

Statement by Ulf Dinkelspiel at the opening of Sweden's negotiations on accession to the EU (1 February 1993)

Caption: On 1 February 1993, Ulf Dinkelspiel, Swedish Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade, emphasises the importance of Sweden's negotiations for accession to the European Communities.

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Statement by the Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade, Mr Ulf Dinkelspiel, at the opening of Sweden's negotiations on accession to the EC (1 February 1993)

The Swedish Government greets today's opening of the enlargement negotiations with satisfaction.

Two years ago the Swedish Parliament declared, with a broad majority, that Sweden's accession to the European Communities is a matter of national interest. This event reflected our wish to participate in the realization of the vision of a united Europe living in peace, prosperity and social justice, open to the needs of its neighbours and aware of its international responsibilities. Six months later, on 1 July 1991, our application for membership was submitted. The objective of the negotiations is Swedish membership of the European Union, once the Treaty has been fully ratified.

We are not starting from scratch. Relations between Sweden and the Community have developed significantly over the last 20 years. The two main milestones are the free trade agreement of 1972 and last year's Agreement on the European Economic Area.

The EEA Agreement constitutes a qualitatively new step in our cooperation. The Agreement, to which Sweden attaches vital importance as we move towards full membership, was recently ratified by Parliament by an overwhelming majority. Every effort must be made to achieve entry into force of this agreement as soon as possible.

Our approach to the Community is based on a number of fundamental beliefs and traditions which will inspire and guide us in the negotiations, and in our actions as a future member.

— First and foremost, we subscribe to the same basic values as the Community and its member states. We are convinced that only democratic societies based on human rights and dedicated to pluralism, openness and the rule of law can protect personal liberties and promote social progress.

— All of us adhere to the concept of a market economy with free competition. Sweden shares the view that a smoothly functioning single market of 370 million people needs common rules, not least to achieve high product safety and to safeguard consumer interests.

— Peace is indivisible. The fundamental idea behind the European Community is the strengthening of peace and security between all the peoples of Europe. We believe that after the end of the cold war, it is possible, and indeed essential, to build a lasting European security order through integration and cooperation. We see the European Community and the joint action of its member states as crucial to stability, peace and development in Europe.

— A strong European Union must be generous to the outside world. The greatest challenge in Europe today is assistance to the Central and East European countries in their reforms to secure democracy, social justice and a market economy. Similarly, Europe must respond to the needs of the developing countries. Trade and aid, environment and development must go hand in hand in our efforts to combat poverty. Sweden is ready to participate actively in joint European efforts to alleviate the plight of the poorest societies and to promote their development. We also wish to take part in a joint and generous approach to the questions of refugees and migration.

— Our common task of combating unemployment and stimulating economic recovery is urgent. No efforts should be spared in this context. There are no national solutions to European problems. Economic, industrial and financial integration has made borders between the West European nations increasingly irrelevant. Ever closer coordination and cooperation have become prerequisites for successful policies for stable, non-inflationary growth and full employment.

— There are a number of other fields as well where we are convinced that progress can best be achieved through international cooperation, and especially under the auspices of the Community. I am referring, in

particular, to ecological degradation. Joint European efforts are necessary to ensure sustainable development towards a healthy environment for future generations. Transboundary environmental problems such as acidification cannot be solved by national actions alone. As a member, Sweden will maintain and develop high standards of nature conservation and environmental protection, in conformity with the Treaty. As implied in the Commission's Opinion on the Swedish application, we wish to contribute to the development of the Community into a dynamic international force in the environmental field.

A European Union built on common values and drawing on broad and diverse experience will greatly enhance our joint abilities to deal with all these issues.

Throughout this process, there must be unity of purpose, but also great sensitivity to the specific characteristics and capabilities of each member state.

To this end, Sweden welcomes the Community's increased emphasis on openness and transparency. This development is in line with Sweden's long-standing tradition of open government. In this area, we have fundamental principles to bring with us and important experience to share. Open government ('offentlighetsprincipen') and especially free public access to official records and protection afforded to those who give information to the media ('meddelarfriheten') are fundamental principles laid down in the Swedish Constitution which guarantee citizens' access to information on public matters. These principles form an inalienable part of our political and cultural heritage. They promote the democratic process, the rule of law and the effectiveness of public administration — which are all vital factors at the Community level too.

We also welcome the new approach to the application of the principle of subsidiarity. This principle contributes to respect for the national identities of member states and safeguards the powers of national and local authorities. We share the view that the Community should only take action where an objective can better be attained at the Community level than at the level of individual member states.

Geographically Sweden is a large country, with a rich and varied natural endowment. Our citizens are committed not only to high environmental standards but also to the equally inalienable age-old customary law on the right of open access to the countryside ('allemansrätten').

The increasing importance which the Community attaches to the social dimension is, in our view, a crucial corollary to economic integration. We look forward to actively contributing to the further development of this area, which includes the working environment and the dialogue between the social partners. This also applies to efforts to improve the situation of disabled persons. Present EC regulations in the social area set out minimum standards, which allow individual member states to apply more far-reaching rules. We welcome the Social Protocol of the European Union Treaty, including the reinforced role of the social partners in the elaboration and implementation of common measures in the labour market field. We take it that this means that Swedish collective agreements will be deemed adequate for the implementation of EC directives. The Swedish and Nordic labour markets are characterized by a long tradition of deciding conditions of work in collective agreements between the organizations concerned.

It is also our firm ambition to contribute to the further development of Community policies to promote equality between women and men, which is an important Swedish goal.

Mr President,

Moving now to the basis of our negotiations, let me first underline what the Swedish Government has already stated on numerous occasions. Sweden fully shares the political objectives and principles, the so-called *finalités politiques*, of the Treaty on the European Union.

We are prepared to base our negotiations on the existing rights and obligations, known as the *acquis communautaire*. Sweden's ability in this regard was clearly manifested during the EEA negotiations and has since been recognized by the EC Commission in its Opinion on the Swedish application. Nevertheless, we

shall have to find joint solutions to a number of issues, to which I will be returning in a moment.

We wish to participate in the construction of a new European security order on the basis of the UN Charter, the principles and decisions of the CSCE and other relevant principles of international law. To this end we wish to participate fully in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) within the framework of the Union.

Our political commitment to become a full and active partner in the CFSP is based on broad parliamentary support. Sweden is not bound by any legal restraints with regard to such participation. We are prepared to assume the same treaty rights and obligations as the present members of the Community.

As recently stated by the Swedish Parliament, Sweden's policy of non-participation in military alliances remains unchanged. At the same time, we recognize that the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which in time might lead to a common defence, is one of the CFSP goals which is to be further discussed in the context of the 1996 review conference. We will not hamper the development of the European Union as it moves towards this goal.

Sweden wants to participate in the emerging Economic and Monetary Union. Joint endeavours to achieve monetary stability are an important prerequisite for achieving growth and employment. The urgent need to achieve monetary stability through closer economic and monetary cooperation has been amply demonstrated by the kind of currency turbulence and interest rate shocks which have recently affected many countries, including Sweden. Sweden is thus keen to contribute to the elaboration of the EMU prior to accession. A final Swedish position relating to the transition from the second to the third stage will be taken in the light of future events and in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty.

We take it for granted that Sweden is to get the same number of votes in the Council and the same number of seats in the European Parliament as well as in other EC institutions as other comparable member states. We also assume that Swedish will become an official language of the Union.

The long-standing tradition of cooperation between the Nordic countries will no doubt also be an asset for our future partners in an enlarged Community. We wish to see this cooperation recognized in an appropriate form in the accession treaty.

And now I would like to turn to the main negotiating issues.

Regional policy

As pointed out by the Commission in its Opinion, the accession of Sweden and other Nordic countries means that areas representing substantially new regional features will soon be part of the Community. These regions are characterized by low population density, limited local markets, long distances and harsh climatic conditions. These are permanent geographical features and difficulties. For obvious reasons, these factors are not taken into account in current EC regional policies guiding national and Community rules. We take it that there is a wide degree of understanding for adaptation of Community policies to take these new factors into account as Sweden and other Nordic countries accede to the Community, since they are important, particularly for agricultural and regional development. This is also implied in the Commission's Opinion. Sweden must be able to pursue an active and ambitious national policy for regional development in accordance with treaty provisions.

The Commission's Opinion confirms that Sweden would qualify for support from the EC structural funds. One of the negotiation issues will be to arrive at criteria and methods which allow Sweden to participate fully in the common structural Community programme designed to alleviate regional difficulties caused by serious industrial decline, to combat long-term unemployment, to facilitate the occupational integration of young people, to adjust agriculture and forestry production, and to promote the development of rural areas.

Environment

We expect that the highest level of ambition will apply in the environmental area and thus that there will be no lowering of standards. The solutions in the EEA Agreement for *inter alia* chemicals, dangerous substances and exhaust emissions from motor vehicles should also apply in the accession treaty. In view of the need to reduce harmful emissions, Europe should take the lead in developing the most stringent requirements possible for motor vehicle emissions. We welcome the Fifth Environment Action Programme, which provides a solid basis for further strengthening European environmental standards and for the realization of sustainable development and of our UNCED commitments. We agree on the need for precautionary action, including the substitution of hazardous processes and substances by less hazardous alternatives. Furthermore, like other Community members, we will decide nationally on any imports of waste and we will not allow final disposal of foreign nuclear waste and other forms of long-term storage which are not part of a treatment process.

Agricultural policy

Sweden is currently undertaking a major reform programme in the agricultural sector to promote liberalization, competition and efficiency for the benefit of consumers and farmers alike. Swedish agricultural policy objectives are to a large extent similar to the objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy of the Community (CAP). We are now aiming at full integration in the CAP, with a minimum of transitional measures and safeguards, following Sweden's accession to the European Union.

However, due consideration must be given to the specific conditions for agricultural production in Sweden. Our population density is extremely low. Only 7 per cent of the land is cultivated. Lower average temperatures and a short growing period influence yields and production costs. In response to these 'arctic and subarctic' conditions, Sweden has developed a range of regional support measures for agricultural production, rural development, employment, the environment, open and varied landscapes and the maintenance of biological diversity. Milk production, the most important agricultural sector in Sweden, is the backbone of agriculture in economically less favoured regions. Agreement on ways and means to support these objectives and on the maintenance and development of agriculture in the north of Sweden, in forest areas in the south and on the islands of Öland and Gotland, within the framework of the Community's policies, must be reached in the course of the negotiations.

Full integration means an adjustment of the Swedish food and agricultural reform programme of 1990. From the point of view of comparable policies within the Community, the Swedish programme has yielded results, for example a balance in the animal husbandry sector and reductions in the cereal surplus. This should be taken into account in the negotiations, for instance when calculating base areas for support measures and in the allocation of adequate national production ranges — for example for milk. The conditions for the livestock sector as a whole require close attention.

The horticultural sector is not subject to market regulations in Sweden. Adaptation of this sector to meet EC market regulations is a matter which requires careful consideration.

The Sami people have a special position in Sweden. The prerequisites for reindeer herding and husbandry, which is the basis of the Sami culture, must be maintained. Swedish hunting traditions, based on the wise-use principle and designed to preserve Swedish fauna, must also be maintained.

Sweden has achieved high phytosanitary, animal and public health standards. Environmental, foodstuffs, animal welfare and feedingstuffs requirements are far-reaching. By maintaining such standards, Sweden wishes to contribute to a higher ambition and to the development of the European regulations in these respects. What I have now said applies to the protection of consumers in other areas as well.

Fisheries policy

Sweden, with a considerable fishing area in the Baltic Sea, is aiming for full integration into the Common Fisheries Policy, with a few technical adjustments. The full maintenance of Sweden's traditional fishing

patterns in surrounding waters and in the North Sea is particularly important in this connection. This also applies to the implementation of the common organization of the market in fisheries and aquaculture commencing on the day of accession. The maintenance and development of a regional policy in the fishing sector, within the framework of the policies of the Community, is of vital concern and justified by a harsh climate, long distances and other unfavourable conditions.

The common commercial policy and the Customs Union

We are prepared to adjust to the tariff levels of the EC Customs Union and to harmonize our commercial policy with that of the Community, in order to be able to participate fully in the Single Market as from the date of our accession. We must, however, seek to bridge the differences between our commercial policies. These tasks will no doubt be facilitated by a successful outcome of the GATT Uruguay Round.

In the first instance, I am thinking of the preservation of Sweden's free trade with the Baltic states in order to support their reform endeavours. It should be possible to find pragmatic solutions, in anticipation of new and similar cooperation arrangements between the Community and the Baltic states.

It is important to minimize the risk of welfare losses from different kinds of trade restrictions in relation to other third countries. I am referring here, for example, to the remaining quantitative restrictions in the textile and clothing sector, which Sweden abolished in 1991. Since the aim of the Community is gradual liberalization in this area, it should be possible to find suitable transitional arrangements.

Commercial monopolies

Under the EEA Agreement, Sweden has already accepted the treaty provisions on commercial monopolies, while declaring that our alcohol monopolies are based on important health and social policy considerations. These arrangements are a strategic part of a comprehensive policy aiming at reducing the total consumption of alcohol and minimizing the danger caused by the consumption of alcohol. The alcohol monopoly structure should not, of course, discriminate or distort competition in conflict with the stipulations of the Treaty of Rome.

Elimination of border controls

The opening up of frontiers in Europe is certainly an important step towards closer integration. However, in some cases, such as narcotics and animal diseases, border controls cannot be abolished in the absence of other effective control measures. Active efforts to combat drug trafficking and other forms of international crime must continue. We want to discuss this matter thoroughly in the course of the negotiations.

Euratom

With regard to the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), we understand that important aspects of the Treaty are no longer applied in strict accordance with the written provisions and that various practical applications have gradually developed among member states. Our objective is to ensure that vital Swedish interests are satisfactorily met in areas such as health protection, nuclear safeguards, right of ownership, non-proliferation and the safe and economic functioning of the nuclear fuel cycle.

Community budget

With regard to the budget, Sweden will be a net contributor. The extent of this contribution may constitute a problem. Arrangements which have been made for member countries in a similar situation will have to be studied. Furthermore, in view of a number of factors such as the costly adaptation of our agricultural sector in an EC perspective and delays in access to aspects of the Community rights and benefits, appropriate modalities for the gradual phasing in of our contribution will also be necessary.

Mr President,

In quite a few of the areas which I have commented upon, Sweden has a keen interest in being associated with the further development of norms and provisions foreseen in the 1993 work programme of the Community, and thus well in advance of accession. The underlying motive would be to participate — possibly informally — in the EC deliberations on rules and guidelines which will soon be applicable to Sweden. I am thinking, for example, of CFSP joint actions, new trade policies, EMU/EMS cooperation, refugee and asylum policies, judicial cooperation, environmental and consumer policies and other crucially important fields where the *acquis communautaire* is developing continuously.

Finally, a few words on the organization and the timetable for our negotiations. I am happy to accept your procedural suggestions. Our aim is membership by 1995, preceded by a referendum in 1994. This timetable takes into account the fact that changes will have to be made in the Swedish Constitution, in accordance with our constitutional procedures.

Mr President,

In the months to come, we will be covering a vast negotiating field. With constructive cooperation and political goodwill, I am convinced that we shall be able to find mutually acceptable solutions for the many and important issues on our agenda. We have a clear sense of purpose. We want to contribute actively to building a strong and coherent European Union, devoted to peace, freedom and democracy, to economic growth and social progress, to a clean environment and cultural diversity.