

Televised address given by Martti Ahtisaari following the outcome of the referendum on accession to the European Union (16 October 1994)

Caption: On 16 October 1994, Martti Ahtisaari, President of the Republic of Finland, delivers a televised address in which he welcomes the positive outcome of the referendum held the same day on Finland's accession to the European Union.

Source: Television address by President Martti Ahtisaari on October 6, 1994, following announcement of the result of the EU referendum. [ON-LINE]. [Helsinki]: The President of the Republic of Finland 1994-2000, mise à jour 18.02.2000[28.07.2003]. Available on http://www.valtioneuvosto.fi/tpk/eng/speeches/speech_texts-1994.html.

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Publication date: 21/10/2012

Television address by President Martti Ahtisaari on October 16, 1994, following announcement of the result of the EU referendum

The result of a historic referendum has just been announced. A clear majority of Finns want our country to join the European Union.

The voter turnout showed that the decision to hold a referendum was justified. There has been energetic debate on the issue, and the pros and cons of membership have been thoroughly pondered.

For the first time ever, the Finnish nation have decided for themselves which road the country should follow at this crucial stage in the history of our continent.

I wish to thank the Finnish people for their active participation in this vote, which is so important for our country's future.

The outcome of the referendum is morally and politically binding on Parliament, the President of the Republic and the Government. Successful membership of the European Union will call for solid cooperation between all three organs of government.

Finnish accession to the European Union will be a natural extension of the policy of European cooperation that we have followed so far. We are not stepping out into the unknown; rather, we are joining with similar countries in the decision-making process that dictates our continent's future development.

Enlargement of the European Union will make for greater stability in Europe.

The Union also offers new ways of strengthening our own well-being and security.

The referendum was held amidst our everyday preoccupations and at a time when Finnish society faces many difficult problems, the most serious being mass unemployment. It is now time to take determined steps to beat the unemployment problem. This must be our common concern.

We are now embarking on several years of adjustment to EU membership. We must see to it that we build national consensus on the measures needed to ease the process and on Finnish policy within the Union. This calls for the commitment of every Finn.

Membership of the European Union must create a better tomorrow for every section of the population. Let us join forces in the face of this major challenge, as we have always done in the past. This has been our great strength, and will be so now.