

## Interview with Hans-August Lücker: the Association Agreement between Greece and the EEC (Bonn, 15 May 2006)

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[François Klein] You were general rapporteur on Greece's accession to the EEC in 1962. Can you tell me about EEC policy in regard to the Association Agreement with Greece?

[Hans-August Lückner] To tell the truth, Greece's application for accession in 1962 was greeted with enthusiasm in Europe, especially by Walter Hallstein. Walter Hallstein revelled in the idea that the country that was the cradle of European democracy, the Greek spirit that had made Europe great, wanted to come and be a member! It was the first new state that wanted to join the EEC, and we were almost drunk with joy, we were over the moon. At times you might say we found it rather difficult not to express our enthusiasm too openly, because after all we were facing tough negotiations.

So Hallstein said to me, 'Can you do that on the side, be rapporteur on the agreements?' After all, we were in the midst of the 1962 agricultural policy. And I replied, fine, if I can get myself released from all other duties in the Bundestag I can do it. And the Bundestag had already said ... the Group had said, 'We quite understand, you do not need to come here any more, get on with your work in Europe, you have enough to do there.' So I took over as general rapporteur and of course the agricultural problem was one of the most difficult problems in terms of Greek accession. And then I really got involved and took over as rapporteur and told the Greeks — I do not really mean told ... I kept suggesting to them, 'In the area where you face no competition with our northern countries, meaning southern fruit and vegetables ... you can go and produce as much as you want, as much as you can. And you will have to process those products, not deliver them unprocessed but as juices or preserved fruit and vegetables. We will offer you the technology and you provide us with the raw material, processed in Greece and then delivered to us in tins or jars.' And so they did.

And then I was asked to do something wonderful: near Epidaurus ... was a strip of land that was becoming desolate; all they had was seawater and the seawater contained salt, which meant that the soil was no longer fertile. Karamanlis, the then Prime Minister, said to me, 'Lückner, can you help us? There must be some kind of technology.' Well, I knew a professor in Frankfurt who knew a bit about these matters and I said to him, 'Listen, this is the problem ... Have we got any way of helping?' He replied, 'Yes, I know a good company in Karlsruhe that is already doing that kind of thing in Africa.' So Karlsruhe it was! That is where we negotiated. And the company said, 'We'll do it!' According to Homer, 600 metres down in the seabed there was a freshwater source with a huge amount of fresh water, which had to be brought to the surface. That was it, and that was what we did. Six hundred metres may be an exaggeration, 60 perhaps, I don't know, but at any rate it was pretty deep down. And then they tapped this source and brought the fresh water up to the surface, we piped it in and the farmland flourished. And I managed that, with Professor Briebe from Frankfurt; he put me in touch with that company and it worked.

After that came the agreements and that was it; Karamanlis had to go into exile, we wanted nothing to do with the military government and we rather dropped everything. And then, when Karamanlis returned from exile, he immediately picked it all up again. I visited him in exile in Paris two or three times. Giscard d'Estaing had offered him asylum. And he was absolutely convinced that he would take the helm again in Greece and that we would then pick up from where we had left off in 1963.

And he did indeed come back, but in the meantime ... This business with the water happened during the time of the Colonels, during the military regime, and some people held that against me; but I was concerned with the farmers who had no water and could no longer produce; that was something that had to be looked at separately ... I would even have done it if the communists had been in power, because it is a question of human beings. But some people held it against me, perhaps just for party political reasons; some people thought I had gained too much influence, but that is something you just have to put up with.