

## Speech by John Lynch (Brussels, 22 January 1972)

**Caption:** On 22 January 1972, at the signature of the Treaty of Accession to the European Economic Community (EEC), the Irish Prime Minister, John Lynch, highlights the historical significance of the EEC enlargement process.

**Source:** Bulletin of the European Communities. Dir. of publ. Commission of the European Communities. February 1972, n° 2. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. "Speech by John Lynch (Brussels, 22 January 1972)", p. 27-30.

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**URL:** [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/speech\\_by\\_john\\_lynch\\_brussels\\_22\\_january\\_1972-en-c50fe05d-3e50-420f-922a-c44b3eb4cbae.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/speech_by_john_lynch_brussels_22_january_1972-en-c50fe05d-3e50-420f-922a-c44b3eb4cbae.html)

**Publication date:** 13/09/2013

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"This is an historic occasion which suitably completes our negotiations, negotiations which were difficult and complicated and which demanded zeal, hope and understanding of all who participated in them. We may say that the cooperation and understanding which showed themselves during this period are a source of courage to us. They auger well for the future of the enlarged Community.

What we await is the enlargement of the European Communities. We look forward to the 1st of January, 1973. Now that the negotiations are completed and the Acts of Accession signed, it remains to fulfil our constitutional requirements. It is the opinion of my Government that the Parliament and people of Ireland are convinced that our best course is cooperation with the other Member States in the enlarged Communities. We believe that the people of Ireland will approve decisively and with confidence our entry to the Communities.

We mark by our gathering here today and by the signing of the Acts of Accession of the four applicant countries to the European Communities the culmination of many months of intensive and arduous negotiations. The successful outcome of the negotiations is a gratifying measure of the political will which has clearly existed on the part of the Community and each of the applicant countries to find mutually acceptable solutions to the problems which presented themselves. The manifestation of this political will and this mutual understanding points towards a future of beneficial and constructive cooperation by our ten countries in the enlarged Communities.

Today is also a beginning-the beginning of a new phase in the creation of a wider and stronger Europe. The heads of State or Government of the present Member States at their historic meeting in The Hague in December 1969 charted the future course of the movement towards the construction of Europe. They inspired the idea of the "triptych"-the three-fold movement for the completion of the Communities, for their internal development and strengthening and for their enlargement. Under this inspiration major progress has been made and the third element in this three-fold movement-the enlargement of the Communities-is now taking a decisive step forward.

We have set ourselves the entry date of the 1st of January, 1973. As far as we in Ireland are concerned we now have to fulfil the necessary constitutional requirements. My Government are convinced that the Irish Parliament and people share the Government's conviction that the political and economic future of Ireland lies in cooperation with the other Member States in the enlarged Communities and that they will decisively approve the entry of Ireland to the Communities.

Ireland is the youngest of the States represented here today. However, we are one of the oldest nations of Europe. Geography has placed us on the periphery of the Continent. But we are an integral part of Europe, bound to it by many centuries of shared civilisation, traditions and ideals. Ireland, because of historical circumstances, did not participate in the past in all the great moments of European experience but the Irish people have in many periods of our history been deeply involved in the life and culture of the European mainland. Since statehood, my country, conscious of its European past, has sought to forge new and stronger links with the Continent. In this we were renewing and revitalizing historic bonds.

A distinguished Irishman has written:

"My only counsel to Ireland is that to become deeply Irish she must first become European."

He also wrote over sixty years ago:

"If this generation has, for its first task, the recovery of the old Ireland, it has for its second, the discovery of the new Europe."

Since these words were written, Europe has been devastated by two world wars and it has been the task of a later generation of Europeans to begin the construction of a new Europe based on unity and cooperation

amongst its peoples. We in Ireland seek to share in this noble endeavour. We have responded to the call made by the founding fathers of the Communities to other countries of Europe who shared their ideals to join in their efforts to establish the foundations of an ever-closer union among the European peoples. My Government see in the European Communities the best hope and the true basis for the creation of that united and peaceful Europe.

We recognize that the enlargement of the Communities will pose its own problems. For the present Member States it will be a matter of adjusting to the workings of a Community of Ten. For the new Member States there will be the challenges of integrating into a Community already established and developed. These will be no easy tasks but, from the record of the Community of Six since its establishment and from our successful experience together in the negotiations, we draw confidence that the difficulties of accession and transition will be overcome and that the effective and constructive working of the enlarged Community will be assured. There is, however, much to be done: the coming year will be a vital period of preparation. The consultation procedure which was agreed in the negotiations will enable the process of integration for the applicant countries to commence and to proceed.

In this period before the Community is enlarged our ten countries will also look beyond the immediate problems of accession and transition. We should engage in examining together what the Community's future course should be after enlargement. For the Community of Ten cannot of its very nature, no more than the Community of Six, remain static: it will be a continuous creation: it must evolve and progress in the direction of the unity in Europe which the architects of the original Community envisaged.

Another of the tasks which, I suggest, our ten Governments must face in the context of the enlargement of the Communities, is to examine carefully how the institutions may best be equipped for their respective roles after enlargement. I have in mind here particularly the role of the European Parliament. All recognise a government's obligation to involve the people of the nation as closely as possible in the processes of government. There will equally be an obligation on us jointly to bring the peoples of the enlarged Communities into closer contact and involvement with the decisions, policies and workings of the Communities. It is in this surely that there is a major role for the European Parliament. The Irish Government consider it of the highest importance that the part to be played by the Parliament in the enlarged Communities should be the subject of the closest study by our Governments acting together.

The enlarged Communities as they evolve towards that greater unification in Europe which their founders envisaged can be a vital force for peace in the world and can make an ever-increasing contribution to the economic and social progress of the developing nations. We attach the utmost importance to the emphasis placed by the Member States at the summit meeting in The Hague on the promotion of rapprochement among the peoples of the "entire European Continent".

Great thoughts, Mazzini said, make great peoples. Robert Schuman saw that a united Europe would be achieved not in one step but by many concrete measures. The creation of the European Communities was the first practical expression of the vision of Schuman and the other founding fathers. Their development and achievements have brought significantly nearer the realization of the goal of unity in Europe. The Communities' enlargement will bring this realization even closer. At our signing here today of the Acts of Accession which marks a decisive step towards the future cooperation of our ten countries, it is surely appropriate that we should draw hope and inspiration from the achievements of the past twenty years and the vision which made them possible."