

Position of the Luxembourg Government (22 January 1963)


Caption: On 22 January 1963, Eugène Schaus, the Luxembourg Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, sets out Luxembourg's stance with regard to the French veto of the United Kingdom's application for accession to the European Communities.

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The position taken by the Luxembourg Government during the final talks preceding the suspension of negotiations on the United Kingdom's accession to the Common Market is well known to all. We were convinced that a positive outcome could have been achieved while still complying with the principles and the spirit of the Treaty of Rome. The Government saw no justification for suspending negotiations.

But accession of a third country to the Community requires the unanimous agreement of all the founding members. We accepted that arrangement when we signed the Treaties of Paris and Rome, and we should have realised the consequences it could have. So, for the moment, the Communities remain as they were, and, rather than wasting time on futile recriminations, we have to look to the future and try to make the best of the situation that now prevails.

The Luxembourg Government's attitude here is based on the following considerations.

Relations between the Six are currently being sorely tested. However, despite any bitterness that the events of the recent days may have caused, it is essential that we abandon anything that might affect the Community's cohesion. Solidarity between Member States must, in spite of everything, remain the golden rule, whatever disagreements might exist. To conduct our discussions in the presence of a third party would be against our most basic interests. Let us not forget that, when signing the Treaty of Rome, we made a solemn commitment to refrain from any action that might jeopardise the achievement of our common objectives.

The best way to ensure success in the future is to focus all our efforts now on safeguarding the Communities. Indeed, much still remains to be done if we are to achieve the objectives set out in the Treaty of Rome. Since the path towards a geographical enlargement is blocked for the moment, I think it would be wise if we turned our attention to the tasks involved in establishing and developing the Common Market, tasks which are, themselves, numerous and difficult enough. Part of these efforts must include greater consideration of how to manage our relations with non-member countries. The trend towards an open and liberal Community would allow us to secure, albeit in a different form, some of the advantages that we were seeking through enlargement.

There are still considerable opportunities open to us, even if they may appear less inspiring than those we had glimpsed before. While pursuing in this way their task limited to a Community of Six, we shall, of course, do nothing that might endanger a future resumption of negotiations that are only on hold.

Once again, our ideal of European unification requires that we demonstrate patience, realism and modesty. For our part, we shall participate in this constructive undertaking which, we believe, is the best way of preparing for the future.