

## Ministry of Foreign Affairs Circular to Portuguese Embassies (30 November 1959)

**Caption:** On 30 November 1959, the Portuguese Foreign Ministry sends to Portugal's Embassies a circular concerning Portugal's commitment to the European Free Trade Area (EFTA).

**Source:** Adesão de Portugal às Comunidades Europeias, História e Documentos. Lisboa: Assembleia da República - Divisão de Edições, 2001. 438 p. ISBN 972-556-300-X. p. 74-75.

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## Ministry of Foreign Affairs Circular to Portuguese Embassies on the founding of EFTA (30 November 1959)

[...]

It must be pointed out that, despite a concern to ensure that the new association [EFTA] would be viable, the aim in Stockholm was not to establish a small, inward-looking world. Even when they addressed the Governments concerned directly, the Ministers who approved the Convention were keen to stress that the countries that they represented had absolutely no desire to see Europe divided into rival blocs. They said, on the contrary, that they would do their utmost to seek solutions allowing the members of the EEC to subscribe, without sacrificing their own particular ends, to a system of economic cooperation that could include not only the signatories to the Stockholm Convention but also, if they wished, the other members of the OEEC (Ireland, Greece, Turkey, Iceland and Spain) which, for various reasons, were not yet members of EFTA or the Common Market.

One particular aspect to be borne in mind is that the EFTA countries consider to be groundless the misgivings expressed on other continents, especially in North America, that the cooperation to be established in Europe goes against the grain of the global economic cooperation subscribed to by the countries forming part of the broader GATT framework.

The seven current EFTA countries believe that strengthening their economies at regional level will contribute greatly to the advancement of the world economy, a theory supported by the fact that, in the final analysis, post-war European reconstruction was of benefit to the world as a whole, although, for many years, the process of revitalising economic activities in the OEEC meant that the area's internal trade had to be given support that was denied to foreign trade.

This should not lead to fears that cooperation within EFTA or, should it come about, close cooperation in a broader European framework could be detrimental to plans for world cooperation that no EFTA members wish to hinder in any way.

[...]

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