

## Address given by Krister Wickman at the signing of the agreement between Sweden and the EEC (Brussels, 22 July 1972)

**Caption:** On 22 July 1972, the Swedish Foreign Minister, Krister Wickman, welcomes the signing of the agreement between Sweden and the European Economic Community (EEC) which establishes a basis for closer economic relations.

**Source:** Documents on Swedish Foreign Policy 1972. Volume I: C: 22. Stockholm: Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1973. ISBN 91-38-9835-7.

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**Publication date:** 05/09/2012

## Speech by Krister Wickman at the signing of the agreement between Sweden and the EEC (Brussels, 22 July 1972)

It is an honour for me to represent the Swedish Government here today at the signature of the agreement between Sweden and the European Communities.

For more than a decade economic cooperation between the West European countries has been concentrated on a continued liberalisation of trade and a greater measure of industrial and technical cooperation. Our goal has been an integrated West European market. Naturally Sweden, with our very close and widespread relations with Europe, has wanted to take an active part in these efforts. The Swedish Government therefore greets with satisfaction the conclusion of the enlargement and free-trade agreements as a mark of success crowning the efforts to obtain economic integration in Europe. These agreements are an outcome of the resolute, political will of all the countries concerned.

The settlements we have made mean, for our part, free trade in industrial goods. This was a central objective set by the Swedish Government when we began our negotiations with the Communities. These negotiations have been arduous ones, but those on the other side of the negotiating table have shown, in a constructive spirit, a will to find solutions to outstanding problems. Of course in any negotiations, the final outcome is a compromise between the initial bids made by the parties. For various reasons, some of Sweden's wishes regarding the nature and scope of our cooperation have not been met in these negotiations. Nevertheless the Swedish Government regards the agreement now concluded as a stable basis for our closer cooperation with the EEC. My Government is anxious to make use of this opportunity of strengthening our relations with the EEC without any renunciation of Sweden's policy of neutrality. My Government consequently attaches great importance to the fact that the agreement is capable of amplification, as this will provide us with a basis for the expansion and widening of the areas of our cooperation in the interests of both parties.

Sweden maintains a particularly close and important cooperation with the other Nordic countries. This cooperation of ours is founded on a strong sense of affinity between the Nordic peoples, a feeling that has roots deep in history. It has had important consequences in practice. The very marked increase in trade between the Nordic countries is linked with widespread integration in the industrial field. We are convinced that the agreements with the European Communities will enable us to continue to extend our Nordic cooperation, even though in some ways we may have to choose a fresh approach. Sweden hopes that its neighbour, Finland, with which we have especially close relations, will sign the agreement as soon as possible this year.

The Swedish Government has asked me to express its gratitude and to acknowledge the contribution of all those who have represented the Community in these prolonged and intensive negotiations in Brussels. We have admired the knowledgeable and patient way in which these, at times very complicated, negotiations have been advanced by those representing the various organs of the Community and of the Governments concerned. We consider that this will give us a good point of departure for the intensified cooperation between the enlarged EEC and Sweden in the future, for which our agreements should provide a basis.

The Swedish Government is convinced that the agreements signed here today will strengthen the ties between the countries of Western Europe and will contribute to peace and stability in Europe.