

# 'The conditions for partnership', from Communauté européenne (17 September 1963)

**Caption:** On 17 September 1963, in Strasbourg, the President of the European Commission, Walter Hallstein, gives an address to the European Parliament in which he sets out the conditions for a solid partnership between the United States and the European Economic Community (EEC).

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## Hallstein: The conditions for ‘partnership’

President Kennedy’s offer to the European Community of an Atlantic ‘partnership’ implies heavy obligations. It aims at nothing less than joint responsibility for world affairs, a burden hitherto assumed alone by the United States — and for that responsibility to be shared equally. The first condition is for Europeans to be genuinely willing to make co-responsibility a reality through real effort and practical measures.

Moreover, a ‘partnership’ of this kind assumes three things: a partner capable of acting, a partner who is equal and a relationship of trust between the partners.

Firstly, the capacity to act: there lies an invitation to the Community to strengthen its internal structure, for there is always, with any political body, a relationship of cause and effect between its infrastructure and its external freedom of movement. Just like a national state, the European Community is free to organise its external relations as it sees fit only in so far as its internal resilience provides a solid base for such a policy. Hence, for example, the outcome of the forthcoming GATT negotiations will to a great extent be determined by our ability to give real substance to our own Community agricultural policy. Only on that condition will we be able to talk seriously with the Americans about trade in agricultural products. The same applies in all other domains: Europe will have a genuine say only in so far as it reaches a common position.

But a common position is still not unity. It is even more important for the Community’s constitutional structure to be consolidated in such a way that its political potential, its negotiating potential, can also be brought to bear en bloc. Hence the need to merge the European executives and expand our Parliament’s functions.

The need for a European partner with the capacity to act can also be derived from an even more general basic requirement, that of the equality (or comparability) of partners. Here we cannot as with the quantitative aspect of the problem — where we are already nearing equality in a whole series of areas — do without a measure of anticipation: to a certain extent, the projected equality is worth as much as the equality that already exists. Basically, in its relations with a continent on the way to unification, America has for years given Europe credit for its future status.

That is one success of European integration. We must tirelessly continue in this direction and no progress is too small, provided we move ahead.

The last and by far the most important demand implied by the ‘partnership’ programme is that of trust. This psychological element, which is so difficult to grasp but is so essential to political relations, particularly international relations between men and nations, is also in our case one of the keys to success. Realising this fact is a task in itself. For we are not talking here about a phenomenon beyond our control. Rather we must make a genuine effort.

We should, as a matter of principle, abjure the trivial mistrust that feeds on prejudice, an attitude both unworthy and ill-advised, for mistrust incites mistrust, just as trust engenders trust.

But, even more, we must create favourable conditions for trust. Equality between partners is one such condition. One of the problems with the Atlantic Alliance — and probably the central problem — is that it brings together a giant and a band of dwarves: until now the United States bore a maximum of responsibility while a maximum of trust was required of Europeans. There would be much to be gained from a better balance of power; but without the unification of Europe this is not an option. A conscious and continuing movement towards interwoven interests will strengthen the sense of solidarity, of interdependence — which is to say, mutual dependence.

Structural aspects aside, the right behaviour is important too. This means an ongoing commitment to share information across the board, candid discussion and timely consultation, but also respect for the partner’s views and an appreciation of his reasons, precisely when they are not shared. These are obvious facts, of

course. But they must be borne in mind.

There can be no trust without trust in oneself. Are we on the right track? Today this question comes down to whether or not there is a path other than the one offered to us. The answer would seem to be simple: there is no alternative. What is more, the pseudo-question of the 'third force' and that of hegemony are settled by the same token. We do not have to choose between the Atlantic Community and the European Community: the 'partnership' reconciles the two.

(Speech at the Strasbourg Assembly, 17 September 1963)