

Statement by Pierre Werner: excerpt on the strengthening of the Communities (The Hague, 1 December 1969)

Caption: Strengthening the European Communities is the principal topic addressed in the speech by Luxembourg Prime Minister, Pierre Werner, delivered on 1 December 1969 at the Hague European summit.

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[...]

C. Strengthening the existing Communities

There is an urgent and pressing need for the Community to define policies to be implemented and action to be taken in a number of fields. If it fails to do so, there is a danger that the impact of the advantages of a large single market will be lost.

Such resolutions and directives, jointly drafted by the Six, could be referred to the applicants for membership so that common conclusions could be reached in conjunction with these countries.

As to the areas in which the Community could be strengthened, the first that comes to mind is monetary and financial co-operation. Recent monetary developments - and the repercussions and consequences of these for the common agricultural policy in particular - have proved that any common policy is likely to become precarious at a moment's notice until such time as the Member States take a decisive step towards monetary co-operation and the alignment of financial policies.

To create the conditions for economic union, economic planning and the co-ordination of short-term economic policies must develop side by side. Many people consider that the attainment of these objectives is the essential preliminary to monetary integration.

I am not convinced of this and I am very much afraid that if we refuse to accept a modicum of financial discipline of a Community nature a co-ordinated short-term economic policy will never see the light of day.

Recent events on the monetary scene threw the common agricultural policy into disarray and proved that economic and monetary policy form one indivisible whole. This is why my delegation advocates a programme which would lay greater emphasis on our willingness to advance in this field, which has both political and economic overtones.

A first step in this direction was taken with the Council's approval in principle of short-term monetary assistance between the Member States.

In addition, the Commission's proposals for medium-term financial cooperation and increased co-ordination of medium-term economic policies are to be discussed within the Council as soon as possible.

But, if we are to succeed, we must go much further than this. It is not for a meeting like ours to define the technical details of a programme for future monetary union. A number of possible and more or less daring approaches have been suggested.

Be that as it may, the Luxembourg delegation would be happy to see a reference in the final communiqué to our willingness to create a monetary union before a specified date by introducing a series of appropriate arrangements, mechanisms or agencies backed by the co-ordination of economic policies which these will be expected to stimulate.

D. Strengthening the institutions

Almost all our national Parliaments have made it clear that they are prepared to ratify the financial regulation and the allocation of the own resources to the Community only if the powers of the institutions are adjusted at the same time. Public opinion is running along the same lines.

Of course it can be argued that there is a close link between increased powers for the European Parliament and the election of its members by direct universal suffrage. I have no wish to deny this link but I cannot believe that its existence should prevent us from acting in either field.

We must progress on these issues in a realistic way, in step with advances achieved in other areas of European integration.

To sum up then, our final communiqué should affirm:

(i) that our Governments are ready to change over to the definitive period of the Common Market at the end of the year;

(ii) that they are prepared to shoulder on that date all the obligations imposed by the Treaty and derived Community law, and in particular to put the final touches to the definitive financing arrangements;

(iii) that the Community should lose no time in producing a mandate for negotiations with the applicants for membership, these negotiations to begin once the mandate has been approved;

(iv) that, side by side with the production of a negotiating mandate and parallel with the negotiations themselves, decisions will be taken in those areas in which the Community needs to be strengthened, including scientific and technical research, the gradual realization of monetary union and a common economic policy;

(v) that this economic, monetary and financial strengthening is to be matched by a reinforcement of the institutional provisions of the Treaties to increase the powers and competence of the European Parliament and make provision for a first step towards the election of its members by direct universal suffrage.

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