

Declaration by Gaetano Martino on the admission of Austria to the Council of Europe (Strasbourg, 16 April 1956)

Caption: On 16 April 1956, Gaetano Martino, Italian Foreign Minister and President-in-Office of the 18th session of the Committee of Ministers, welcomes Austria's accession to the Council of Europe.

Source: Council of Europe - Official Report- Eighteenth Session of the Committee of Ministers - 16th April 1956.

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The CHAIRMAN declared the public sitting open and invited M. Leopold Figl, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Austria, to take part in the work of the Committee.

The Chairman made the following declaration:

"Your Excellency, I consider it a special privilege to be able today, on behalf of the Committee of Ministers, to welcome Austria to the Council of Europe.

During the past few years, when Austria was going through a difficult period in its long history, the Council of Europe never ceased to view your country with deep sympathy.

The Austrian Government, for its part, established relations with various institutions of the Council which led to fruitful co-operation.

On several occasions, the Consultative Assembly expressed its firm conviction that this situation should be regarded as contingent and that Austria's association with the Council of Europe should as soon as possible lead to its accession as a full Member, for which Austria was always fully qualified.

As soon as circumstances permitted, our Assembly's wish, reflecting as it did the common feeling of all our Governments, was fulfilled, and thereby the vocation of the Council of Europe and Austria, the one and the other, was realised.

All who have set their hearts on building Europe cannot fail to welcome the fact that Austria will thus contribute the benefits of its civilisation and its political stability to the accomplishment of our common task.

This surely proves that our organisation is open to all who wish to participate in the joint effort to build a better future for their peoples while respecting democratic principles and fundamental freedoms.

On behalf of the Committee of Ministers and, as Permanent Representative of Italy, on behalf also of my country, I most heartily welcome the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs and I am sure you will wish me, on your own behalf, to ask him to convey to the President of the Austrian Republic, on this occasion, the Council of Europe's best wishes for both his own prosperity and welfare and that of the Austrian people."