

Decision by the Nordic Prime Ministers on Nordic Cooperation (Copenhagen, 23 April 1968)

Caption: On 23 April 1968, in Copenhagen, the Prime Ministers of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden meet to discuss the enhancement of Nordic cooperation in the fields of commercial and agricultural policy.

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Decision by the Nordic Prime Ministers in Copenhagen the 23rd April 1968 on Nordic Co-operation

I. Denmark's, Finland's, Norway's and Sweden's prime ministers, who are of the opinion that a wider Nordic economic co-operation will benefit the Nordic countries *inter alia* by furthering co-operation in EFTA and other European integration efforts and strengthen the position of the Nordic countries in their trade relations with other nations, find that the time has come to take a new step in Nordic economic co-operation.

The prime ministers have agreed that continued economic co-operation shall give due regard to the EFTA obligations of the four countries and be open to Iceland which presently is considering an application for membership of EFTA, that their co-operation shall take such forms, that it facilitates their countries' participation in or co-operation with an enlarged European market, that their co-operation is to develop in accordance with their countries' efforts to develop their trade relations with third countries and to contribute to the liberalization of world trade, and that due regard shall be given to the interest of the developing countries, that their co-operation shall ensure a reasonable balance of advantages and disadvantages for each of the four countries, and that their co-operation in future as before shall not involve the foreign policies and security policies of their countries.

II. The prime ministers have as a basis for their considerations had a report dated 5th April 1968 concerning *inter alia* Nordic economic co-operation, prepared by a working group set up by the Nordic committee of ministers for economic co-operation.

The prime ministers have agreed that additional studies shall be made and specific proposals prepared for submission to the governments on an expanded Nordic co-operation in the following matters:

1. A Nordic customs union as part of a Nordic commercial policy.

a) A common external customs tariff based on the weighed average of the four countries' customs duties. Regard shall be had to the desirability of wherever possible establishing the Nordic tariff rates at the same level as those of the EEC common external tariff or as closely thereto as possible. With a view to overcoming special difficulties which may arise in the individual country, tariff quotas, tariff suspensions or transitional arrangements may be applied.

b) Gradual introduction of other measures which may be necessary for the establishment of a Nordic commercial policy (e.g. measures against dumping and low price imports).

2. Nordic co-operation in the field of agricultural policy.

a) 1) A gradual expansion of trade in agricultural products among the Nordic countries *inter alia* by the introduction of Nordic preferences, agreed prices in Nordic agricultural trade, barriers against dumped or subsidized exports of agricultural products from third countries and by means of removal of the element of manufactured foodstuffs.

a) 2) Co-operation about exports to third countries including co-operation as regards price policy.

b) Furthermore, with due regard to special difficulties existing within any of the Nordic countries: measures likely to further the four countries' adaptation to a common Nordic market and a Nordic agricultural policy in harmony with European integration in this field.

3. Increased co-operation as regards the fisheries industry *inter alia* including elimination of existing restrictions in Nordic trade and commercial policy co-operation as regards exports to third countries.

4. Increased co-ordination of economic policy in step with integration in other fields.

Increased co-operation in the capital field including *inter alia* a gradual liberalization of capital movements between the Nordic countries in order to use the total productive resources of the four countries as effectively as possible.

5. a) A Nordic finance fund *inter alia* to facilitate the adaptation of the individual country to an expanded economic co-operation.

Projects within the various sectors of economic life, regional development projects, industrial development projects, infrastructure projects, projects concerning energy supply, research and educational projects, projects of interest for Nordic trade.

b) The financial framework and the rules for financing the fund. The financing may take the following forms: capital contributions from the four countries according to an agreed cost sharing, loans in the Nordic and foreign markets.

c) Financing where required of other common objectives which may be agreed.

6. Increased co-operation in the field of commercial and economic legislation.

7. Increased co-operation about rules and legislation affecting competition (*inter alia* public support measures, restrictive business methods, public purchasing policy). The aim is in the first instance to create freer and non-discriminatory conditions of competition for enterprises in the Nordic countries.

8. Establishing industrial and energy policies and technical research and development policies in close co-operation among the four countries. These efforts shall include intensification of existing Nordic co-operation on technical research and industrial development projects and the inclusion of new areas in this co-operation. The objective shall be an increase of Nordic industries' competitive ability particularly as regards expanding and technically advanced product fields.

9. Increased co-ordination of the Nordic countries' assistance policies vis-à-vis developing countries' *inter alia* including co-operation on the Nordic countries' assistance loans and other financial contributions to developing countries.

10. Further expansion of co-operation in the educational field with a view to a more rational use of the resources of the four countries.

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Institutional arrangements are to be made to the extent required.

An expanded Nordic co-operation shall be envisaged also in other economic fields than those mentioned above. Wherever possibilities exist such fields should be considered.

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The prime ministers give the Nordic committee of ministers the task of initiating and keeping under review the work concerning the matters mentioned under II above. A committee of officials is to be set up before 1st June 1968 and a preliminary report comprising all the fields of co-operation mentioned under II is to be submitted by this committee before 1st January 1969.

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