

## Address given by Jean-François Deniau at the ceremony held to mark the signing of the trade agreement with Portugal (Brussels, 22 July 1972)

**Caption:** On 22 July 1972, as the trade agreements between the European Economic Community and Austria, Finland, Iceland, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland are signed in Brussels, Jean-François Deniau, Member of the Commission, gives an address in which he outlines the importance of these agreements for the progress of European integration and relations with the other Member States of the Community.

**Source:** Archives historiques du Conseil de l'Union européenne, Bruxelles, Rue de la Loi 175. Fonds CEE et CEEA, CM2. CM2 1972. Dossier concernant les accords entre la CEE et les États de l'AELE non candidats de l'adhésion (Autriche, Islande, Portugal, Suède, Suisse). Signés le 22.07.1972, CM2/1972-1622.

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[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/address\\_given\\_by\\_jean\\_francois\\_deniau\\_at\\_the\\_ceremony\\_held\\_to\\_mark\\_the\\_signing\\_of\\_the\\_trade\\_agreement\\_with\\_portugal\\_brussels\\_22\\_july\\_1972-en-24a32d27-c945-4fc2-a261-a3721bf047b6.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/address_given_by_jean_francois_deniau_at_the_ceremony_held_to_mark_the_signing_of_the_trade_agreement_with_portugal_brussels_22_july_1972-en-24a32d27-c945-4fc2-a261-a3721bf047b6.html)

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Exactly six months after signing the Treaties whereby four European countries, Denmark, Ireland, Norway and the United Kingdom, are to become members of the European Communities, we have returned to this same place with six other European countries, Austria, Finland, Iceland, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland, to sign new Agreements. We sincerely hope that Finland will also be able to sign them subsequently. The interim Agreement with Austria also deserves special mention. It would not have been possible to achieve this result, which is in accordance with the wishes expressed at the Conference of Heads of State or Government at The Hague, without the firm political will of all the States concerned and without the sometimes exhausting work of the negotiators. In this connection I should like to thank particularly the team led and inspired by Mr Edmond Wellenstein, whose exceptional mental and human qualities have been major contributory factors to the success achieved.

The aim of these negotiations was not accession, since for various reasons, this was not possible or desirable for the countries represented here today. The aim was rather to prevent the progress being made by the Member States in the construction of Europe entailing a deterioration in European relations as a whole. The legal commitments, the high level of economic relations already achieved, the bonds of friendship, are such as to have made us do all in our power to ensure that the determination of certain countries to create among themselves a strong and dynamic Community would not have detrimental consequences for our closest neighbours. We can safely say today that the first objective has been attained and we have even gone on beyond it by mutually opening markets which now involve 16 countries.

But our closest neighbours are also European countries, and in this there is another reason, albeit more general and more long-term, for the Agreements we are about to sign. It is true that Europe is a vague concept and geography is not much help in defining its limits. History helps even less, in fact could be said to be against us, as Europe's past unfortunately consists mainly of conflict and rivalry. Yet we set up the European Community to change the course of events and to lay the foundations of lasting solidarity, thus ensuring peace and paving the way for prosperity. In this way, the bounds of Europe should progressively stretch as far as Europeans face up to reality and show a will to act. It is only right that the other countries of Europe should take part in such an enterprise, which is in the common interest, in their own ways and in the contexts of their own particular situations.

These Agreements can be seen not only as consolidating and improving what already existed, but as forming the outline of a new experiment, the basis for future development. It is true that the experiment is difficult and, to a certain extent, precarious since, unlike accession, these Agreements are based upon the complete autonomy of each of the parties. Yet the search for a European dimension in addition to our national dimensions, being necessary for us and advantageous to the rest of the world, is still the major striving of the second half of this century. Today we are beyond the stage of determining what is to be aimed at and how, nor is there any question of imposing choices upon anybody, particularly in view of the considerably varying situations of the countries concerned. Nevertheless, we should not forget the idea which, in the long term, is the sole justification for all our efforts, and, while keeping in mind commitments made in the past, it should be remembered that the future remains and should remain wide open.