

Statement made by Willy Brandt at the Hague Summit (1 December 1969)

Caption: On 1 December 1969, at the opening of the Hague European Summit, the German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, emphasises the importance and the implications of an enlargement of the European Communities and sets out his ideas on the deepening of the European integration process.

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Statement by Willy Brandt (The Hague, 1 December 1969)

I

If all were well with Europe, we would not be meeting today. If the Community were able to speak with one voice our main topic here would be foreign policy: the question of the peaceful organization of Europe, negotiations with the countries of Eastern Europe and our interests with regard to the conflict in the Middle East.

Instead, the success or failure of this Conference will rightly be judged on whether or not we can steer the Community vessel back into navigable waters. While we concentrate on narrower issues, we cannot shirk the decisions which are needed if our fellow citizens are to appreciate once more that Europe is not merely a matter of market regulations and if the young are to see that Europe is something more than the remembrance of a part dark, part glorious, past.

We would all surely agree that our Community should not constitute another bloc but should, rather, be a model which could serve as a component of a balanced all-European peace order. It is in this spirit that the Federal Republic of Germany is seeking an understanding with the East in co-operation and agreement with its partners in the West.

The links that have been forged between us must be indissoluble and must grow ever closer. If we want to achieve the necessary harmonization we must give each other support, that is to say, we must apply solidarity in practice. On behalf of the German Government, I declare that we are ready to do this. And German public opinion is behind us in this.

But the public naturally also wants to know what consequences our European commitments have for them. My Government, like the others, must be able to show that the contributions it is called upon to make are meaningful, reasonable and well-defined and that our chosen path towards unity in Western Europe is the right one politically.

We do not consider that our meeting here is usurping the established institutions of the Community. Our Conference is more than an elevated form of the necessary Brussels routine.

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II

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This issue has been exercising our minds for years. The Treaty makes it one of the cardinal issues of our Community, and nowhere is it written that it should not be dealt with until after the transitional period. The German attitude to this issue has been known for years. I mean that we may not put it off any longer.

In the first place, experience has shown us that postponing the question of enlargement threatens to paralyse the Community.

Secondly it would be in the common interest if the Community were to be enlarged at a time when we are trying to bring East and West closer together.

Thirdly, the Community must grow beyond the Six if it wants to hold its own, economically and technologically, against the superpowers and meet its worldwide responsibilities.

And I do not hesitate to add a fourth argument: those who fear that the economic strength of the Federal

Republic of Germany could upset the balance within the Community ought to favour enlargement for this very reason.

In any event, I want to say that without Britain and the other countries which have applied for membership Europe cannot become what it should and can be.

I got the impression from the talks which preceded this Conference that we are agreed in principle that the Community should be enlarged. This agreement should not be underestimated. At this point I would like to address the French President in particular: if France responds today to our clear will to complete and develop the Community with the trust which is a condition for enlargement this will be a source of satisfaction and rejoicing for us.

Over and above the question of principle, we are agreed that the applicants would have to accept the Treaties, the aims of the Treaties and the common legislation adopted since the Community was established.

It has also been agreed that any guidelines we may adopt on the Community's future development should be referred to the applicants. Once they have been translated into formal decisions, these too would have to be accepted by the applicants. Such a procedure would make it possible — and I think this is important — to synchronize Community development and accession negotiations so that neither would hamper the other but that each would benefit to the greatest extent possible from the other.

Thus the starting positions for the negotiations have now progressed to such a stage that no obstacle stands in the way of their being put into final form in the near future. I therefore suggest that we let the applicants know that we consider it possible for negotiations to begin in the spring of 1970.

During the negotiations themselves we should take the necessary decisions on the applicants' demands as regards adaptation and transition, and present them to our partners as the Community position.

Discussion is often now confined to Britain but this should not be interpreted as meaning that we are neglecting the other applicants.

III

Europe's interest also makes it imperative that we should not ignore our future relationship with other EFTA countries. As far as my country is concerned, I am thinking here in particular of Austria and Switzerland. As we all know, Sweden poses a question which is still open and which in the end it can only answer itself in its close contact with the other Scandinavian countries.

The close economic ties between the non-aligned countries and the Community, the free trade which operates within EFTA and also the political role of these countries in the European system of States, make it essential to find a comprehensive economic solution which would include them. A Community which resolutely pursues its economic development and political objectives can justify vis-à-vis the outside world the adoption of such a solution which is necessary in the interests of Europe as a whole.. The fact that it takes exceptional measures to deal with exceptional situations does nothing to change the Community's character. It will not become a preference area itself but will continue to be a community.

The Federal Government feels that the countries in question should make their wishes known in good time and that they should be kept informed of the possibilities open to them. I therefore suggest that we hold a round of talks with the applicants and those countries interested in other forms of co-operation. Such talks should take place as soon as possible after the accession negotiations begin.

IV

Although our Conference will be mainly concerned with other problems, I think it would be well for us to decide to make a fresh effort to co-operate in the field of foreign policy. This effort should involve more

than the mere resumption and continuation of discussions within Western European Union,

Past differences about who should participate in a well-defined form of co-operation in the foreign affairs field would disappear if the enlargement of the Community and political co-operation could be placed in the same perspective. In this way we could reaffirm the "finalite politique" of the Community in a wider circle without the areas of economic integration and political co-operation having to be completely identical.

I therefore propose that we instruct our Foreign Ministers to draft an agreement on the gradual development of political co-operation amongst the Member States of our Community, on the assumption that the Community will be enlarged.

At the moment the important thing is that we should agree amongst ourselves on our attitude to the topics to be discussed at an all-European conference. I hope that in the next few days our representatives on the NATO Council will help to make a constructive contribution here. There should be no shadow of doubt that, after careful preparations and with the participation of our American allies, we wish to help to find solutions which would mean greater security with fewer arms and make more practical East-West co-operation possible.

V

The growing integration of the economies of our six countries has made their overall economic development increasingly interdependent. Any economic disequilibrium between them now has a direct and rapid impact on the overall development of the Community. Inflationary tendencies in one country soon become a threat to the stability of another and to equilibrium within the Community. This leads to distortions and restrictions on movements of goods, services and capital; it also endangers the common agricultural market. This type of development can harm the Community as a whole. The only way of warding off the danger is to move more rapidly towards a stable, expanding Community.

My Government is willing to move along the road to economic and monetary union, soberly and realistically, step by step. Structural differences between our States, and the differences which still persist in our economic targets and behaviour, are facts which can only be changed by perseverance and joint efforts. Converging attitudes on the part of the main social groups will also be needed.

As a first step, effective co-ordination of short-term economic policy will need to go hand in hand with the harmonization of targets. In this context it is important to fix quantitative medium-term economic targets. If we succeed in elaborating a common economic policy in this way, it will be possible to implement economic and monetary union in a second stage.

Such a development will call for the creation of a European Reserve Fund. Here too I offer my Government's full co-operation. Once the necessary conditions exist, we will help to create the European Reserve Fund and to determine procedures for it. We would then be prepared to transfer a given proportion of our currency reserves into such a fund to be administered jointly with the proportionate reserves transferred by our partners.

The Federal Government has proved in the past that it is willing to practise solidarity in monetary matters. We would like to see the relevant Council decisions being given concrete form this very month.

We should also try to fix a deadline for the creation of the economic and monetary union in the sense of an outward-looking Community of stability. I suggest that the Council be asked to examine this important issue, to work out the detailed stages of a plan of this kind in close co-operation with the Commission and to adopt this phased plan during 1970.

If we take this decision we shall be giving a clear indication of our solidarity. Let us resolutely make a new start.

VI

We have all come to appreciate the need for co-operation between our countries in the scientific and technical fields; much has been said and written about this but we have been slow to act accordingly. A number of sensible proposals are now before the Community but they need to be embodied in a coherent technological policy for Europe. This calls for political decisions.

This is particularly true of Euratom. May I say quite frankly that it would be quite unacceptable and alien to the spirit of our co-operation if, while discussing the question of completion, development and enlargement, we were to allow the future of Euratom's Joint Research Centre, established at great expense, to be placed in jeopardy because we cannot agree on the provision and utilization of funds which are negligible in proportion to the estimated expenditure for the Community as a whole.

It seems to me that our present method of producing jointly approved and extremely detailed Community programmes confined to the nuclear field will not get us forward quickly enough. We cannot go into the details of the research programme here but we can, and I suggest that we do, show that we all want to settle the Euratom crisis. To this end we should agree to ensure the continued existence of the Research Centre, to extend its activities to non-nuclear fields and to introduce greater flexibility into its structure and methods of work.

VII

While I am on the subject of the Community's development I must say something about its institutions. We have to count on these institutions working in the way planned by the Treaties. This will really become evident when we reach the enlargement stage.

I suggest

- that the Council's method of working be tightened up
- that the Commission's executive functions be widened where required
- that the powers of the European Parliament be broadened, particularly by giving it budgetary control.

The structure of the Community must be brought into line with the principles of parliamentary control. In doing this, we must not lose sight of the principle of direct elections laid down by the Treaty.

VIII

In accordance with the Treaty the definitive stage of the Community begins on 1 January 1970. Our Governments have agreed within the Council to work on the assumption that the transitional period will not be extended. This means that we will have to do all in our power to take the decisions which are necessary.

It has become evident in the Council that it will not be possible to finish everything scheduled for completion in the transitional period before the end of the year. This includes matters which are of special interest to Germany, such as certain tax harmonization measures, the common commercial policy and the elimination of the remaining restrictions on the internal market. We trust in the readiness which all members have expressed to try to deal with outstanding issues as quickly as possible. We are not insisting on complete solutions by the end of the year.

As we all know, the real difficulties are in the field of farm financing. In the Federal Government's view principles and practicalities are involved in this complex issue.

We subscribe to the principle of European solidarity, which must also hold good in the process of developing and enlarging our Community. The nature and extent of farm financing are determined by the shape of the agricultural policy and the workings of this policy are unsatisfactory for two reasons:

In the first place, the Community is producing rising surpluses. Financing these surpluses is eating up more and more funds that are needed elsewhere. This is being criticized as bad economics and is bound to discredit the Community in the eyes of the public, particularly since consumers feel that their views are being brushed aside. If this trend continues, surpluses will exceed our financial capacity. Furthermore, our surpluses are weighing on world markets and this must be avoided in the interests of world trade. We must therefore make a determined effort to overcome the surplus problem for economic, financial and political reasons. This calls in any case for a thorough reform of the instruments of agricultural policy, that is to say, the market regulations.

The second reason that the agricultural policy does not function properly is that each country still has its own structural problems. These must be solved as a matter of urgency if we want to balance our overall economic structures. This in turn is a precondition for the economic harmonization needed at Community level.

The reform of the structure of agriculture will, to a great extent, have to remain the responsibility of our individual Governments. Experience has shown indeed that even the individual Governments find it necessary to delegate responsibility for structural policy to lower levels. The decisive point is that we all press resolutely ahead with our structural policies and co-ordinate them in such a way that they will promote the growing-together of our national economies.

To ensure that there are no misunderstandings here, or in discussions over the weeks ahead, may I say quite frankly that I not only have to represent the interests of the German taxpayer but also the future of the German farmer. One of the planks of my domestic reform programme is the development of a modern and competitive agriculture.

This is the context in which we see the problem. It follows that the Federal Government will only be able to agree to the definitive financing arrangements if it can be sure that discussions of the surplus problem, in other words the reform of the market regulations, will begin immediately and be pursued energetically on the basis of ideas likely to lead to success. All member Governments will have to instruct their representatives on the Council to speed up proceedings energetically in co-operation with the Commission. The role hitherto played by prices cannot remain taboo in this connection. What we need is a concrete picture of the situation in good time to enable us to make an early assessment of our potential commitments.

Only then would the Federal Government be in a position to recommend that the legislature approve the financing arrangements. This approval is needed under Regulation 25 of 1962, which makes express provision for the initiation of the procedure described in Article 201 of the EEC Treaty.

The German Parliament naturally also sees an inner connection between farm financing and the enlargement issue. I have noted with satisfaction that other Governments have expressed the opinion that the farm system, including the financing arrangements, will have to remain adaptable, especially in view of the enlargement of the Community.

If we can reach agreement along these lines, the way will be open for the adoption of definitive agricultural financing arrangements. The Commission has made proposals for such a settlement to the Council which are of special value, seen as a whole. But it is no secret to any of us that extremely difficult decisions will have to be faced on individual issues in the weeks and months ahead.

IX

To this outline of my Government's attitude I would only like to add that we must choose between a courageous step forward and a dangerous crisis.

What I am saying here is what I have already said at home: the people of Europe are expecting and urging our statesmen to place the will to succeed on the side of the logic of history. Europe needs our success.

If I might refer once more to the younger generation, let me say that the Federal Government would like to see a European Youth Organization created. We feel encouraged in this by the success of the Franco-German Youth Office.

On the world scene our Community, while becoming stronger and larger, should pursue a twofold aim. First, by pooling its resources, it should enable Europe to hold its own economically, scientifically and technologically with the superpowers and in this way to preserve its identity. In the second place, it should put Europe in a position to make a vigorous contribution to the great task which is clamouring for more and more attention from the industrial countries: development aid.

We can render our ideals of peace and humanity no better service