

Statement by Pierre Werner to the Chamber of Deputies (Luxembourg, 4 December 1969)

Caption: On 4 December 1969, Pierre Werner, Luxembourg Prime Minister, makes a statement before the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies on the decisions taken and the political guidelines adopted by the Six two days earlier, at the end of the European Summit in The Hague.

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The Conference of Heads of State or Government at which I, along with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, had the honour of representing Luxembourg came at a crucial point in the development of European cooperation, both because of its timing and because of the serious nature of the problems on which the politicians from the six Member States of the Communities had to take a decision.

Before reviewing the decisions and guidelines adopted at The Hague, I am happy to say that, thanks to the united determination of all our governments to achieve real and substantive results, the Conference may be deemed to have been a success.

You are well aware of the issues that were before the Heads of State or Government. They have been widely discussed in recent months, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs explained the Government's position to you just last week. There will, therefore, be no need for me to dwell on the meaning and implications of the terms 'completion', 'deepening', 'strengthening' and 'widening' of the Communities.

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The Heads of State or Government were aware that their national parliaments and the public expected this meeting formally to reaffirm the aims pursued over the last 18 years in the field of European unification, and they were determined to respond to that expectation.

They unanimously reaffirmed their faith in the political objectives of the Treaties, whereby a process of integration will lead to a united Europe capable of assuming its responsibilities in tomorrow's world and of making a contribution commensurate with its traditions and tasks.

In this respect, the final resolution which the Conference adopted represents a profession of faith and an act of confidence in Europe's destiny and calling. That act merits particular emphasis.

The unanimous and spontaneous manner in which all the Heads of State or Government reaffirmed these objectives provides the clearest possible evidence of their determination to see economic cooperation develop into a political community.

This House — like the Government — will certainly welcome this statement and everything that it promises for the future, and it should help to dispel the growing doubts which we have constantly heard expressed in all quarters about whether all the Member States of the Community really wanted to continue with this project.

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With this in mind, we should appreciate the genuine importance of this formal reaffirmation of our governments' determination that the European Economic Community should progress from the transitional period to the final stage at the end of this year.

This bears out the prediction made when the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957 that 12 years would be enough for the development of the fundamental rules which would lead to the achievement of economic unification.

In response to this requirement, the Conference stated that, at the end of this year, the financial regulations governing both the financing of the common agricultural policy and the establishment of the Community's own resources will be adopted.

In so doing, the Community will have to succeed not just in putting the finishing touches to its common agricultural policy but also in laying the foundations for genuine financial independence. That will be a very

important consolidating factor.

You will remember that, from the very outset, the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community provided for the creation of budgetary resources which would allow the High Authority to act completely independently.

On the other hand, the Rome Treaties did not initially include provisions of this type, and this has often been seen as a weakness, particularly by the most exacting supporters of European unification.

In future, all Community measures will be funded progressively not just from agricultural import levies which are allocated to the Community budget but also from the transfer of customs duties and, possibly, from other resources to be created; these have not yet been spelt out, but the Council will shortly be taking a decision on them.

You will understand that a process on this scale must inevitably involve allowing time, starting with the time needed to submit these hugely important decisions — which are themselves an example of the sort of pooling of sovereignty without which Europe cannot be built — to all the parliaments for ratification.

All of this, of course, is bound to raise problems for a number of Member States which feel that this sort of system would place an unreasonable burden on their economies. It will be for the Council to find balanced solutions to counteract excessive strictness by attempting to distribute burdens as fairly as possible within the Community.

However, whatever arrangements accompany these measures, the very fact of making the Communities — even in the long term — independent of the Member States' budget contributions is a powerful integrating factor and will enable new measures to be taken and policies defined in fields other than those in which European rules have been developed and applied hitherto.

In this context, you will be particularly pleased to hear that the Heads of State or Government were unanimous in considering that the progressive creation of own resources must go hand in hand with greater budgetary control powers for the Strasbourg Assembly. We shall thus be moving towards the democratic scrutiny of Community expenditure and probably, in the longer term, towards decision-making powers for the Assembly on certain items of revenue.

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In defining these measures on the future financing of the common agricultural policy in particular, the Conference of Heads of State or Government was forced to acknowledge the problems presented for the agricultural market — and indeed for any economy — by the existence of surpluses which are often far greater than consumers are able to absorb.

It was specifically stated that the Community would have to define a proper production policy in agriculture in order to eliminate these surpluses and bring supply more closely into line with actual demand.

This is not an implied criticism of the common agricultural policy as it stands at the moment.

It would be unfair to make agricultural producers bear the consequences arising from, when all is said and done, a tremendous boom in farming in all our countries over the last few years, often achieved through considerable personal investment.

We should give agriculture a chance, now that it is so highly developed, producing under better conditions and with an infrastructure which will enable it to keep farmers' incomes at a fair level.

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Beyond these requirements imposed by the completion of the Community, the Hague Conference really came into its own when it acknowledged the need to define a number of new policies, even in fields in respect of which the Treaty of Rome itself does not lay down specific provisions.

The Conference of Heads of State or Government drew lessons here from the monetary situations in which the Member States have found themselves in recent months.

It has often been said, in recent weeks, that these types of currency phenomena not only create serious problems for Europe's common policies but even risk undermining the efforts made to achieve a genuine, barrier-free common market.

The Hague Conference thus created new hope in the field of monetary policy and in the increasingly close coordination of economic policy. For the first time, the Member States took a positive view of the inevitable creation of a monetary union. For those like me, who have, for some time now, been advocating these measures as vital for the achievement of genuine economic union, this unanimous conclusion reached by the Hague Conference was particularly satisfying.

It was agreed that, early next year, a step-by-step plan for the creation of an economic and monetary union will be drawn up. This is sure to be a difficult area, but the formal statement of political will to succeed offers unhoped-for chances that this goal will, indeed, be attained.

At the same time, it was agreed that the Member States' economic and monetary policies will be increasingly closely coordinated in order to ensure, as far as possible, that differences in developments between Member States do not have negative effects in the future. In order to ensure that the Community punches its weight at international level, the idea is that our respective positions within the international monetary organisations will be coordinated more closely, a process which might even culminate in a common position.

Finally, while the introduction of a single European currency is a longer-term objective, the creation of a European reserve fund has been considered by several Member States' spokesmen as something to be achieved at an earlier date. Of course, the drafting of specific decisions on this subject will still require much more detailed work, but the very fact that politicians at the highest level are seriously considering this possibility without protest is a major development which is very much to be welcomed.

Further progress has been made on problems relating to scientific and technological cooperation in Europe. It is not enough to bemoan the fact that Europe is lagging behind in this field or to undertake studies to find out how and whether Community cooperation is possible in this area. Here, too, political impetus was needed, and the determination to develop programmes on a European scale has been demonstrated, with Member States of the Community willing to provide the funding needed to develop and carry out such programmes.

By the same token, the Hague Conference decided to do its utmost to put an end to the difficult situation facing the Euratom Community and its research centre. They are to develop a research programme tailored to the demands of modern industrial management and facilitating the most efficient use of the Joint Research Centre. As a result of the unequivocal statement that this would be done, the Euratom Council of Ministers should, at the end of this very week, be able to take steps to ensure that the research work will continue. Some very interesting suggestions have been made on this subject which lead us to believe that a new approach can now be taken to the major questions surrounding the survival of this Community.

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The decisions taken at the Hague Conference on the applications for accession from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark and Norway were obviously eagerly awaited by the public in every country. Clearly, this was an area in which a Conference like the one at The Hague could not take the place of the Community institutions responsible for taking a decision on applications for accession. However, in view of the huge

political implications of this issue and the problems that the Community has faced in the past on this subject, the Heads of State or Government felt obliged to state their positions as clearly as possible. They were unanimous in stating that they were determined to adopt the most positive approach possible to the enlargement of the Communities.

Translating this statement of principle into action, they gave their agreement to the opening of negotiations between the Community and the applicant countries. This is obviously a highly important step along a path which all of France's Common Market partners have wanted to take for many years now.

To enable these negotiations to be opened very quickly, it was decided that the work required to define a common basis for negotiation should start without delay and, by general agreement, in a very positive spirit.

This statement shows just how far the Community has come. There is, therefore, little point in dwelling on the possible fixing of a precise date for negotiations to start, given that it is already established that the Community is actively preparing for those negotiations and that it is striving to make this clear in its discussions with the applicant countries which are being asked to accept the Treaties and their political aims, along with the decisions that we Six have taken since the Treaties came into force, and the development options that we have chosen.

The Luxembourg Government welcomes the attitude adopted at the Hague Conference and will do its utmost to help to promote the process begun there.

In this context, it would also be appropriate for the Community to enter into discussions with those European states which, for one reason or another, cannot or do not wish to join the Communities but whose ties with our countries are such that we cannot ignore their situation. I am thinking here, among others, of Austria, which only recently asked to have its economic position defined in relation to the Community, a request which we, for our part, have received with a great deal of interest and understanding.

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It was also important that this Conference should enable the Foreign Ministers to resume discussions on the problem of political unification. Over the next few months, they will be resuming talks for the first time since 1964, and this leads us to hope that the political goals openly affirmed by the Conference will result in the definition of conditions for the Community Member States to develop the sort of political cooperation that is the natural outcome of the efforts that we are making to achieve economic unification.

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It is, perhaps, still too soon to identify the position which this meeting of Heads of State or Government will occupy in the history of European integration.

I personally think that it has done what was legitimately expected of it in that it not only enabled an assessment — and often a critical one — to be made of our achievements to date, but also enabled new initiatives to be taken which had become necessary as a result of our common determination to make progress and the need to draw conclusions from the transitional phase of the development of the Common Market for the furtherance of the project.

If we look beyond the inevitable uncertainties, the often serious difficulties and the defence of the legitimate interests of each Member State and each social and economic group in our societies, there is an obvious and clear determination to overcome the obstacles.

Of course, the path we are taking together is a difficult one and is strewn with many obstacles. There are many problems to be faced, and the timetables involved are often long. There will still be some tough negotiations. We should not underestimate this, but we may draw hope from the fact that everyone has confirmed their determination to achieve the goal which Europe set itself in 1951.

In order to achieve this historic task, politicians have appealed to the people they represent, and in particular to young people, who should find that Europe provides the hope to match their ambitions. The governments' determination to push on with the European project is important, but the people's determination to do so is even more important.

This is how I view the results of the Hague Conference, which was perhaps not an end or a beginning, but simply one of the milestones along our path, one distinguished by the need for conciliation and the determination to innovate with both realism and perceptiveness.