

Address given by Norbert Schmelzer at the ceremony for the signing of the Agreements between the EEC and the Member States of EFTA which have not applied for accession (Brussels, 22 July 1972)

Caption: On 22 July 1972, at the Egmont Palace in Brussels, Norbert Schmelzer, Netherlands Foreign Minister and President-in-Office of the Council, delivers an address at the ceremony for the signing of the Agreements between the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Member States of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) which have not applied for accession, including Portugal.

Source: Archives historiques du Conseil de l'Union européenne, Bruxelles, Rue de la Loi 175. Fonds CEE et CEEA, CM2. CM2 1972. Dossier concernant les accords entre la CEE et les États de l'AELE non candidats de l'adhésion (Autriche, Islande, Portugal, Suède, Suisse). Signés le 22.07.1972, CM2/1972-1622.

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Speech by His Excellency Mr W.K.N. Schmelzer, President-in-Office of the Council and of the Conference of the Member States, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, at the ceremony of signature of the Agreements with Austria, Iceland, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland and the Additional Agreements with Liechtenstein (Brussels, Egmont Palace, 22 July 1972)

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my capacity as President in Office of the Council of the European Communities and of the Conference of the Member States, it is my honour and privilege to be presiding today over the ceremony of signing of the Agreements between the European Communities and

The Republic of Austria, represented by Federal Chancellor Bruno KREISKY and by Mr Josef STARIBACHER, Minister of Trade, Crafts and Industry;

The Republic of Iceland, represented by Mr Einar AGUSTSSON, Minister of Foreign Affairs;

The Republic of Portugal, represented by Mr Ruy D'ESPINEY PATRICIO, Minister of Foreign Affairs;

The Kingdom of Sweden, represented by Mr Krister WICKMAN, Minister of Foreign Affairs;

The Swiss Confederation, represented by Mr Ernst BRUGGER, Minister of Economic Affairs, and the Principality of Liechtenstein, represented by Mr Alfred HILBE, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

It is my pleasure to welcome you here today; and also the representatives of the mass-communications media who will, I hope, be bringing this important event to the notice of so many people in Europe and perhaps elsewhere.

I should also like to welcome here the Representative of the Finnish Government, His Excellency Ambassador TALVITIE.

You will be aware of the reasons for which the Finnish Government - which has initialled the Agreements pending full signing when the internal situation of Finland allows - has not been able to take part in today's ceremony. I am sure that I speak on behalf of all of us when I say that we hope that the signing of the Agreements with this friendly country will take place as early as possible.

I also welcome here the Representatives of the States acceding to the European Communities, the Representatives of the Member States and those of the institutions, together with our guests of honour, whose presence here indicates their links with, and what they have done towards, what is to take place here today.

I declare the signing ceremony open and I should like first of all, to address to Mr HARMEL, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium and Representative of our host country, our sincere thanks for the hospitality once again so warmly extended to us by his country.

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Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Council of the European Communities and of the Member and acceding States, I am happy to be able to address myself to the eminent representatives of the States which are our guests today to tell them how much importance we attach to the signing, in a few moments' time; of the Agreements we have

negotiated - sometimes with difficulties, sometimes falteringly, but in the end successfully - with each one of them.

Since The Hague Conference in 1969 - which marked a decisive stage in the evolution of the Communities by making its enlargement possible, - the Heads of State or Government have manifested their will to establish close links with those EFTA Member States which, while not wishing to join the Community, desired to maintain or establish a special relationship with it. This will was confirmed at the Ministerial meetings which took place at the beginning of our negotiations in November 1970 under the chairmanship of Vice-Chancellor SCHEEL. In a few moments we will thus see accomplished one of the other important objectives that the Community set itself in The Hague, and accomplished on the terms and, practically within the period of time we had envisaged.

It is my pleasant duty on this occasion to pay tribute to all those who, often in difficult circumstances and faced with extremely complicated problems, have had the task of bringing these negotiations to their successful conclusion and above all, to the negotiators of the States which are becoming our partners today.

I have already had occasion at the beginning of this ceremony to greet each of the plenipotentiaries at Ministerial level, and we know how decisive their personal activities, which have sometimes been as difficult to fit in in their own capitals as in Brussels, and in bilateral talks; have been for the conclusion of these negotiations. I should also like to mention those who have been responsible for conducting the negotiations at Deputy level, Ambassadors MARQUET for Austria, ASGEIRSSON for Iceland, Ruy TEIXERA GUERRA for Portugal, ASTROEM for Sweden, JOLLES for Switzerland and Count GERLICZY-BURIAN for Liechtenstein.

I should also like to pay special tribute to the Commission, which under the Chairmanship of Mr MALFATTI, and more recently of Mr Sicco MANSCHOLT, has conducted these negotiations on behalf not only of the present Community but already of the enlarged Community, with the European spirit, feeling of initiative and powers of imagination which characterize the indispensable role played by this Institution. May I also be allowed to make special mention here of Commission member Jean-François DENIAU and Director-General Edmund WELLENSTEIN who, with the help of their staff, have borne the main burden of the negotiations and, in a quite remarkable manner, have been able to bring this great endeavour to fruition.

I cannot fail to mention my predecessors in the Office of President of the Council, especially Mr THORN, during whose term of office a very delicate stage in the Council's discussions on the negotiations took place and also the Permanent Representatives and the Heads of Missions of the acceding States who, with their co-workers in the Article 113 Committee and the ad hoc Working Party on Agriculture, have spared no effort to make possible the happy conclusion of the negotiations. You will also appreciate why I wish, at this juncture, to thank the staff of the General Secretariat of the Council, of every grade, for the dedication and the efficiency with which they have supported us, often under difficult circumstances.

With the signing of the Acts of Accession in this same hall on 22 January 1972, the Founding States of the Community had the immense satisfaction of witnessing the realisation of one of their main aspirations, when the original nucleus of the Communities was enlarged by four new Member States. They were and are convinced that, in taking this step, they had made a decisive contribution towards completing the construction of Europe in this original form which, in their eyes, remains the only way toward European unification.

But at the same time the Six Member States, along with their new partners, were aware that the nations which would form the enlarged Community from 1 January 1973 onwards did not, in themselves, represent the whole of Europe.

We respect the opinions of the other States of the European Free Trade Area, which have felt obliged to seek different forms of co-operation with the Communities, forms which they considered to be better suited to their own particular interests and aspirations. Since the Second World War we have taken part together in the efforts for reconstruction and economic co-operation in Europe. During the more recent past, these

efforts have been conducted within two different organizations, the members of which have, however, always striven to remove trade barriers and to achieve closer co-operation among themselves. Today this goal has been attained.

With your States, we form a part of the world which has experienced so many horrors, conflicts and wars. But it is also a part of the world which, by means of our joint efforts, has built up a considerable achievement in human civilisation and intends to add to it.

In the Acts which are to be signed in a few moments, the Community, for its part, wishes to bear fresh witness to its desire fully to face the new responsibilities which it is assuming as a result of enlargement. It intends to carry out its responsibilities to the full, in respect both of its members and of its other partners in Europe and overseas. In this connection, it wishes to pursue its declared objective of making the old continent's contribution to the establishment of a better international order, based on justice, well-being, equality and peace among all nations.