

'European solidarity', from Communauté européenne (April 1970)

Caption: In April 1970, Raymond Barre, Vice-President of the European Commission with special responsibility for Economic and Financial Affairs, shares with the readers of the monthly publication Communauté européenne his hopes for the European Economic Community (EEC) in terms of monetary unification.

Source: Communauté européenne. Bulletin mensuel d'information. dir. de publ. Fontaine, François ; Réd. Chef Chastenet, Antoine. Avril 1970. Paris: Service d'Information des Communautés Européennes. "L'Europe solidaire ", auteur:Raymond Barre.

Copyright: (c) Translation CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/european_solidarity_from_communaute_europeenne_april_1970-en-7d87ad76-ab3d-43e9-9c26-10103e037d5c.html



Last updated: 05/07/2016

European solidarity

In conferring on the Community the ambitious objective of creating an economic and monetary union, the Heads of State or Government have certainly given a new impetus to European integration, but it must be accompanied by a strong political will.

The difficulties — and here we are talking about much more than merely abolishing customs barriers — will be commensurate with the scale of the Grand Design. It will take shape in a context very different from the one in which the Communities were founded. In 1950, European countries were weak and ruined by the war: they have now recovered and are prospering. European integration started during the Cold War; today both East and West want cooperation and détente.

The Member States of the present Community and those who will later join them might be tempted to settle for the current level of achievements and therefore avoid more onerous obligations and the tougher discipline required if the Community is to be strengthened. They realise that a modern country, accepting the laws of international competition and, adapting to it by a policy of specialisation and innovation with specific agreements on international cooperation, is not condemned to mediocrity. They are aware that, although it may not be a major world power, Europe can retain its historical importance.

When the Heads of State or Government of the Community decided to pursue economic and monetary integration, they were making an important political statement; to quote André Marchal, we are witnessing ‘from the basis of an economic Europe the birth of a European political conscience.’

Some greeted the policy decisions of The Hague with a certain amount of scepticism. In as much as European integration is governed by reason, they were, in fact, a logical development, and no one should have been surprised.

In 1951, in the early years of European integration, Raymond Aron wrote, with his usual uncompromising lucidity: ‘the notion of Europe is an empty one; it has neither the transcendence of religious ideology nor the immanence of national feeling. It is a creation of intellectuals which accounts for its emphasis on rationality as well as for the lack of heartfelt feeling it generates.’ Twenty years later, the European Economic Community is internationally recognised.

The Member States of the Community acknowledge more and more the economic and political advantages that membership gives them — advantages that are difficult to measure, until they are gone.

The Community offers its members a large, expanding market, conducive to stimulating trade, business and finance. It is in no way the protectionist association often portrayed. If one compares the level of protection offered by the common external tariff to that of other large competitor countries, the European model does not come off badly. The dynamic nature of the Community economy greatly benefits third countries.

The Community offers its members the possibility of resolving together the technical, economic and social problems that arise from the structural changes faced by individual countries, both in industry and agriculture. These problems are of a different scale in each country, but their harmonious resolution is, ultimately, in the interests of everyone.

The Community gives its Member States the chance to create, within the world economy, a centre of economic growth and monetary stability and a chance to protect their economic and monetary independence in a potentially dangerous international situation.

Lastly, over and above the economic argument, the Community provides the basis for Europe to develop as a political entity and thereby express its identity and originality in a difficult and uncertain world.

More than ever, the European Economic Community reveals the European idea to be a reasonable goal. At the same time, a united, fraternal Europe is also winning over the hearts of the people.