

Resolution adopted by EFTA (Stockholm, 20 November 1959)

Caption: On 20 November 1959, meeting in Stockholm, the representatives of Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom adopt the text of the Convention establishing the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and declare their willingness to open negotiations with the Six in order to establish new foundations for their economic relations.

Source: European Free Trade Association, Text of Convention and other Documents Approved at Stockholm on 20th November, 1959. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1960. 27 p. (Cmnd. 906).

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For more than 10 years, the seven countries which are now establishing the European Free Trade Association, have co-operated most successfully within the framework of the O.E.E.C. both with the six countries which are Members of the European Economic Community, and with Greece, Ireland, Iceland, Turkey and recently Spain.

Indeed the remarkable expansion of the European economy since the end of the war is due, to a large extent, to the work of the O.E.E.C. Its achievements have had beneficial effects far beyond Europe. By preparing the convertibility of currencies, the O.E.E.C. has created the conditions permitting its members to eliminate the restrictions on trade progressively also toward third countries. By promoting freer trade in Europe, the O.E.E.C. plays therefore an important role in the liberalisation of trade on a world-wide basis.

The existence of two groups, the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Community, inspired by different but not incompatible principles, implies the risk that further progress along these lines be hampered, if such a danger could not be avoided by an agreement to which all countries interested in European economic co-operation could subscribe.

Such an agreement, based on the principle of reciprocity, should not cause any damage to the measures taken by the European Free Trade Association and the European Economic Community. Moreover, it should allow member States of either organisation to eliminate in common the obstacles to trade between them, and more generally, to seek to solve the problems they share. Among those, there is the problem of aiding the less developed countries in Europe and in other continents, which is one of the foremost tasks of the more advanced countries.

Common action in these fields would strengthen the already existing bonds between the European countries as well as the solidarity arising from their common destiny, even if their views on the way in which European integration should be achieved are not always identical.

For these reasons, the seven Governments who will sign the Convention establishing the European Free Trade Association, declare their determination to do all in their power to avoid a new division in Europe. They regard their Association as a step toward an agreement between all member countries of O.E.E.C.

To this end the seven Governments are ready to initiate negotiations with the members of the E.E.C. as soon as they are prepared to do so. Meanwhile views should be exchanged through diplomatic channels or in any other way, on the basis upon which such negotiations may profitably be opened.

Stockholm, November 20, 1959.