

Comments by the Danish Delegation on Nordic Economic Cooperation (18 February 1969)

Caption: On 18 February 1969, the Danish delegation in Brussels gives its views on the report by the Nordic Committee on a possible extension of economic cooperation between the Nordic countries.

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Comments by the Danish Delegation on the Summary and Conclusions of the Preliminary Report by the Nordic Committee of Government Officials on Expanded Nordic Economic Co-operation (18 February 1969)

1. In the Danish view, a co-operation of limited scope and without any long-range perspectives would offer no adequate grounds for altering the basis of the existing co-operation. In such circumstances there would be a risk of creating more difficulties than advantages to the Nordic countries in their internal as well as external policies. The Danish delegation has decided, therefore, to endorse the recommendations of the committee of government officials, trusting that in the continued negotiation reasonable account will be taken of the following views:

(1) Institutions should be shaped in a manner that would enable them to cope with the needs for the implementation and further development of the co-operation within the framework of a Nordic agreement.

Within such an institutional set-up there should be a separate Nordic body, authorized to assume the main responsibility for effective implementation of the co-operation and to formulate and submit proposals regarding Nordic co-operation.

(2) A Nordic customs union should not curtail the opportunities of the Nordic countries in international trade but contribute to the efforts toward continued elimination of tariffs and barriers to trade within the framework of a wider integration with countries outside the Nordic area. This would imply, among other things, that the customs tariff should be designed to avoid increased costs of production.

(3) A satisfactory basis should be provided for co-operation in the agricultural sector which, in the short as well as in the long term, would open the way to a further gradual expansion of the intra-Nordic trade in agricultural products. To Denmark, satisfactory cooperation is not, in the long term, a question of transfer of incomes from the other Nordic countries but one of assigning to agriculture a role in Nordic co-operation by which the production resources of the Nordic agricultural sector could be generally exploited and so provide for a reasonable division of labour.

(4) The Nordic countries should take the consequences of the ever brewing importance of capital supply and expand their co-operation in order to provide for gradual liberalization of intra-Nordic capital movements to the extent necessary for the development of a common Nordic market and for its satisfactory functioning.

(5) The Nordic countries should be ready to make available the necessary funds to cover capital needs, which will rise in step with the development of Nordic economic co-operation.

2. Another condition would be that any decisions taken should facilitate access for the Nordic countries to participate, in whatever form they might wish, in an enlarged European market. The co-operation should therefore be flexible enough to be adaptable to such a market. This is true both of the co-operation as such and of the procedural provisions designed to facilitate the transition to a wider European co-operation.

3. A decision taking reasonable account of the afore-mentioned views and covering the areas in which agreement has already been reached in the committee of government officials would, in the Danish view, provide a basis for expanded co-operation that would promote economic development to the benefit of all Nordic countries.

If the co-operation gets under way and these opportunities are exploited, many of the problems which are significant in the initial phase would probably become of a smaller order in the course of time, and it would probably be easier to solve them in a wider context.

In the longer perspective, the co-operation would assume growing importance in a number of fields in which agreement has been reached in principle, in the committee of government officials. This is true of economic policy, policies related to industry, energy and research, education, trade legislation and rules of competition.

Provided that reasonable guarantees can be obtained, among other things through the establishment of suitable institutions that the co-operation will develop at the pace and in the direction desired, advantages can be expected in these fields which would carry more weight than the problems encountered by the individual countries in the opening phase of the co-operation.