of European integration had not been without the necessary struggles. Traditionally, the Dutch government had sought to keep defence and foreign policy within a transatlantic framework, hoping to limit European cooperation to trade and economic development. For this purpose, it pursued the development of a supranational rather than intergovernmental Europe, believing the former would give more influence to smaller countries. Unfortunately, The Hague found its ideas clashing with those of de Gaulle’s France, which had been driving for a stronger, French-led European identity in foreign affairs. In 1961, this was expressed in strong Benelux opposition to the Fouchet Plan, a design for an “intergovernmental union of states” that Jan van der Harst has deemed “the most telling example … [of] de Gaulle’s initiative to create a political Europe”.  

Four years later, in July 1965, the European Community experienced what Piers Ludlow has described as “the most serious crisis of its seven-year history” when the French government left its chairs in the EC institutions unattended until January of the next year. The result of a “mounting frustration amongst all of France's partners, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands in particular, about the extent to which the French had been able to dominate the formative years of the EEC”, the ‘empty chair crisis’ symbolised the deep, existing divisions within the European Community.

Soon after the crisis’ resolution through the Luxembourg compromise, de Gaulle took the controversial decision to withdraw his country from the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the primary guarantor of security for most European countries. For the Dutch

---


16 Ibid., p. 233.
government, van der Harst notes, this action “confirmed [the] suspicion … [that] de Gaulle was looking for ways to loosen the ties between Europe and the United States, to weaken NATO and to undo the desired coupling of American and European security”. Relations continued to plummet in 1967, when de Gaulle once again vetoed a British entry into the EC. A staunch supporter of British membership, The Hague saw the French blockade as a major defeat. In van der Harst's analysis, “Holland wanted to have the British in for exactly the same reason why de Gaulle was opposed to EC enlargement: the expected impact of the Anglo-American relationship on future European developments”. Besides, it was hoped that liberal-minded Britain would be able to counter any Franco-German domination within the EC. In an anecdote indicative of the mood following the French veto, former Permanent Representative to the EC M.H.J.C. Rutten remembered receiving a “ukase” from The Hague ordering that none of the Dutch representatives in Brussels were to speak French anymore. Naturally, such an order was impossible to follow, but the antagonistic feelings that had produced it were very real. If Europe would experience deep divisions during the oil crisis of 1973, it is clear that these disagreements were nothing shockingly new.

From 1969, the spell of disagreement seemed to be lifted. Meeting in The Hague, the Community's six heads of government gathered to renew Europe's political objectives, instructing their Ministers for foreign affairs "to study the best way of achieving progress in the matter of political unification". Under the new President Georges Pompidou, moreover, France lifted its veto-blockade on a British entry. While progress was gradual and the divisions of the 1960s had surely not been forgotten, political integration was moving forward. With the accession of Britain,

17 Harst, 'Gaullist Challenge', p. 128.
18 Ibid., p. 130.
Denmark and Ireland scheduled for January 1973, the future EC Nine held their first summit in Paris by the end of 1972. As summarised by Daniel Moeckli, "the aftermath of the clashes of the late 1960s was gradually giving way to new relations of trust and a shared belief that a common European voice in world politics was actually feasible".\(^{21}\)

Despite the renewed spirit of political unification, internal differences would prevent the creation of a common energy policy before crisis struck in October 1973. Referring to lessons learned from the 1956 Suez Crisis, a 1958 High Authority information booklet already noted the necessity of European coordination and cooperation in the field of energy.\(^{22}\) Likewise, a 1963 information memo suggested “a common energy policy must be adopted that [would] provide security of supply, without which the aim of low costs [could] never be achieved”.\(^{23}\) Throughout the sixties, dependence on oil grew significantly, with the percentage of energy consumption accounted for by oil rising from about 28% in 1960 to almost 56% in 1970. This greater dependency made the EC increasingly vulnerable to the use of oil as a political weapon: something the boycott against the US and the UK during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war only reaffirmed.\(^{24}\) As the political objectives of Europe were reinvigorated in the early 1970s, so too was the related question of energy security. At the 1972 Paris Summit, the EC Nine joint statement expressed the need to “formulate as soon as possible an energy policy guaranteeing certain and lasting supplies under satisfactory economic conditions”.\(^{25}\) The Community members had also agreed to stock 90 days’ worth of oil usage to


secure emergency supplies, so that by October 1973, according to Venn, "reserves roughly equivalent to 70 days were in place".²⁶

Yet, widely divergent energy policies made closer cooperation difficult. Whereas the Netherlands and the United Kingdom sought to minimize government intrusion in affairs of the energy markets, the French *dirigiste* approach maintained close control of the petroleum market. The EC countries also differed in needs, interests and vulnerability. Britain, for example, was afraid a common energy policy would Europeanise its national asset of North Sea oil.²⁷ Similarly, the Dutch were in a less vulnerable position due to their gas reserves, which they were not keen on sharing. France, on the other hand, was relatively dependent on external energy supplies. By its nature, moreover, the issue of guaranteed energy supplies was inextricably linked to foreign policy. With ever-increasing dependence on Middle Eastern and North African oil, such common security could not be achieved without a common Arab policy. Whereas the French and British foreign services were considerably pro-Arab by the early seventies, however, the attitudes of Netherlands, Denmark, and also Germany were favourable to Israel. While the Quai d'Orsay saw in EPC an opportunity to promote the French interpretation on the Middle East conflict, moreover, the Netherlands was weary of European involvement in what it considered US diplomatic territory.²⁸ With all these obstacles to overcome, concrete progress in the creation of a common energy and foreign policy would surely take time. Unfortunately for the EC Nine, that time would not be given to them, and their resolve to build European political unity would face its greatest challenge only a year after the Paris summit.

²⁸ Gfeller, 'European voice', p. 662
II. European Crisis or 'Sauve Qui Peut'?

In Washington, increased European political cooperation was followed with suspicion. In a conversation with his Dutch counterpart, Kissinger spoke of US irritation with the perceived “ganging-up” of the European countries. Despite the country's strong Atlanticist tradition, Foreign Minister van der Stoel made clear to Kissinger that increased political cooperation was simply a fact at the moment. As hostilities in the Middle East broke out, however, the Netherlands maintained an Atlanticist line, believing that there should be no separate place for Europe at the negotiating table. Within EPC, it insisted that there should be no relation between French and British actions in the UN Security Council and a common position of the EC, effectively blocking any political role for a united Europe on the world stage. While the EC countries did issue a common statement calling for an immediate ceasefire, internal differences made them unable to play a more significant political role.

As soon as the war had started, the government in The Hague recognised that further escalation of the conflict would increase the likelihood of the Arab states employing the oil weapon. These suspicions seemed confirmed when, on the 17th of October, OAPEC announced to reduce oil exports by five percent each month as long as the Western countries were supportive of Israel. Several days later, a total petroleum boycott of the Netherlands was announced by different Arab governments, accusing the Dutch government, amongst others, of reselling Arab oil to Israel and facilitating the flying-in of volunteer fighters. Denying all accusations, the Dutch cabinet believed it had been designated as a scapegoat. While it was undeniable that great sympathy existed for Israel within Dutch society, the Ministers believed the special position of Rotterdam as the main European

29 Cabinet meeting, nr. 6159, 5 October 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1237, p. 5.
30 Cabinet meeting, nr. 6180, 19 October 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1237, p. 6.
31 Cabinet meeting, nr. 6187, 26 October 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1237, p. 9.
transit and processing point for Arab oil had also played a role. Because of this position, the national
danger of the embargo was even more critical: not only was there a possibility of acute shortages,
but it was also feared that the flow of oil might move to another European port, with significant
long-term economic consequences for Rotterdam.\textsuperscript{32} Since the embargo was fundamentally a political
issue, Minister of Economic Affairs Lubbers believed that a solution to the Middle East war based
on resolution 242 of the UN Security Council had to be found.\textsuperscript{33} For this, it would be necessary to
make clear that the Dutch position was the same as that of the other EC countries. The Hague thus
clearly sought to deal with the embargo within the European framework. At the same time, the
Dutch position on the conflict would have to be clear and consistent; in no case did the government
want to make it seem as if it was susceptible to Arab blackmail.\textsuperscript{34} The question now would be
whether The Hague’s EC partners would also see the crisis as a European problem.

To tend to the more immediate concerns of energy shortages, The Hague turned to the
Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). As opposed to the
Community’s still undeveloped energy security policy, the OECD did have in place an emergency
oil-sharing mechanism. Still uncertain over the scale and effectiveness of the announced embargo,
Minister Lubbers argued that the Netherlands should insist, with all its power, on the employment
of this mechanism.\textsuperscript{35} However, the oil-sharing scheme could only be called upon through a
unanimous decision of the OECD members, and clear divisions in Europe on the Middle East
conflict made such a decision not at all certain. Indeed, with French and British reluctance to invite
further Arab retaliation, the emergency mechanism would eventually not be called upon.

For The Hague, most important was to show that a country within the framework of the EC
and the OECD could not be discriminated against. The European Commission shared this

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., p. 10.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
In a special meeting in The Hague on 22 October, President of the Commission Ortoli argued that if Europe wanted to be a force for peace in the world, it could not afford internal discord. According to Ortoli, two lessons could be drawn from the recent use of the oil weapon. First, Europe would only be able to play a role in world affairs when acting in harmony. Second, the Community would have to properly deal with its energy problems both immediately and in the long-term. Van der Stoel agreed with this analysis, and argued for further European cooperation. As Harryvan notes, van der Stoel's predecessor Schmelzer had “stressed the artificiality of the institutional separation between the Community and the EPC”. Van der Stoel reiterated this position, calling the existence of the two separate structures “disastrous” and arguing for “a complete integration of both structures”. Even though a communal defence policy remained unthinkable for the moment, the Dutch government clearly and consistently supported a supranational, political integration of the Community. At the ministry, it was recognised that the oil crisis might give the necessary impulse to accelerate the establishment of an EC energy policy, and that a common policy towards both external issues as well as the internal market had to be forcefully pursued. In this, it believed, the Netherlands would not have to hold back, due to the relatively strong negotiating position that the Royal Shell, its gas reserves and its great oil refining capacity provided. Some of its European partners, however, would seek to use the situation to their own advantage.

Despite the traditional narrative of a Guallist-inspired French drive for further political integration, Aurélie Gfeller shows that President Pompidou had in fact been rather suspicious of EPC for some time. Besides concerns over enlargement, Pompidou feared an increased

---

36 REZ extraordinary meeting, nr. 6197, 22 October 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1262, p. 2.
37 Harryvan, Influence, p. 222.
38 REZ extraordinary meeting, nr. 6197, 22 October 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1262, p. 3.
39 Note from DES tooliecontactgroep, '514.15 alg.olie', not dated, BZCA 2.05.313, 8479.
40 Ibid.
supranationalism that would limit his room for manoeuvre.\textsuperscript{41} By late September, however, the President changed his stance, announcing his readiness “to participate in regular EC summits within the EPC framework”.\textsuperscript{42} The Middle East conflict and the oil crisis, with its added complexity of the Dutch embargo, would be the first opportunity for Pompidou to showcase his new commitment to EPC. A week after the embargo against the Netherlands had been announced, the French President argued that the moment had come “to demonstrate that European integration rested on a solid basis and could contribute to the resolution of world issues”.\textsuperscript{43} In this way, he hoped to bring Europe to the table at which the US and Soviet Union had held the only seats so far. Any united European action, however, was made difficult by the Community members' drastically different predicaments. While the Arabs had singled out the Netherlands as a hostile country, Britain and France would be designated as 'friendly' states. Despite a desire for European integration, the privileged treatment received from OAPEC would provide the British and French with little incentive to associate themselves with the pro-Israeli Dutch.

Early November, an EEC Ministerial meeting provided the first opportunity to showcase a united European front. In The Hague, expectations of its European colleagues remained realistic. Even though optimistic signs had come from Bonn, there existed big questions on the preparedness of the UK to participate in a common political action regarding the oil question, and there seemed no indication of such a willingness on the French side either.\textsuperscript{44} Several days before the meeting, The Hague had received news of a French proposal for a special European summit by the end of the year. Despite Dutch concerns over the institutionalisation of such a conference, the Dutch delegation would have to handle any French proposals as diplomatically as possible in order not to

\textsuperscript{41} Gfeller, 'European voice', p. 662.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., p. 663.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} Cabinet meeting, nr. 6195, 2 November 1973, 3, MR 2.02.05.02, 1237, p. 10.
unnecessarily damage Franco-Dutch relations. At the meeting of 5 and 6 November, Van der Stoel pressed for European solidarity. Yet, Britain did not wish to discuss oil supplies, and France similarly refused to attend to the proposals put forward by the European Commission. Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg, on the other hand, did hope to find a European solution to the oil crisis, not in the least because the embargo indirectly affected their own supplies as well. The Ministerial talks were most of all representative of the deep divisions within Europe: “In the clearest terms”, Hellema et al. write, “[French Foreign Minister] Jobert stated that the Dutch Middle Eastern politics had led to the embargo against Rotterdam and therefore no appeal to the Common Market was justified”. 

The only concrete result of the EC discussion was a Declaration on the Middle East issued November 6, in which the Nine called for “a just and lasting peace through the application of Security Council Resolution No. 242 in all of its parts”, and declared themselves “ready to do all in their power to contribute to that peace”. According to Gfeller, this “declaration was a historical novelty …, dispelling all ambiguities around the 1967 resolution [by backing] its French interpretation”. Certainly, the expression of the desire to play a meaningful role in world affairs had been a clear step forward in the political unity of the Nine. To state that it dispelled all ambiguities, however, would do injustice to the differences that remained hidden underneath the surface of the formal text. Referring to UN resolution 242, the declaration first of all inherited the obscurity that had already existed due to the differences in the English and French language versions of the resolution: whereas the French text spoke of ‘the’ territories, the English version did not include a definite article. In addition, Van der Stoel argued that the position taken on by the EC was compatible with earlier positions of the Netherlands on the interpretation of resolution 242. Writing

45 Ibid.
46 Cabinet meeting, nr. 6206, 9 November 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1237.
47 Hellema, Business as Usual, p. 92.
48 European Community, 6 November 1973, 'Declaration on the Middle East', in Statements of the Foreign Ministers and other documents, AEI http://aei.pitt.edu/id/eprint/5576
49 Gfeller, 'European voice', p. 665.
to Hellema et al., the Foreign Minister would later state that, on the same day, he had made a “back-up statement [that] without doubt [laid] down that The Netherlands had not committed itself to a formal evacuation of all occupied areas”. Nevertheless, the Dutch press certainly did regard the statement as being unpleasantly close to the pro-Arab French position. In an open letter to Van der Stoel, prominent Dutch historian Louis de Jong even accused the Minister of insincerity and a lack of solidarity with Israel. While such domestic outrage was perhaps unwarranted, it is undeniable that the declaration had somewhat altered the official Dutch position. In the cabinet meeting, Minister Vredeling remarked that, “in a global analysis, Dutch policy had shifted under pressure of the embargo”. Others, such as Minister Pronk, argued that the EC-stance was in agreement with earlier statements made by The Hague. In reality, it had been necessary for the Dutch government to make concessions to show OAPEC some goodwill and to avoid further isolation within the EC. While admitting that the context of the declaration gave an impression of The Hague yielding to Arab pressure, prime Minister Den Uyl remarked that it would have been even less justifiable if the Dutch standpoint had once again deviated from that of its eight partners. The Hague had taken on a cooperative stance towards its partners in the hope for a European solution to the oil problem. With the refusal to include any reference to the embargo in the declaration, however, the gamble had not paid off so far, and the Dutch cabinet would have to wait until mid-December for a second chance at a show of European solidarity.

---

50 Letter from Van der Stoel to Hellema et al., in Hellema, Business as Usual, p. 91.
51 Cabinet meeting, nr. 6206, 9 November 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1237, p. 8.
52 Ibid., p. 10.
53 Ibid., p. 11.
III. The Copenhagen Summit

When Pompidou announced his readiness to actively pursue the development of European Political Cooperation, he had also expressed his wish for the organisation of a European summit, to be held before the year was over. Discussing the French proposal, Denmark offered to host the meeting in Copenhagen on 14 and 15 December. Rather than an official meeting with large delegations, Pompidou informed Van der Stoel that he wanted the summit to be of an informal character, much like a “gathering around the fireplace”. In principle, this also meant that no decisions would be taken and no formal communiqué of the summit would be released. The only exception to this would be a summary of the discussed topics, handed to the press by the Danish chair of the conference.

In The Hague, the preparation of the European summit was considered to be of greatest importance. Despite its informal character, Den Uyl remarked that the conference had taken on a special significance, as it would be “held in a situation where, for the first time, the EEC [acted] as a unit in the field of foreign affairs”. As the summit had been proposed by Pompidou, moreover, the French president also attached great importance to its success. The conference would have a “strong political character”, dealing with the Middle East, relations between East and West, and transatlantic relations. Regarding the energy problem, the summit was expected to address both energy supplies as well as energy politics. The emphasis on these issues was very important for The Hague, as the November 6 declaration had not brought any change in Arab policy. In fact, the consul of Kuwait admitted that the Arab countries sought to stretch the Dutch position even further, and desired an

54 Sassen to BZ, telegram 184, 5 November 1973, note on Danish invitation to Copenhagen Summit, BZCA 2.05.313, 1523.
55 Cabinet meeting, nr. 6206, 9 November 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1237, p. 6.
56 Cabinet meeting, nr. 6226, 23 November 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1237, p. 4.
57 Ibid., p. 8.
independent statement in which the Dutch government demonstrated its commitment to the EC declaration. Van der Stoel argued that the Dutch were being judged on a higher standard than their EC partners, which could not be allowed. The experience of Japan, which had given in to far-going demands, showed that this would only cause further concessions. Moreover, it was important for Dutch actions not to conflict with US policy on the Middle East.

The consideration for US interests was certainly not surprising. In Dutch historiography, this traditional commitment to the transatlantic alliance has often been put forward as one of the pillars of Dutch foreign policy. Dutch historian J.J.C. Voorhoeve, for example, has argued that “whenever there is a serious conflict between European integration and Atlantic cooperation, [Dutch governments have given] preference to Atlantic interests”. Taking a closer look at the discussions within the cabinet during the end of 1973, however, this claim does not seem justified. While by late November, Kissinger had expressed his willingness to come to Dutch aid, Minister of Defence Vredeling argued the offer should not be taken up, lest it further isolate the Netherlands within the EC and identify its policy with that of the US. Even though the offer should not be simply rejected, Van der Stoel agreed that caution was warranted in order not to underline Dutch dependence on the United States. The situation became more difficult, however, when the intention of Under-Secretary of State Donaldson to visit The Hague was publicly announced by the State Department. Fearing negative consequences for the Dutch pursuit of European solidarity, Van der Stoel suggested that a visit should only take place after the European summit. The question provoked unusual division between the Ministers. In times of need, Minister Boersma argued, one should look after allies of whom support could be expected. Others similarly warned that the

58 Ibid., p. 9.
60 Cabinet meeting, nr. 6226, 23 November 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1237, p. 11.
61 Cabinet meeting, nr. 6234, 30 November 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1237, p. 5.
62 Ibid., p. 5.
Netherlands could not afford to demonstrate independence from the US for the sake of European solidarity, and that there should be no hesitation in taking up the American offer.\(^63\) Prime Minister Den Uyl, however, was sceptical of the American ability to help, as it faced an embargo itself, and concluded that the US was clearly playing politics with the Netherlands. Van der Stoel voiced a similar suspicion of an American attempt to create divisions within the EC.\(^64\) Besides, Den Uyl did not believe American aid would be beneficial. “If the Netherlands would tie itself to the great protector of Israel”, he argued, “it would significantly reduce the chances of breaking the embargo”.\(^65\) For the Netherlands, the only solution would be European solidarity and a breaking of the boycott. To the US, it would have to be made clear that its publication of the intended visit had embarrassed the Dutch government, and that any future communication with regards to aid should be kept secret. This sentiment was expressed again a week later, when the council concluded that “any potential American aid to the Netherlands should have no negative consequences for European cooperation and the position of the Netherlands within the Nine”.\(^66\) Unlike the description by Hellema et al. of the episode as part of a “Dutch-American rapprochement”, a close analysis of the discussion thus shows that the Dutch government clearly gave priority to European integration over transatlantic relations at this point in the crisis.\(^67\)

Looking for a European solution, The Hague’s biggest challenge would come from its EC partners. Strong support for solidarity could be expected from Germany and Denmark and to a lesser extent from Belgium and Luxembourg, while the Italian position remained unclear.\(^68\) Besides dependence on Dutch exports of gas and oil, some of these countries, such as Germany, held similar views regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and the American patronage over it. In the UK, however,

\(^{63}\) Ibid., pp. 5-6.  
\(^{64}\) Ibid., p. 8.  
\(^{65}\) Ibid., p. 7.  
\(^{66}\) Cabinet meeting, nr. 6255, 7 December 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1237, p. 8.  
\(^{67}\) Hellema, Business as Usual, p. 136.  
\(^{68}\) REZ meeting, nr. 6279, 6 December 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1262, p. 2.
Prime Minister Heath expressed publicly that going to Copenhagen as a “Community in trouble” would be a big mistake. French Minister Jobert was of a similar disposition, afraid that a communal answer to the crisis would send a wrong sign to the Arab countries.

Apart from the challenge coming from diverging views and interests, The Hague was weary of French attempts to institutionalise the summit. As in other Benelux countries, the Dutch Foreign Ministry feared that increased intergovernmental cooperation would mean an erosion of the Community's supranational institutions. Yet, even towards this traditionally important principle the Dutch cabinet showed increased flexibility. While Prime Minister Den Uyl understood the usual objections, he also highlighted that, “in the past, summits [had] not been unfavourable in stimulating European unification”. The presence of President Ortoli at the Conference, moreover, would ensure a role for the European Commission. In the council, Minister Westerterp warned that, due to its weariness of new developments, the Netherlands was losing its credibility regarding the pursuit of European integration and would end up losing on all fronts. Although paralysis of the communal institutions had to be avoided, Den Uyl remarked that, in the end, the true erosion of European cooperation did not come from a summit of the Nine, but from regular meetings between France, Britain and Germany, to which the smaller countries had no answer. In a significant show of adaptability, the Ministers therefore decided that the Netherlands would have to be open to new developments in European cooperation. Such flexibility was also shown towards developments in the external role of a political Europe, as Van der Stoel acknowledged that, if there were a complete consensus amongst the Nine, the representation of this consensus through the British and French Security Council seats would not be objectionable. In fact, he remarked, such objections would only

---

69 Ibid.
70 Cabinet meeting, nr. 6255, 7 December 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1237, p. 2.
71 Ibid., p. 6.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., p. 7.
decrease with the advancement of political integration. While the Foreign Minister's reasoning may seem only natural, it did open a door, however slightly, that had traditionally been firmly closed: that of a role for a political Europe on the world stage. With a constructive attitude, The Hague would thus go to the Copenhagen summit, hoping to finally address the oil crisis.

In France, the main aim of the Summit would be the establishment of a Euro-Arab rapprochement. On November 21, French Foreign Minister Jobert had already “urged the EC Nine to foster détente through a closer relationship with the Mediterranean world and the Middle East”. According to Gfeller, Jobert's new Euro-Arab rhetoric was matched “with an unprecedented commitment to European unity” as the Quai d'Orsay, realising that “EPC required sacrifices”, accepted a common, diplomatic EPC démarche in the Arab capitals to plead for a lifting of the embargo. “By accepting the EPC démarche against their perceived interests”, Gfeller contends, French officials had passed a first test of European solidarity. Yet, while the European démarche as a first show of external solidarity was indubitably another positive and unprecedented step towards a European foreign policy, French motivations to join it should not be romanticised. As Van der Stoel told the cabinet meeting, France had only agreed to support the common action on the condition that the Dutch delegation to the UN General Assembly would not vote in favour of a resolution on the suspension of nuclear tests, leading the Foreign Minister to promise that the Dutch delegation would abstain. With this trade-off, the French approval of common actions can hardly be said to have been a complete sacrificial move against its own interests. Nevertheless, the European démarche remained a promising first sign of solidarity and cooperation in foreign affairs.

74 Ibid., p. 5.
75 Gfeller, European Identity, p. 98.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid., p. 99.
78 Cabinet meeting, nr. 6226, 23 November 1973, MR 2.02.05.02, 1237, p. 11.
As expected, little common ground was found in Copenhagen. While Germany and the Netherlands took the opportunity to press for solidarity, France hoped to establish a foundation for its desired Euro-Arab rapprochement. The situation was complicated even further by the visit to Copenhagen of four Arab Ministers, for which several of the EC members blamed France. While Gfeller shows that such allegations were unjustified, she does note that the “Arab mission put Jobert’s emerging Euro-Arab strategy on a more solid footing”. Afraid of provoking the Arabs, the Nine could hardly refuse a request to meet with the Arab delegation. Further talks, however, were rejected by Germany and the Netherlands, but also Italy. In the end, no concrete decisions regarding the Middle East conflict were taken. Germany and the Netherlands, especially, had not seen the need of releasing another statement after that of 6 November. Yet, the Summit had certainly not been fruitless: In another important expression of European integration, the Nine released a Declaration on the European Identity, to “enable them to achieve a better definition of their relations with other countries and of their responsibilities and the place which they occupy in world affairs”. Reaffirming the “political will to succeed in the construction of a united Europe”, the document also announced the Nine's intention to “preserve their historical links with the countries of the Middle East and to cooperate over the establishment and maintenance of peace, stability and progress in the region. At the same time, the declaration reasserted the importance of the transatlantic alliance as a guarantor of security, creating a European identity that was not mutually exclusive with a strong transatlantic partnership. While the Summit also saw an agreement to work on a common energy policy, it did not provide any concrete, short-term solidarity, leaving the Netherlands without its desired European solution once again.

---

80 Hellema, *Business as Usual*, p. 150.
82 Ibid., pp. 49, 52.
IV. The Washington Conference

Travelling to Brussels in early December for a NATO conference, Kissinger expressed his dissatisfaction with the European allies, who seemed to increasingly separate themselves from the US. In addition, he feared that the EC Nine would give in to Arab blackmail. Speaking in London on December 12, right before the Copenhagen Summit, Kissinger addressed the energy problem and called for the creation of “an Energy Action Group … with a mandate to develop within three months an initial action program for collaboration in all areas of the energy problem”.83 In France, the proposal was received as merely another attempt at dividing the EC and reasserting American leadership. While other EC countries were more positive towards the proposal, they too remained cautious. Since Europe was much more dependent on Arab oil than the US, they feared a confrontation with the Arab producers.84 At the Copenhagen Summit, France achieved a “victory” by preventing an official welcoming of Kissinger's proposal in the communiqué, and convincing its partners that Western cooperation should take place within the framework of the OECD.85 Soon after the Summit, however, the Quai d'Orsay would see its partners slowly drifting away.

For The Hague, the Summit had not been able to produce concrete progress towards European solidarity. Adding insult to injury, the energy problem took another drastic turn as, in late December, OPEC announced a 130 percent increase of the posted price of oil.86 When it thus received an invitation for an energy conference to be held in Washington in February, the option deserved careful consideration. One of the problems with the initiative was the fact that only five

83 Kissinger as quoted in Gfeller, European Identity, p. 121.
85 Gfeller, European Identity, p. 122.
86 Ibid., p. 124.
countries had been invited. For the EC, this meant the exclusion of Luxembourg, Denmark, Ireland and Belgium, who were not pleased with this course of events. Furthermore, it was expected that France would only attend the conference after a common energy policy had been decided upon. Taking into account the positive British and German reactions, however, it was decided that the Netherlands should also reply positively to the invitation. To prevent dissatisfaction amongst the EC partners, the Dutch government considered expressing its readiness to develop a common energy policy at the same time. However, Van der Stoel warned, “this should not be postulated as a conditio sine qua non”.

According to Den Uyl, the EC partners could be reminded of the Summit agreement to establish a common energy policy before the end of January. Rather than staying away from Washington, the invitation provided a good opportunity to accelerate the negotiations on a common energy policy and thereby reduce the chances at a negative French attitude. The Washington conference was seen as an important chance to break the boycott. However, The Hague did realise that the credibility of its commitment to EPC was on the line. In keeping with German and British actions, the council decided to accept the invitation only after the EC Ministerial council of 14 and 15 January. The Dutch delegation would fully support the German proposal to achieve a common stance before the 11th of February, it would not resist participation in the conference of currently uninvited countries, and it would plead for the President of the European Commission to represent the EC.

On February 8, Van der Stoel was able to inform his colleagues in the cabinet meeting that a common standpoint had been agreed upon in which the Dutch point of view was sufficiently recognisable. First of all, the Nine would seek to start a dialogue with both producer and

---

87 REZ meeting, nr. 6296, 10 January 1974, MR 2.02.05.02, 1581, p.6.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid., p. 6-7.
90 Ibid., p. 7.
91 Cabinet meeting, nr. 6324, 8 February 1974, MR 2.02.05.02, 1399, p. 4.
developing countries as soon as possible. Furthermore, the development of a consumer platform should take place within existing frameworks such as those of the OECD or the IMF. Finally, Van der Stoel expressed himself positively regarding the Algerian proposal to convene a special UN assembly on raw materials and development. The Nine would vote in favour of the initiative, and Van der Stoel urged the US to do the same.92 With these agreements, the common European approach seemed promising. Nevertheless, the mandate remained vague, and “in truth”, Gfeller argues, “there was no genuine agreement”.93 In the US, there was considerable irritation with the common European opposition to a conference directed against the producers. Annoyed, Kissinger had exclaimed: “It is, of course, designed to create a united front. That's the only purpose of a consumer meeting”.94 Nevertheless, Washington also recognised the divisions that were still present within the Community, and the opportunity it provided. According to a pre-conference briefing, “several of the West European participants will favour cooperative action to make oil supplies more secure: The Netherlands, still embargoed and with little hope of arranging bilateral deals with Arab states, was likely to push hardest for a united consumer front on the matter of assuring adequate oil supplies, [while] West Germany has been visibly irritated by its EC partners’ unwillingness to cooperate in solving energy problems and will come to Washington hoping to find a common course of action”.95

Indeed, as the Washington Conference began on the 11th of February, it was not long before disagreements within the EC Nine became painstakingly clear. German Minister Schmidt, Gfeller writes, “openly supported the US line and even censured the EC states that had struck bilateral deals with the producers – that is, essentialy France and Britain – for pursuing beggar-my-neighbour

92 Ibid., p. 7.
93 Gfeller, European Identity, p. 126.
policies”, after which Jobert strongly and publicly criticised Schmidt in return.\textsuperscript{96} The common position of the EC soon became untenable, causing a rift between France and its EC partners. At night, Kissinger was content, saying: “We have broken the Community, just as I always thought I wanted to”.\textsuperscript{97} Similarly, Nixon declared that “the European Community, instead of having a silly unanimity rule, learned they can't gang up against us and we can use it now … with everything else”.\textsuperscript{98} From these and other statements, it is clear that the creation of divisions within the European Community and the reassertion of American dominance had been Kissinger's goal all along. In the end, all participants - except for France, which did not accept the final two paragraphs - signed a communiqué calling for the creation of an Energy Coordinating Group (ECG) to continue the negotiations.\textsuperscript{99}

With its primary goals of avoiding confrontation with producer countries and involving non-industrial consumers, the Dutch delegation was content with the communiqué’s affirmation “that solutions to the world's energy problem should be sought in consultation with producer countries and other consumers”.\textsuperscript{100} Evaluating the conference, Van der Stoel noted the regrettable inability of France and the other EC countries to come to an agreement.\textsuperscript{101} While it was still too early to draw any conclusions regarding the consequences this would have for EPC, he did expect the French attitude to have some influence. According to Minister Pronk, it was difficult to find good motives for the French attitude at the conference, stating that the French policy of pursuing bilateral energy contracts while pleading for further talks in the framework of the UN showed little consistency.\textsuperscript{102} This latter, UN strategy had to be fully supported by the Netherlands, however, and should not be

\textsuperscript{96} Gfeller, \textit{European Identity}, p. 128.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., Nixon, p. 130.
\textsuperscript{99} Final Communiqué of the Washington Conference, 13 February 1974, CVCE \url{http://www.cvce.eu/obj/final_communique_of_the_washington_conference_13_february_1974-en-96e19fad-6aba-4b79-a79134624e94ac9f.html}
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{101} Cabinet meeting, nr. 6332, 15 February 1974, MR 2.02.05.02, 1399, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., p. 8.
pushed to the background in favour of transatlantic cooperation. Even though the US had seemingly
destroyed European unity, Kissinger's earlier threat that a failure of the Washington conference
would carry with it an erosion of the transatlantic partnership had not been taken kindly. Moreover,
the Dutch Ministers believed that the interests of developing countries did not appear high on
Washington's list of priorities. Therefore, a common European stance had to be pursued that
showed understanding for the position of developing countries.\textsuperscript{103}

The follow-up meetings of the ECG carried a procedural character. By promoting the
creation of an institution within the framework of the OECD in Paris, the eight EC participants
hoped that France would eventually join the new organisation as well, so that the creation of the
new agency would not be achieved at the expense of EPC.\textsuperscript{104} In November 1974, the International
Energy Agency was officially founded within the framework of the OECD, though with great
autonomy. Despite the fact that Germany and chairman of the ECG Davignon had gone “to great
lengths to integrate France”, the French government decided not to join the organisation.\textsuperscript{105} In the
Hague, there had been suspicion towards the French attitude, which Van der Stoel believed “aimed
at torpedoing the ECG”.\textsuperscript{106} While concerns of the EC partner would always be handled cautiously,
the Foreign Minister argued that the ECG had to be seen as an umbrella for bad weather, which
would indubitably return at some point. In other words, the Netherlands could not afford to pass up
on an opportunity to achieve concrete progress in the securing of its energy supplies. Especially
important for the Dutch, the triggering of the IEA's emergency mechanism would depend on
“quantitative thresholds” rather than unanimous voting.\textsuperscript{107} After all, it was the unanimous voting rule
that had effectively prevented the OECD oil-sharing scheme from being activated a year earlier. In

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., pp. 10-11.
\textsuperscript{104} Türk, 'Neutral Consumer Organisation?', p. 8.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{106} REZ meeting, nr. 6725, 6 November 1974, MR 2.02.05.02, 1581, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{107} Türk, 'Neutral Consumer Organisation?', p. 9.
addition, Türk explains, the fact that “agreement on central questions [was] not decided on the unanimity principle but according to oil consumption” made it “impossible for the US or the EC to force through a decision alone”. In the end, the US manage to prevent the creation a European energy policy by encouraging an international solution to the energy crisis, reasserting the importance of the transatlantic alliance, although its position in the new organisation was not as dominant as it may have wished.

For The Hague, international cooperation on energy and the realisation that expected oil shortages had been overestimated diminished the urgency of a European energy policy. Nevertheless, the results of the Washington conference had not damaged its support for further political cooperation in Europe. Rather, Van der Stoel stated that the most important question was now to determine in what way the Netherlands could positively contribute to the maintenance of the Community. While the French idea that an independent Europe would have to separate itself from the US was definitely still disapproved of, the Foreign Minister did believe that France had interests in maintaining a strong Community, and remarked that French ideas - apart from their motives - were often right. During the energy crisis, Den Uyl noted, the inability of the Community had resulted in the Energy Coordinating Group and in a continued erosion of communal competence. With the relevance of the Community at stake, it would now be time to accelerate European integration. The uncertainty surrounding the French developments made it impossible for the Dutch government to any kind of European vision for the future. It is clear, however, that the oil crisis had not dimished the Dutch support for EPC, which had manifested itself continuously during the winter of 1973-1974.

108 Ibid.
109 Ibid., p. 17.
110 Ibid., p. 19.
111 Ibid., p. 6.
112 Ibid., p. 9.
Conclusion

In the history of European integration, it is not difficult to find recurring patterns of behaviour for the countries that make up the European Community. A danger, however, lies in the transformation of such complex attitudes to mere caricatures used to explain that history. In the case of the Netherlands, an emphasis on its loyalty to the Atlantic relationship has dominated historiography. While relations with the US have undoubtedly been very important throughout the history of Dutch foreign policy, this paper has sought to challenge the picture that, when European integration and American policy have come into conflict, the Netherlands has indeed always prioritised the latter.

In 1969, a renewed desire to pursue European political cooperation seemed to have left behind the many disagreements and crises that had marked the sixties. With the accession of Britain, Denmark and Ireland, the future of Europe was regarded with optimism. The remark made by Van der Stoel to Kissinger that increased European political cooperation was simply a reality the US would have to live with, was indicative of the support it enjoyed in the Netherlands. With the start of the Arab-Israeli war, some of the EC members saw an opportunity to let Europe play a role in world affairs. Believing the Middle East conflict should be dealt with by the US only, however, the Dutch blocked this. Several weeks later, they would certainly regret this, as their fate would depend on the will of the EC partners whose ambitions they had blocked.

Throughout the energy crisis, The Hague would look to solve the problem of energy security within a European framework, believing the crisis might provide the necessary impulse to accelerate the creation of an EC energy and foreign policy. Realising the political nature of the crisis, the Dutch government sought not to isolate itself within the Community by taking on a constructive and diplomatic attitude. An important product of this was the Declaration of 6 November, clearly
showing the concessions The Hague was willing to make in order to find European solidarity by way of a common energy response. The greatest testimonial of Dutch commitment to tackle the energy crisis through EPC would come in the lead-up of the Copenhagen Summit, when an offer of American aid was not taken up in order not to upset European cooperation. Moreover, the US was asked to postpone an official visit until after the Summit, so that the Dutch would retain their credibility towards the EC partners. Certainly, US protection would have given the Netherlands an easier time, as it would not have had to give in to Arab demands by slightly altering its position on the Middle East. Besides, the achievement of European solidarity would not be easy. Yet, Den Uyl clearly believed that there could only be a European solution to the crisis. To reach this, The Hague made its attitude towards EPC more flexible, no longer dogmatically rejecting intergovernmental meetings and officially deciding to open up to new EPC developments. It was only after the situation seemed to get worse, and no concrete solidarity with the Netherlands had been shown, that The Hague would openly turn against their French partner at the Washington conference. Rather than a prioritisation of transatlantic relations, however, this most all of represented a prioritisation of immediate national interests over a European energy policy. Even though The Hague had preferred the latter, its predicament did not allow it to reject the opportunity of Washington. Even after the Conference, however, the Netherlands remained committed to EPC in much the same way as it had been before. In fact, it took the failed response to the oil crisis as a reason to further pursue European integration. First of all, it can thus be concluded that the Dutch attitude should be seen in the context of renewed EPC, which the cabinet supported. While national interest of solving the boycott was important in The Hague's pursuit of solidarity, it also saw it as an opportunity to further develop political cooperation. Repeatedly, the Dutch government chose to deal with the oil crisis through a European approach, even though a transatlantic one was available. Not because it was the easier option, but because the Netherlands saw its future in the context of a more united Europe.
Considering the influence of the oil crisis on European political integration in general, only limited remarks can be made. Even though there were wide divisions between EC members during the oil crisis, such disagreements had of course not been unfamiliar to the Community, and the EC still managed to take several important steps towards an integration of foreign policy. First, it laid the foundations for a Euro-Arab dialogue. Secondly, it demonstrated several unprecedented feats of cooperation: the Middle East declaration, a common démarche, and a declaration on European identity. As becomes clear from the Dutch example, the inability to form a common response to the crisis did not have a great negative impact on the attitude towards EPC in the aftermath of Washington. Rather than having caused disagreements and division within the EC, the energy crisis had merely exposed the extent to which, despite talk of renewed EPC, the Community had been unprepared for its consequences.
Bibliography

Archives

113 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken: Code-archief 1965-1974, 2.05.313.
1523, 1561, 8478, 8479, 8480, 8486, 8488.

113 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministeries voor Algemeene Oorlogvoering van het Koninkrijk (AOK) en van Algemene Zaken (AZ): Kabinet van de Minister-President (KMP), 2.03.01.
8230, 10128, 10129, 10864.

113 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerraad, 2.02.05.02.
1237, 1262, 1285, 1398, 1399, 1400, 1402, 1403, 1406, 1581.

113 Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Nederlandse Ambassade in Frankrijk te Parijs, Consulaten te Nice, LaRochelle en Straatsburg, 2.05.177.
926, 927.

Online archives

Delpher http://delpher.nl/
Archive of European Integration http://aei.pitt.edu/
Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe http://www.cvce.eu/

Published collections of primary sources


Secondary sources


113 Archives cited in the way recommended by the ‘Nationaal Archief’. Please see the abbreviations section for English translations and used abbreviations for these archives. Numbers of consulted folders are shown in italic.


Hogselius, Per, 'The European Natural Gas Industry and the Oil Crisis of 1973/74'. Published by H-Energy on 14 April 2014 as part of 1973 Energy Crisis Anniversary Discussion. 


Nemeth, Tammy, 'Brief Historical Contextual Overview to the 1973 Energy Crisis'. Published by H-Energy on 14 April 2014 as part of 1973 Energy Crisis Anniversary Discussion. 


