

## Report by Helmut Kohl to the European Parliament (30 June 1983)

**Caption:** In a speech to the European Parliament on 30 June 1983, West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl gives an account of the Stuttgart European Council and emphasises the importance of the implementation of common European Political Cooperation.

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Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I am glad that today, on the last day of the German presidency, I can report to the European Parliament on the European Council in Stuttgart at this special part-session. I am not so concerned with reporting what has happened. What I want is to consider jointly with you what conclusions we can draw for the Community's future activities. The Heads of State and Government of the Community bear a special responsibility for European policy. Naturally that also applies to you, the directly elected Members of the European Parliament. That explains the need for a dialogue between the European Parliament and the President of the European Council. This idea was therefore formally embodied in the Solemn Declaration on European Union adopted in Stuttgart.

The European Parliament has the important and vital task of raising our citizens' European consciousness. To do so, it needs authority and its voice must be heard.

*(Applause)*

But our citizens' European consciousness cannot be raised unless they feel that they, their interests and their problems are being catered for properly in the Community. The founding fathers of Europe, to whom we owe the Community and the splendid idea of European integration, knew it: the Community lives because it guarantees peace and stability in Europe, because it does in truth make us stronger and because thanks to it alone, we become a convincing partner for discussion in today's world and one whose voice is listened to.

But the founding fathers of the Community also knew that the Community must tackle the difficult task of continuously seeking to find a balance between the interests of its Member States. Today this is considerably more difficult - and there is no point in arguing about it - than in times of economic prosperity and full cash-boxes. At a time when large undertakings, entire sectors of industry and entire regions of all our countries are hard hit by the economic structural crisis and by unemployment and when we are forced to make large-scale cuts in our national budgets, it becomes more difficult to cope with the problems in the Community.

Then there is a greater risk that the individual questions of agricultural policy, fisheries policy or the budget are given more importance than they really deserve within the dimension of Europe. Then it can happen, and that is the danger facing us, that these questions distort the political horizon in Europe. And that is precisely the moment when we must beware as much of political short-sightedness as of national panic action. That is precisely the moment not to lose sight of the basic political conviction set out in the Treaties of Rome. Their content is well-known. The aims are: a large and free internal market, an open, liberal external trade policy, a common agricultural market, a common development policy and, above all, the institutional development of the Community.

All this rests on the foundation of economic and political solidarity on the part of the Member States of the Community. Especially at a time like now, it is not enough to regard the Community as merely a European free trade zone. I am firmly convinced that the prospect of a future European Union is more necessary today than ever. Today more than ever we need progress along the road towards European integration.

*(Applause)*

For all these reasons Stuttgart was a difficult meeting, a difficult summit. However much all the participants were convinced - and I believe we can assume they were - that only joint action can bring progress for us all and help each individual Member State to protect its well-understood interests, at the same time this Stuttgart meeting did of course also reflect the economic and financial problems afflicting us all at home. These difficulties narrow down the political room for manoeuvre of the governments and therefore also of the Community institutions.

And yet the European Council in Stuttgart gave an important impetus to the further development of the Community. It set negotiations in motion, fixed actual timetables and provided practical guidelines for these negotiations. Each one of us, myself certainly included, would have liked to have gained more for ourselves

out of Stuttgart and we would all have liked to have brought more home for Europe.

But just as national extremist positions can have no place in a European compromise decision of that kind, similarly it would be wrong, unpolitical and also utopian to try to measure a decision of that kind against an ideal European yardstick. The Stuttgart declarations are a foundation, on which we must and can continue to build very practically in the coming months. That applies both to the Commission and to the Governments in the Council and I am confident that in this work the European Parliament will be at our side in a constructive, realistic and critical spirit and will contribute to ensuring that no-one in the national governments even thinks of postponing the problems facing us *ad calendar graecas*, in the light too of the Stuttgart decisions.

In Stuttgart we were concerned with the Community's budget, with financing the Community and with efficient and economical budgeting. But the real issues were the enlargement of the Community and the relevant preparations, the various Community policies and also new areas of Community policy. We want enlargement - and I am saying this quite deliberately on behalf of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany which I lead - we want to keep our promise to the democratic parties and institutions in Spain and Portugal and that is why we want Spain and Portugal to become members soon.

*(Applause)*

Because we want a Community which does not hesitate before new Community tasks in the fields of research and technology, environmental policy or social policy, we must ensure that in the long term the Community is based on solid financial foundations. We cannot do this applying some patent medicine such as merely increasing own revenue. The Community budget does not exist in a vacuum; the same rules must apply to it as to our national budgets.

I am speaking to you today after the cabinet of the Federal Republic of Germany embarked yesterday on the difficult job of saving nearly DM 7 000 million for next year alone, which in our case relates to some 30 million inhabitants. Naturally, this obligation to economize, to make budgetary rearrangements, cannot apply only to the national budgets. We in the Community also have an obligation to slow down expenditure on the individual policies, in particular agricultural policy. We must check all the ways in which we can economize and readjust.

*(Applause)*

The Stuttgart Summit confirmed that these matters cannot be tackled or resolved in isolation.

*(Applause)*

They are all equally important and must be dealt with at the same time, side by side. There is no alternative for any of us, or for you, to this endeavour. We want to find an overall solution in order to achieve a balance of interests acceptable to all. The European Council in Stuttgart endorsed this view of the German presidency. May I stress that I know of no Member State that does not want to see at least a part of the overall package implemented as soon as possible. That includes the applicant countries of Spain and Portugal. By linking the questions, we should be able to create a new, strong impetus for the implementation of the overall package.

The first in a series of special Council meetings will take place as early as 8 July 1983 under the Greek presidency. These negotiations are difficult, but I do not doubt that we are all prepared to tackle resolutely the problems which we have perhaps for too long pushed aside. In the end we will decide jointly on all these interlinked questions, and we will also decide on the scale and timetable of the Community's own resources requirements, on the basis of the results achieved.

In view of some of the criticism voiced in this House too, which I well understand, may I say quite plainly, to state our position: we Germans do not want a low-key Europe. We do not want to abandon old or new

Community policies, transfers of resources or progress in convergence. To increase own resources without at the same time putting a brake on the movement of costs, especially in the common agricultural policy, and without ensuring a fair distribution of the burden, is equally inconceivable.

Moderation is the order of the day. Any additional expenditure must be convincingly justified in view of the sacrifices imposed on our citizens. That is a precondition for a credible European policy. You know that as well as I do. We as politicians must act in line with the votes cast by our electors, and I am saying this now as Chairman of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany: the same electors who voted yesterday in the national election will vote tomorrow, i.e., in June next year, in the European election. As politicians we must look ahead to that election, and no-one in their own country must look at it and say: 'But it's *only* a European election'. It remains an *election*, which involves us all jointly!

I am sure that our fellow-citizens, the electors, are prepared to make sacrifices for Europe. But only if we can show them convincingly that Europe is more than a bank account into which money is paid in the hope of getting more back in the right circumstances.

*(Applause)*

Failing that vision of Europe, that mental and cultural image of Europe that was always present in the minds of the fathers of the Treaties of Rome, we will not be able to make any progress with Europe. I expect us to fulfil the task assigned in Stuttgart and to have made convincing progress by the time of the European Council in Athens in December this year.

The settlements achieved there will, however, take time to enter into force. That is why, in Stuttgart, we had to agree on an interim solution for the United Kingdom. After lengthy negotiations, we agreed on a political net amount of 700 million ECU for 1983. This settlement takes account of overpayments to the United Kingdom; accordingly the amount is markedly lower than for 1982. This time, we did not include an additional risk-sharing formula to cover contingencies.

For the rest, we will adhere to last year's settlement, including a 50% German minority share. The Council and the European Parliament will have to negotiate the details in connection with the 1984 draft budget. The interim solution we have found comes close to a long-term financial settlement and the resources must be spent in the framework of common policies. In its deliberations on economic and social questions, the European Council urged that the Community's financial instruments should be used in a comprehensive and coordinated fashion, in order to boost and protect the economic recovery in our countries. Thanks to the increase in the Community loan under the German presidency, these instruments have been considerably strengthened as a whole. The European Council greatly welcomed the decisions of the Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs to concentrate the European Social Fund resources on measures to combat youth unemployment. It also appreciated the resolution on vocational training policy under which young people are to be guaranteed one year's basic training after the end of their compulsory schooling. I regard both measures as highly important and timely contributions to reducing youth unemployment.

As regards the internal market, the European Council recorded progress in certain areas. But we agreed in Stuttgart on the need for further efforts to reduce existing distortions to competition and obstacles to trade on the internal market. We know that in economic policy questions the Community has to rely on the efforts of everyone, i.e., primarily on the efforts made by each individual on his own doorstep. The Community makes the large internal market available. For the rest it can only take flanking action. That is why one of our most important European tasks remains that of coordinating the economic policies of the Member States of the Community more closely. Any State that believes it can go it alone will harm itself and the others.

*(Applause)*

In the past weeks and months we have made progress in precisely this area, in spite of the different starting points. This progress should encourage us to continue along the same road, while at the same time making full use of the European Monetary System as a political instrument of economic discipline and coordination.

I especially welcome the fact that the European Council emphatically endorsed the proposals we made on questions of environmental policy, in particular the problem of the death of the forests. In view of the acute danger in all our countries, we must take rapid and effective action. National measures are inadequate. We need greater European and international effort. I would like to encourage you to continue to be the moving force in questions of protecting the environment.

After more than two years of intensive negotiations, the European Council in Stuttgart managed successfully to conclude the deliberations on the Solemn Declaration on European Union and to sign the Declaration. Some partners still have reservations about certain provisions of the Declaration. Moreover, the content of the Declaration was slightly watered down in the course of the deliberations. We would have been prepared to go further. The same applies to some other Member States. It certainly applies to the European Parliament. But we must reconcile ourselves to the fact that together we can only achieve as much as each of us is prepared to accept for himself.

At this point, I would like to say a few plain words to this House. Of course I understand the criticism, of course I can understand people saying we should have achieved more. But the Members who are sitting here are also members of their national parties at home and may I say quite openly that in this House I sometimes hear tones from one quarter or another which I do not hear at home. I observe with great interest that a number of people express European views here which they do not, cannot or are not prepared to translate into practice in their own party.

*(Applause)*

Of course it is much easier to express European convictions here. What we need is for these European convictions and decisions to be translated into practice at national party meetings if we want to make progress in Europe.

*(Applause)*

Because I am aware of these difficulties and very well aware of the differences in emphasis between speeches here and declarations at home, I think that with this Declaration, in spite of all the cuts I admit we have made to it - for I never asserted it was a masterpiece - nevertheless we have moved a few steps forward on the road to European integration. We do not regard the Declaration as final either. It can be reviewed at any time and should be. If, for instance, the big political parties which exist in all countries could find a common conviction - I have suggested this on several occasions - we would have a good chance of making progress soon.

In the Declaration, all the Member States of the Community profess themselves in favour of extending the policies and responsibilities of the Community of Ten in the cultural field, in the field of approximation of legislation, in the field of security policy. Moreover, in that Declaration we are making an attempt to integrate the institutional achievements of the Community and those of the cooperation the Member States and steer them more effectively towards the objective of European Union.

The text of the Declaration makes it clear that all the Member States are prepared to urge facilitating the Council's decision-making procedures by applying the rules laid down in the Treaties, including those on majority decisions. That is a step forward. However, the fact that some Member States placed on record that in cases where vital national interests were at stake, the Council must continue to deliberate until it reaches unanimity, is consistent with the present state of affairs in the Community. We have to live with it as it is; and we can live with it, even if we wish things were different, and I certainly wish they were, to put it plainly.

*(Applause)*

The two originators of the Declaration, Mr Genscher, the Federal Minister and Mr Colombo, the Foreign

Minister, were especially concerned to give the European Parliament a greater say. However, in this specific area considerable reservations were expressed and in my view it is one of the areas in which the Members of the European Parliament have an especially important educational task to carry out in their national parties. So in this specific area there were reservations, yet we managed to make at least a little progress as regards consultation in the legislative procedure, the negotiation and conclusion of international treaties and the appointment of the president of the Commission.

Parliament is still at liberty to put forward more far-reaching proposals, regarding its own position too, during reviews of the Declaration. As far as I am concerned, I stick to my conviction that the position and authority of the European Parliament must be strengthened.

*(Applause)*

Our citizens would be well-advised to back up this Parliament by taking part in as large numbers as possible in the forthcoming direct election. Voting for the European Parliament means voting for an effective European policy. And you know as well as I do that more responsibility does not merely mean more power. As things stand, it would be disastrous for Europe if the European Parliament or the national parliaments acted side by side or even at times counter to one another. Important as it is for the national MPs to know what is being thought and done in the European Parliament, it is equally important for you as MEPs to know the restraints and requirements imposed on your colleagues in the national parliaments and on their decision-making. Here I think it is essential for contacts to be improved, and that seems to present a problem in most of the countries.

In Stuttgart, some plain, open and at times angry words were spoken, as is usual, and perhaps also necessary, in talks between partners and friends. But at the same time there was a willingness to compromise, to set aside national wishes where this proved necessary in the interests of Europe. The progress made in Stuttgart is the achievement of all the participants. It is still up to all of us to see to it that the Stuttgart results are soon translated into practice. We have moved towards finding solutions but have not yet found final solutions.

We do not have much time. The world in which we are living is not prepared to wait until we have resolved our internal problems. Europe is not an island but is part and parcel of our world with its vast problems and conflicts. The ship of Europe has entered troubled waters, politically and economically. Our economy may slowly recover. But it will not recover just like that. We must tackle the problems firmly and without respite.

The necessary structural adjustments in important areas of our economy - steel, the textile industry, ship-building, to give a few examples - will take time, but they affect many people. When we talk about them we must not look only at the statistics but also at the faces of the men and women concerned who are unemployed. That is why it is so necessary for us to find a European dimension for our industries, especially for our new industries of the future, and to exploit it to the full. We can profit from the advantages of our large internal market, but third parties, to whose markets we also need free access, should profit from them too. A European dimension, however, also means European cooperation in research and innovation, means cooperation between undertakings wherever that is useful and feasible.

This is a year of important decisions in East-West relations. We need steadfastness and solidarity, not only in the Alliance but equally in the Community and among its Member States. The European pillar of the Alliance, of transatlantic relations, must be strong and solid. The Community and its Member States cannot afford to concentrate on internal quarrels in this situation. That could be lethal to our freedom, to our freedom of action and in the end to peace.

We need a strong Europe, a self-confident Europe, if we do not want to become the plaything of world politics. Europe must be strong so that it can safeguard its interests everywhere and so that the Community of free democrats can remain strong in the world.

I say it again: we all need Europe. The nation-state ideas of the nineteenth century will never take us across the threshold to the twenty-first century. I am utterly convinced that if we are to achieve any decisive

breakthrough at all, we must achieve it in this decade, in the next and the next-but-one term of this Parliament.

We Germans need this in particular. We live in a divided country and that is why we need Europe even more than others. Only if we are united under the aegis of Europe will we have any chance at all of seeing our nation united in future and in history. That is why I plead so passionately at home - apart from all the important economic and social questions - for the breakthrough to Europe, for the political integration and union of Europe, because this can promote our own chances as a country and a nation. That is why, and I am speaking quite bluntly and undiplomatically, we are prepared to make the necessary sacrifices on the road to the integration of Europe.

*(Applause)*

Only a strong and united Europe can conduct the necessary dialogue with the East, together with our friends and allies, and thus have a chance of reaching a settlement. That is necessary to the preservation of peace in the world. I will be able to go and hold my talks in Moscow in the next few weeks with the backing of the solidarity in the Alliance, and with the backing of the European Community and its policy.

The German presidency ends tonight. It was a presidency in a difficult time and anyone who wants to measure it by its results must also measure it by the problems it found facing it. I took over the presidency a few weeks after being elected Chancellor and a few weeks before the Bundestag election. There has been nothing comparable in the history of Europe to date. So anyone who makes critical remarks here must think first of the situation as it was at the outset and then imagine what he himself would have done in that situation.

*(Applause)*

Naturally, we respected our mandate and now when we hand over the presidency to Greece we do so with best wishes to our Greek friends and partners and in the assurance that our European affairs are in good hands in that country where the idea of freedom and democracy was first conceived in Western history.

Presidency means special responsibilities for the Community and the management of its affairs. The Community exists through the responsibility of all its members. Naturally, there will be especially heavy demands on its members - and not only on the presidency! - in the next few months, in view of the sketch of European policy I have just given.

May I conclude with one very personal remark? I belong to that generation of German politicians which set out after the war, as pupils and students, to tear out the boundary posts, sing European songs and celebrate fraternization. In the emotion of those years we thought we had already created Europe and had long since completed the most difficult part. Meanwhile we have grown older and necessarily more sceptical and realistic. But I do not hesitate to say here that I am utterly convinced - now and especially after these six months' experience in the presidency - that without the emotions of those years and without the ability to understand not just the material things but also the spiritual and cultural connections in Europe, there will be no Europe.

*(Applause)*

Important as economic data are, it is equally important to realize that behind the data and the statistics of unemployment there lie human destinies, which are a challenge to our solidarity; and it is equally important that in addition to our interest in technocratic matters, which a modern European mass society obviously needs, we should also reel this emotion, this sense of a new departure, that we should have not only an intellectual but also a heartfelt conviction.

Certainly, detail can be the devil and at a summit of this kind you will find many devils hidden in the agenda. There are some people, perhaps too many, and incidentally they can be found in all the political

groupings in Europe, who are beginning to feel resigned in matters European. To conclude, I would like to say quite simply that I see no cause for resignation, in spite of a number of setbacks which I myself have also experienced and suffered. Elements that have become separated and grown apart in Europe over a period of hundreds of years cannot be brought together again in the space of a single generation, overnight so to speak, from the point of view of history. We need a great deal of perseverance, and there is one entirely convincing rational argument. No-one who rightly or wrongly criticizes the development of Europe has ever been able to answer me one question: what is the alternative to Europe?

*(Applause)*

Because this is the case, may I appeal to you - and you in turn will do the same to others - in spite of all the difficulties and national problems, which we certainly have and would not deny, and in spite of all the obstacles still put in our way on our historic journey, to persevere regardless! We will reach the goal: the integration, the political union of Europe.

*(Sustained applause)*