

## Statement by André Bettencourt on the results of the Norwegian referendum (26 September 1972)

**Caption:** On 26 September 1972, André Bettencourt, French Foreign Minister, comments on the negative outcome of the Norwegian referendum and calls for European integration to be revived.

**Source:** La politique étrangère de la France. Textes et documents. dir. de publ. Ministère des Affaires étrangères. 2e semestre 1972. Paris: La Documentation Française. "Déclaration de André Bettencourt sur les résultats du référendum norvégien (26 septembre 1972)", p. 87.

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The vote that has just taken place in Norway was a surprise for us, although not totally unexpected, since, over the last few weeks, we have been kept informed of the difficulties which were coming to light, and of the divisions which had been opening up amongst the Norwegian public. Nevertheless, we are always willing to take on board their wishes. We thought that it would be very close, but we hoped that the balance would tip in our favour. For a moment this morning, we counted on the intervention of the Norwegian Parliament. The Norwegian Government, faced with a vote that it considered to be very clear, failed to act. It is not for us to discuss this stance, we understand it, but in truth, we are not surprised.

Europe is going ahead. Everything has changed in comparison with the post-war period, considerable progress has been made. France has played its part. However, look how everything is more complex and more unpredictable than we would expect. In the French referendum on the accession of the United Kingdom and other countries, we secured a 'yes' vote, yet with a much smaller majority than we expected. Another example is that if, in the United Kingdom, the British Government had not shown as much resolve, we might perhaps have seen other difficulties arise.

We have often warned against hasty actions which would have been neither understood nor accepted. This new vote proves that we are gauging the difficulties more accurately and that the caution that is required demands greater perseverance and determination.

It is with this in mind that the French President wanted a Summit Conference. We must not lament more than is necessary the delay in solving certain fundamental problems. We must record everything that has been achieved, and a great deal has already been achieved. We must use this meeting of Heads of State or Government to give renewed impetus to Europe which, as we are well aware, will not immediately assume its true dimensions.