

Address by Willy Brandt: extract on the enlargement of the Communities (The Hague, 1 December 1969)

Caption: At the opening of the Hague European Summit on 1 December 1969, the German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, emphasises the need to make real progress on the enlargement of the European Communities.

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Statement by Willy Brandt (The Hague, 1 December 1969)

If all were well with Europe, we would not be meeting today. If the Community were able to speak with one voice our main topic here would be foreign policy: the question of the peaceful organization of Europe, negotiations with the countries of Eastern Europe and our interests with regard to the conflict in the Middle East.

Instead, the success or failure of this Conference will rightly be judged on whether or not we can steer the Community vessel back into navigable waters. While we concentrate on narrower issues, we cannot shirk the decisions which are needed if our fellow citizens are to appreciate once more that Europe is not merely a matter of market regulations and if the young are to see that Europe is something more than the remembrance of a part dark, part glorious, past.

We would all surely agree that our Community should not constitute another bloc but should, rather, be a model which could serve as a component of a balanced all-European peace order. It is in this spirit that the Federal Republic of Germany is seeking an understanding with the East in co-operation and agreement with its partners in the West.

The links that have been forged between us must be indissoluble and must grow ever closer. If we want to achieve the necessary harmonization we must give each other support, that is to say, we must apply solidarity in practice. On behalf of the German Government, I declare that we are ready to do this. And German public opinion is behind us in this.

But the public naturally also wants to know what consequences our European commitments have for them. My Government, like the others, must be able to show that the contributions it is called upon to make are meaningful, reasonable and well-defined and that our chosen path towards unity in Western Europe is the right one politically.

We do not consider that our meeting here is usurping the established institutions of the Community. Our Conference is more than an elevated form of the necessary Brussels routine.

This is why I say with complete frankness that the German Parliament and public expect me not to return from this Conference without concrete arrangements regarding the enlargement of the Community.

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