

Speech by Trygve Bratteli (Brussels, 22 January 1972)

Caption: On 22 January 1972 in Brussels, Norwegian Prime Minister Trygve Bratteli signs the Treaty of Accession to the European Economic Community (EEC) and delivers a speech on the issues related to EEC enlargement.

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"It is an honour and a pleasure for me to represent the Norwegian Government at the signing of the Treaty of Accession to the European Communities.

Our application, for membership does not date from yesterday. It has been actively upheld ever since 1962 by successive Governments and Stortings, as it is in accordance with our natural interest of participating in a closer and more committed cooperation, in the political, economic and cultural fields, with our traditional partners in Europe.

The recently concluded negotiations have defined for Norway, as they have for the three other applicant countries, the terms of this accession. The Norwegian Government considers that the outcome of these negotiations constitutes a satisfactory basis for Norway's accession to the European Communities. It is now for the Norwegian people and the Storting to take the final decision in this important matter, in keeping with our democratic and parliamentary traditions. We need the support of the people to reinforce our links with Europe and proceed further along the path outlined by the European Communities in order to ensure for the peoples of Europe peace and security, wellbeing and happiness, and to assume the responsibility we have towards the underprivileged countries of the world. The enlargement of the Communities will provide greater scope and new opportunities to attain those common aims which are so important for our own peoples and for the rest of the world. These can be attained if our political action, our progressive and pragmatic cooperation, are founded on confidence and open-minded solidarity between partners. It is the Norwegian Government's firm resolve to give concrete expression to this confidence and solidarity.

In the Communities, the ideal must not be too far removed from reality, nor the periphery too far from the centre. It would be rather pointless to find, in Brussels, solutions to our common problems if we were unable to convince our peoples that the common objectives are also their own and that solutions which have been reached are reasonable and fair.

We are working, in our country, to still extend democracy to new parts of Society. We see in the Community the possibility of also introducing democratic forms of decision-taking into international cooperation.

A Community which extends from Sicily to Finmark must find differentiated and flexible means of action to solve the various problems which are caused by the evolutionary trends of society in the different regions. In this context we attach importance to the objective of the Treaty of Rome concerning the harmonious and balanced development of all the regions in the Community.

We consider it as a very important task for the Communities to foster social policy and to raise it to ever higher levels. It is equally important to develop regional policy so as to strengthen, with the aid of common resources, the basis of economic activity in the peripheral regions. The economic integration of which the enlarged Community is the basis will increase our ability to solve the readjustment problems in economic life and to ensure employment. By means of a common industrial policy we will be better able to master the problems introduced by large multinational corporations into our economies and into the world economy. It is only by common action that we will be able effectively to protect the environment.

These then are the essential tasks for our societies. But the enlargement of the Communities must also be seen in a broader political context. Efforts to bring about greater unity in Europe have now reached a major crossroads. In this part of the world we have come a long way towards reconciliation, peace and stability. This is a further step towards a solution of the problems facing less favoured peoples in other parts of the world. Thanks to the enlargement of the Communities, the peoples of Europe will be able to look to the future with greater confidence."