

Statement by Gaston Thorn on the accession of Greece to the EC (1 January 1981)

Caption: On 1 January 1981, Gaston Thorn, President of the new Commission of the European Communities, welcomes the Greek membership of the Communities.

Source: Bulletin of the European Communities. January 1981, No 1. Luxembourg: Office for official publications of the European Communities.

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URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/statement_by_gaston_thorn_on_the_accession_of_greece_to_the_ec_1_january_1981-en-6be4bb0e-6617-4922-bfce-477acc896e44.html

Publication date: 20/10/2012

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Greece's accession is a major political act which constitutes a turning point in the life of the Community : the southward extension of the Community is a key development in the long history of a European civilization in which Greece has played a prime role.

This enlargement is taking place at a time when the Europe of Ten and the free world are faced with problems that cannot be underestimated. Greece's contribution will be especially valuable, and will enable the Community to renew and strengthen its historic, cultural and political elements.

The process of Greek accession began in 1962 and is now coming to fruition; we are beginning a new chapter in the history of the old Europe and the young Community. Both Greece and the other Member States will gain from working together in a spirit of mutual respect towards their future as a Community.

The challenge facing the Community of Ten demands new action; and solutions must be found for the common good both of the enlarged Community and citizens.