

Address given by Christian Calmes on the occasion of his resignation (Brussels, 14 June 1973)

Caption: In this address, delivered on 14 June 1973 on the occasion of his resignation, Christian Calmes, the first Secretary-General of the Council, gives an overview of his 21 years of service at the head of the Secretariat and thanks his colleagues, as well as the members of Coreper and the representatives of the Commission.

Source: Allocutions prononcées à l'occasion de la cessation de fonctions de S.E. Monsieur le ministre plénipotentiaire Christian Calmes, Secrétaire Général du Conseil des Communautés Européennes. Bruxelles: Secrétariat général du Conseil, 15.06.1973. "M. Christian Calmes, Secrétaire Général du Conseil des Communautés Européennes", p. III/8-9.

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**Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (690th)
Brussels, 'Charlemagne' Building, 14 June 1973**

Christian Calmes, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Communities

Mr President,

I will shortly be leaving you after 21 years leading this Secretariat. You will agree that three decades in public life, two of them in the service of European integration, is a long time, and it leaves its mark on a man; it is a big piece of my life.

For me, as I have said on other occasions, the work has been exhilarating. You mentioned this just a moment ago, Mr President. You recalled the main stages of our long journey together in words that will remain firmly imprinted on my memory and will go down in the annals of my family. I leave convinced that it has been worthwhile.

Today, following this major undertaking of enlargement, which has been difficult for everyone, we often hear that the Council is stagnating, that there are too many groups, that the broad lines guiding its activity cannot be seen, etc. What is interesting about the current situation is that these criticisms levelled against the Council are purely internal, almost incestuous. It is the national officials and the international officials who make up the Council who are most vocal in their criticism and, in reality, where that institution does not succeed in going beyond the Treaties today. And yet, after all the effort that has been made — enlargement, the agreements with the former EFTA States and with the Mediterranean countries — it can be said, with a little more impartiality, that this work, which is essentially reliant on Coreper and on the ongoing dialogue with the Commission, not to mention the efforts of the General Secretariat, is an immense work.

A result like this would have seemed infeasible a decade ago. I am certain that in a few months, under the pressure of events and the objectives fixed by the Summit, we will be able to move even further along the path of European integration.

Mr President, as today I leave the Committee of Permanent Representatives, which together with the Commission is the real driving force behind the Community, it only remains for me to thank you personally and to thank your Government as the host Government, all your colleagues, and the representatives of the Commission for the support they have kindly given me.

I appreciate the tribute paid to me by the Council, through Mr Van Elslande, and by your Committee, through you and Mr Meyer. For a man leaving the European civil service, those tributes are a ray of light amidst the inevitable sadness of departure. This tribute is deserved most of all by my colleagues in the Council's General Secretariat, whom I would like to take this opportunity to thank once again. May I also reiterate one last time the wish that I have expressed to the Council for concern always to be shown for the welfare of this Secretariat, which often works under difficult conditions.

You wished me good luck in life. Allow me to wish you all the best and every success in the work of unification towards which you, Mr President, your colleagues and the representatives of the Commission are tirelessly working.

My dear friend Joseph, in this ceremony I have felt a great deal of friendship. Thank you for remembering my father. You perhaps better than anyone understand my decision, the decision I took three years ago. With this magnificent book you have very thoughtfully remembered what I will be doing in my future work. From this entire ceremony I will remember above all the great expression of friendship and for that I would like to thank you personally and your colleagues. Thank you, Mr President.