

Negotiating positions of the Community and the applicant countries (1972)

Caption: Overview of the respective positions adopted by the Communities and by the United Kingdom, Denmark, Ireland and Norway during the accession negotiations.

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2. Negotiating positions

The Communities

8. At its meeting on 8 and 9 December 1969, the Council of the Communities, taking the view that a common negotiating basis would need to be established if the negotiations were to be effectively begun, decided to undertake the indispensable preparatory work on the following matters: the necessary adjustments to the various institutions in the light of enlargement, the transitional period for agriculture and industry, the major issues concerning relations with the Commonwealth, the problems with regard to ECSC and Euratom, and the negotiation procedure.

Accordingly, at the conference with which the negotiations opened, in Luxembourg, on 30 June 1970, the President-in-office of the Council, the Belgian Foreign Minister Mr Pierre Harmel, informed the applicants of the positions and methods the Community was adopting for the negotiations on a number of basic points. The Community posed the principle, he said, that the applicant States “accept the Treaties and their political objectives, all decisions taken since the Treaties came into force, and the options chosen in the field of development”. These decisions included the agreements concluded by the Community with third countries.

For the Community, “the rule which must govern the negotiations is that the solution of any problems of adjustment which arise must be sought in the establishment of transitional measures and not in changes of existing rules”.

If transitional measures should, however, prove necessary as a result of enlargement, they must not exceed the time required to complete the transition. “As a general rule, they must incorporate precise time-tables.” An initial significant tariff reduction must be made by both sides upon the entry into force of the accession treaties. The transitional measures would have to be “conceived in such a way as to ensure an overall balance of advantages” for all concerned.

Similarly, “it will be necessary to ensure that the advances made in freedom of movement for industrial goods are kept in step with the establishment of the common agricultural market”. The length of the transitional period must be the same for all the applicants.

If transitional measures were needed in other fields, their duration might vary with the subject matter and the applicant concerned, “provided this is possible and desirable”.

Mr Harmel drew the applicant States' attention to the need for the several accession treaties to come into force on the same date.

On the relations of the enlarged Community with the developing countries, he said that the accession of new members would entail new responsibilities towards these countries, which would have to be met in appropriate ways. “With this in view, the enlarged Community must be ready to continue its policy of association with the Associated African States and Madagascar and with any other independent African countries of comparable structure and level of development which request association with a view to promoting their economic and social development.” However, the enlargement of the Community and “the possible extension of the policy of association must not lead to a weakening of relations with the present Associated States”.

The representatives of the applicant countries then outlined in their turn respective negotiating positions.

United Kingdom

9. On behalf of his Government, Mr Barber, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister with special responsibility for European affairs, renewed the previous Government's assurance that the Treaties establishing the three European Communities and the decisions flowing therefrom would be accepted.

While in favour of a short transitional period in the case of Euratom and ECSC, Mr Barber envisaged a longer one for Britain's adjustment to the EEC Treaty, more particularly in connection with the British contribution to expenditure from the Community budget under the financial regulations adopted by the Community, with certain points in the agricultural policy (including the common fisheries policy), with Commonwealth sugar exports, with the special problems of New Zealand, and with certain other Commonwealth matters.

Denmark

10. Mr Nyboe Andersen, the Danish Minister of Economic Affairs and European Integration, confirmed Denmark's willingness to accept the Treaties and subsequent decisions, the political objectives of the Treaties, and the choices made for further development of the Community in the monetary, economic, industrial and technical fields. He touched on the importance of the fishing industry to his country, on Denmark's close ties with the other Nordic countries and those of EFTA, on manpower problems in the context of the Nordic labour market, and on points arising with respect to the Faroes and Greenland. Denmark did not in fact feel a transitional period was necessary, but was prepared to accept the principle in view of the difficulties other applicant States might have to face.

Ireland

11. Mr Hillery, the Irish Foreign Minister, said his Government unreservedly shared, as it had done in 1961 and in 1967, the ideals of the parties to the Treaties of Rome and Paris, and accepted their political and economic aims and the decisions taken to implement them.

With regard to such transitional measures as might prove necessary, Mr Hillery emphasized that, while the common agricultural policy as such presented no difficulties for Ireland, the specific regulations on plant and animal health, and the Community's common fisheries policy, could create some problems. On the industrial side, in view of the small dimensions of Irish industry, transitional measures would be needed for certain sectors. Mr Hillery added that his country was most anxious to conserve the advantages of the Anglo-Irish free trade area.

Norway

12. Mr Stray, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, stressed the special problems of Norwegian agriculture, which by reason of its geographical distribution called for special solutions. Other major items which would need to be carefully studied in Norway's case were fisheries, capital movements, right of establishment, and the Svalbard coalmines. Mr Stray also emphasized the importance to Norway's economy of the close ties it had developed and wished to maintain with the other EFTA countries, and the value it placed on the existence of the Nordic labour market.

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