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REVISED VERSION

Statement by the President of the Council,
Mr. Michael O'Kennedy, T.D., Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs,
to the European Parliament in Strasbourg
on 19 July 1979

Mr President,
Members of the European Parliament,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I first offer to you, Mr. President, and to your colleagues, the distinguished members of the European Parliament, my compliments and warm congratulations on your election to this august body.

Today a page of European history has turned. I begin on this somewhat rhetorical note for a purpose. The average European reads the daily press, watches the news on television and witnesses the gradual development of the great European experiment. However, the progress of all our endeavours together, toward the targets we have established, is on a daily basis characterised by great complexity, by small advances after sometimes tortuous debate. Perhaps the seemingly endless daily and nightly round of harassed debate, wherein national interests are reconciled with overall Community interests apparently always in the last resort, perhaps this distracts attention from the overall progress made towards a great common goal. It is understandable that the daily observer could sometimes forget that small matters of seemingly remote personal relevance can as a whole add up to a great overall purpose. This purpose is of course to the benefit of all and its accomplishment can only be through measured, intermediary stages. I wish, therefore, to herald today our arrival at one of those major interim stages when, as now, a President-in-office of the Council of Ministers rises to report

for the first time to the newly-assembled, directly-elected European Parliament on the most recent European Council, and to present to you what is proposed as the programme of work for the incoming Presidency. Some of the issues are of the utmost gravity and concern to all of us and they demand a realistic, balanced and united approach. For me personally, and for Ireland it is a singular honour - albeit a coincidence - that it is during Ireland's Presidency-in-office that you should embark on your historic task of giving here in the directly-elected European Parliament a new European dimension to the aspirations of our citizens. The meeting of this Parliament represents one of those major interim stages on the road to the overall goal to which we are all committed. Yesterday the Taoiseach, Mr Lynch speaking as President of the European Council, conveyed to you a message from his colleagues - the Heads of State and of Government - expressing their conviction that the due and welcome assumption of the European Parliament of its intended salient role among the Community institutions, will be a major factor in achieving the overall European objective. On behalf of my country, he reiterated our overwhelming national trust, in, and commitment to, the European aspiration. Ireland is committed to ensuring that the role and relevance of the European Parliament are recognised and respected. I am very conscious that moulds harden quickly into their original forms, and I am conscious of the corresponding importance that therefore attaches to the primary mould. For this reason I wish to convey to you the priority the Irish Presidency attaches to the necessity for the establishment and maintenance of cooperation between the Council of Ministers and this European Parliament. The Parliament through its Opinions and advice and through the exercise of its powers must

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be a very major tributary to the flow of European policy and I intend to ensure that under the Irish Presidency due weight and gravity should be seen to attach to the Parliament's salient role. You have been directly-elected and represent strands of thought and of concern from all parts of our nine nations. The Europeans you represent will no doubt perceive increasingly the great opportunity they have - through you as their elected representatives - to help shape the future of Europe. Every European has now, through his chosen representative in the European Parliament, a new window on our decision-making process. He will through his vote and the personal contact with you have a greater participatory role in moulding the future of our community. It is stimulating to reflect on the breadth and depth of opinion from all over Europe that you collectively represent and this will now be a powerful factor to be weighed in our debates. It is in this sense that I reiterate my belief that this opening session marks one of the major intermediary stages on the road toward the achievement of our great overall purpose.

As I mentioned earlier, I am highly conscious that primary moulds harden quickly. It is my purpose over the next six months to ensure close contact between the Presidency and the Parliament. I will, therefore, during Ireland's Presidency - a period which spans a vital, inceptive phase of our relations - welcome all views on how best we can ensure common direction and complementarity to the work of our respective institutions.

I would like now to report to you on the European Council which met in this historic city on 21 and 22 June.

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Our immediate major preoccupation at the Council was, of course, energy. The era of growth fuelled by oil consumption has ended. We must face head-on the fact that oil can no longer be relied upon to meet our energy needs. Recent events in the Middle East have precipitated World vulnerability in the energy field and have heightened our alarm with regard to the future situation. Our economic foundations have shifted and the greatly narrowed margin for manoeuvre in all of our States' economic policies has had unavoidable repercussions on our programmes and plans for the welfare of our peoples. Our overall Community growth rate may fall next year to 2.8 percent from this year's level of 3.4 percent. Without sufficient energy for sustained growth, the spectre of mounting unemployment begins to take form.

These are the bald and inescapable facts before which the European Council demonstrated tangible solidarity. We faced head-on because we had to, the implications for all of us of inaction, or cosmetic action. We saw the danger of large-scale economic and social crisis and this under-pinned our determined resolve to maintain our oil imports at the 1978 level until 1985. The immediate external response to this grave Community Decision may be gauged by the major industrial powers' agreement at the Tokyo Summit on a common strategy to reduce oil consumption and hasten the development of other energy resources.

The important decisions taken in the past days by the President of the USA are a welcome reinforcement of the measures agreed at Tokyo.

The successful outcome of these policies is vital for the Community and on our resolve depends the welfare of all our people. Let us remember also, however, that not only our future depends on the global energy balance. The energy crisis has high-lighted the fact of global interdependence. This must be recalled in our relations with oil-producing States. Let us all remember also the crushing burden which an energy crisis poses for the World's

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developing and least developed countries. Their efforts toward progress and self-reliance can be seriously damaged. Our efforts through Community development cooperation policies, aimed at assisting developing countries in their efforts toward growth and well-being, can be frustrated or even rendered worthless. There is an international balance of responsibilities in the field of energy which must not be overlooked and will not be overlooked by the Irish Presidency. There is too much at stake and I believe that all partners in the energy debate must form their policies in order that all of us - producers and consumers alike - avoid the pitfall of global economic recession, the impact of which would leave no country unscathed.

The European Council established frameworks for the Community's role in dealing with this problem in the short, medium and long terms. We must immediately reduce consumption, regulate the spot market and take all possible conservation measures. In the medium term we must emphasise much greater use of coal and gas and the exploitation of all resources within the Community. The European Council agreed that it is imperative that we develop further nuclear energy and make continued advances in nuclear technology. Examination of our long-term energy strategy for coming decades must include all these **elements** and of course consolidated Community efforts in research toward improving the use of our existing resources and developing new ones. We must harness and employ the sun, the wind, the waves and any other source of energy where we can detect a balance of positive advantage by doing so. In the research field, we hope to have approved during our Presidency the new Joint Research Centre programme for the next four years and the new thermo-nuclear fusion programme. In those cooperative efforts, as in the inter-connection of utilities, I would stress the special value

of a consolidated Community approach: it is imperative that we work together and assist each other rather than proceed in isolation. A planned, forward-looking Community approach must and can result in a long-term energy strategy tailored to the specific needs of the Community and its member States. I view as a priority this Presidency's task to press forward these policies within the Community.

The customary consideration by the European Council of the economic and social situation within the Community was, of course, on this occasion undertaken in the light of the constraining implications of the energy problem. We called for closer intra-Community economic co-ordination to offset inflationary trends and the serious implications for growth and employment. We decided that a real note of warning was needed and so we stated clearly that the answer to oil price increases and attendant difficulties is not through increases in incomes which would in the event prove more nominal than real.

I have hitherto been largely concerned with Community aspirations in a number of areas of very great concern where the successful fulfilment of those aspirations must be pursued with great vigour. One tangible manifestation, however, of what the Community can actually achieve when a resolute political will creates the necessary solidarity is the newly-created European Monetary System. I view this as an auspicious portent for our endeavours in other areas of vital Community interest. From an address to the European Council by the Governor of the Banque de France, and subsequent discussion in the Council, it was clear that the arrangements are functioning satisfactorily so far. I earnestly hope that they will continue to do so and that during the Irish Presidency we will be able to welcome a decision by the United

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Kingdom to join and thereby complete the system.

The European Council noted the ECO/FIN Council's report to it on progress towards economic convergence. It asked for a study paper from the Commission on the consequences in each member State of applying the budgetary system. It is intended that this study will be examined by the ECO/FIN Council, and that in the light of guidelines adopted, the Commission will make proposals in time for decisions to be taken by the end of the year. On the continuing and worsening trade imbalance with Japan, the Council agreed that, far from seeking a solution in any form of protectionism, the Community should endeavour to broaden and strengthen cooperation with Japan in all fields, giving high priority to cooperation in industrial policy, economic and monetary policy and development policy. The Council hoped that the continuation of regular consultations between the Commission and Japan would rapidly result in wider openings for EEC exports on the Japanese market and enable broader and more equitable relations to develop.

The very grave problem currently posed by refugees from Indo-China was discussed at the Council, initially by the Foreign Ministers, meeting separately, and subsequently by the Heads of State or Government. At our meeting we called for an International Conference under the auspices of the United Nations which would discuss practical measures to alleviate the serious situation which now faces the countries in which the refugees are arriving. In calling for the International Conference my Community Ministerial colleagues and I stressed the great urgency of the problem, the grave responsibility of Vietnam and the necessity for a more widespread and generous response from the international community. We pledged to do everything we could to ensure the success of the Conference and we decided to approach the Government

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of Vietnam in regard to all aspects of the question. We also contacted the Governments of a number of other interested countries. The European Council endorsed this approach. The Council made it clear that while they support the right of people to leave and re-enter their own countries freely, they are gravely concerned by the immense human suffering created by this situation and by the disorderly exodus of refugees from Indo-China which has caused severe problems for other countries in the area. The Community could not but be moved by the inhuman and intolerable suffering of the refugees. Some of our countries at various stages in our history have ourselves witnessed the horror and tragedy of refugees from our own lands and this must further strengthen our purpose to alleviate the plight of these our fellow human-beings.

The Community and its member States have responded with concern and determination and in proposing the Conference which starts tomorrow in Geneva we have created a basis for global action to tackle the problem at its source. What we need are practical measures to resettle the refugees elsewhere and to relieve the heavy burden now carried by the countries of the region. But we must also, I believe, try to prevail on the countries of origin to accept their responsibilities in relation to the exodus now taking place from their countries. Our aim must be to seek every means open to us to relieve the suffering on the seas and in the neighbouring States and to find a haven for the refugees in new homes throughout the world. By working to achieve this at the Conference we can give further proof of the weight and effectiveness of our common action, as a community in the face of urgent problems.

The nine members of the European Community have already tried, according to their capabilities, to alleviate this problem by

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admitting refugees for resettlement and by contributing to humanitarian aid programmes, such as those of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The member States are now prepared to make further commitments, additional to those already given, in regard to admitting refugees and making financial contributions, so as to enhance the prospects of success of the forthcoming Conference, to encourage other countries to take similar action, and to help ease the heavy burden which countries in the area are bearing as a further instance of our commitment, the European Community and each of the member States are currently examining how we can best translate our concern into practical effect through the operation and adaptation of our various programmes.

On the first day of my Presidency, I had first-hand detailed reports from the Foreign Ministers of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand on the dimensions of the problem for them, when I met them recently in Bali. I undertook the visit as President-in-office of the Council of Ministers, at their invitation. They stressed the gravity with which they view the problem and the very great strain it places on them. In return I relayed to them the extent of European concern with the problem. I put our perception of it in terms of its source, its symptoms and its solution and outlined the efforts the Community has been making and will continue to make with regard to these three aspects. I urged that, prior to the International Conference and other efforts to get to the source of the problem, they should not refuse landing rights to refugees at present on the high seas. I endeavoured with other Foreign Ministers who were present to get across the seriousness with which we view this humanitarian aspect of the problem. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers were very gratified at the extent of the Community's concern with the crisis and the active steps we are taking to help

alleviate it, and, I think I can say, responded favourably.

You will have noticed that already I have been obliged in reporting on the European Council, to make more than passing references to the work which confronts the Community over the next six months. Before going on to look in greater detail at those commitments as I see them at this point, may I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the achievements of the previous French Presidency, which was a model of vision, determination and efficiency. In the words of our Irish poet. W.B. Yeats -

What they undertook to do
they brought to pass.

I will presume nothing, but only express the hope that the Irish Presidency will in its turn be seen to efficiently discharge the tasks entrusted to it.

I should like to take a moment to explain our approach to the work programme and our views as to what is feasible at this moment in the Community's gradual - but, I hope, inexorable - progress towards European union.

The lesson to be learned from the European Council's handling of the energy problem is, I am convinced, that the Community is capable of showing real solidarity and cohesion when confronted with grave dangers. Further, that solidarity enables us to speak to the outside world forcefully and effectively, and we find that our words and our example carry weight. As I mentioned earlier, the first duty I was called upon to perform, on the first day of our Presidency was to address the Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN Nations. I could not but be struck by the importance they attach to the Community. Their keen desire to forge links between the EEC and the ASEAN Nations

was unmistakable and their interest in the Community and its achievements was striking and most encouraging. It reminded me once again what an impressive - even formidable - structure the Community can be when viewed from outside. It recalled to me the grounds on which my own country, together with Denmark and the United Kingdom, had applied to join the Community and the reasons which prompt Greece, Portugal and Spain to take the same momentous step. That solidarity is something to which all member States, both great and small, contribute. It can involve some sacrifice of narrow national interests, but such sacrifices are amply rewarded and in tangible terms. We sometimes forget, until reminded by our friends outside the Community, how much we have already achieved. The acquis communautaire is more than a cliché, it is a solid achievement which we have created in the face of considerable odds and which we must never take for granted. Not only must we show solidarity in our relations with the external world, we must also express it in maintaining the institutions and the policies which the Community has built up over the years. We must be mindful of the care and the painstaking matching of interests which have gone into the fabrication of every important element in the Community construction - for example, the Customs Union, the Common Agricultural Policy, the Regional and Social Policies, the European Monetary System. We must safeguard the existing acquis as a solid foundation for use in the further development of the Community, even if slight modifications to the original designs should prove necessary here and there. We must recognise the essential and fundamental tasks and learn to concentrate on them.

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It is in this spirit that the Irish Presidency will endeavour to direct the work of the coming six months and endeavour also to ensure that the Community is united and consistent in its efforts to tackle the major problems facing it. I attach importance under the Irish Presidency to seeing movement towards eliminating regional imbalance within the Community. While very particular problems affecting individual member States may call for special attention, we must recognise our over-riding objective to be greater balance between the economies of all member States through common action based on common instruments. We have had for some time now the Commission's guidelines in this area, and we have made progress in areas such as the European Monetary System. It is clear that we need now to reactivate movement on the important question of internal balance. I would be gratified to see the Parliament also giving this objective its closest attention.

What are the main problems and the more important issues to which we must direct our attention in the next six months, for it is clear that in this address I cannot refer to all of the matters before the Council. Apart from energy and the EMS, which have already been mentioned, I would attempt to list them briefly as follows:-

ENLARGEMENT

Now that the Accession Treaty with Greece has been signed and arrangements are in hand for associating Greece with Community business, we shall be concerned to see meaningful progress in the negotiations with Portugal and Spain.

Where Spain is concerned, the Community is engaged in preparing common positions on Customs Union, Fiscal Questions and Agriculture. It is planned to have a meeting at Ministerial

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level in September at which substantial issues will be discussed and, in the period between that and a subsequent meeting in December, to make significant progress. I have already had very useful discussions towards this end with Commission Vice-President Natali and with the Spanish Minister for the negotiations, Mr Calvo Sotelo.

In the case of Portugal, preliminary statements have been made in three policy areas - Customs Union, External Relations and the Coal and Steel Community, and I will remain in close contact with the Portuguese authorities with a view to advancing the negotiations.

It will be the Presidency's objective to give momentum to the negotiations and to ensure that the agreed schedule of negotiations is adhered to. There will of course also have to be active progress as regards the strengthening of the Community, both economically and in its institutions, as part of the preparation for enlargement and in order to ensure its success. If we are to have a strong Community of Twelve, then it goes without saying that this strengthening process must be given priority.

FISHERIES

The finalization of the Common Fisheries Policy has proved to be a difficult political issue and progress has been painfully slow. It may be that recent political changes have created a better climate and there are some signs of a growing determination to reach a solution. The Presidency is hopeful of progress and will support the Commission's efforts to achieve a settlement.

In so far as the external fisheries regime is concerned, we will direct our efforts with the Commission towards securing agreement with a number of Third Countries on reciprocal or non-reciprocal

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fishing rights for 1980. We will also endeavour to negotiate fisheries agreements, in most cases involving a Community financial contribution, for Community access to the waters of certain developing countries. We will use every effort to make progress with the framework agreements with developed countries.

BUDGET

The adoption of the 1980 Budget is a matter of great importance where the Council and the Parliament each has its responsibilities. The Presidency's aim is to be of assistance to both institutions in their common objective and to do everything possible to ensure that each institution's valid role is both recognised and discharged to the full with the object of conclusion of this important question.

The problem of financing the Community when expenditure outstrips present resources is a matter on which there has been some preliminary discussion. The Commission is to present proposals for new "own resources" - hopefully very soon. It is the Presidency's intention to begin work on this vital question without delay. Certainly I would wish to see some progress on this very complex question during the Irish Presidency.

We must implement the European Council's guidelines regarding the coordination of member States' Budgetary Policies for 1980 as a factor in encouraging growth and combatting inflation. With regard to the employment situation within the Community, I am sure that you as parliamentarians will agree with me that there can be very few of us here today for whom this is not a most pressing concern.

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SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Therefore, in the Presidency's approach to the Social Affairs sector, questions of employment, especially youth employment, will be given particular attention. The issue of work-sharing which has been the subject of a series of discussions at Tripartite meetings and at Council level will be further examined with special emphasis on regulation of overtime and the phasing of education and training for employment. There is an Irish proverb which says "Mol an oige agus tiocfaidh se" which can be translated "show respect for youth and they will respond". Today we should jointly commit ourselves to show this respect in all our deliberations and policies. Theirs will be the task to surmount many of the problems I touch upon today. Ours, at least, to launch them towards the summit of endeavour. The Irish Presidency will also give special attention to improved arrangements for dialogue with the social partners and at least one meeting of the standing Employment Committee is proposed. The ILO are holding a European Regional Conference in October at which youth employment will be a major topic: the coordination of participation by EEC member countries in the Conference will be undertaken by the Irish Presidency. It is also hoped that progress will be made on various items arising on the Community's programme for safety and health of workers notably a draft Directive on Protection against Toxic Substances.

AGRICULTURE

While recognising the gravity of many of the problems we face, I might, before commenting on the situation in the field of agriculture, remark in passing how great a pleasure it was to see again on my way to Strasbourg the great natural wealth we in Europe have as a gift of nature. We must bend our minds to the great problems of energy, unemployment and so on, but at this very time the harvests are ripening all around us. Indeed, this is a source of more than abstract pleasure and satisfaction. For despite the technology we can bring to bear on all our labours, yet the successful harvests upon which we depend have a major impact on the Community and its policies. The harvest is a great gift to us and is a potent and commonly-shared strand in our European civilisation. We should not forget the vast

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regions of the world whose civilisations and progress have been so utterly rescinded by adverse climate and the almost insurmountable obstacles it can pose. Agriculture is a cornerstone of our civilisation and of our Community of nations where it is, in the Common Agricultural Policy, recognised as such.

A major question for us, the fixing of agricultural prices for the 1979/80 marketing year, was successfully concluded under the French Presidency. Other important questions in this sector are now ripe for settlement and the Irish Presidency will seek to ensure that they are dealt with effectively. We wish to make progress in examining the Commission's proposals for revisions of the farm modernisation, farm retirement and disadvantaged areas schemes, and we note and welcome the fact that the Council has committed itself to settling these matters during the Irish Presidency. The Presidency will make every effort to assist in achieving these objectives.

With regard to Community Industrial Policy, we all recognise of course the new realities of international competition. Our main restructuring proposals now being formulated relate to the steel, shipbuilding and synthetic fibres sectors and they may be presented to Council early in our Presidency. A review of the steel anti-crisis measures is likely to require considerable attention in the Council in November-December. We will also of course be dealing with ECSC budgetary problems and with import arrangements with Third Countries. In all these measures we are reacting to severe competition in major sectors from outside the Community. Rationalisation in these sectors is necessary in order to cope with the difficulty and we shall continue with the work in this field. Perhaps in the long-term, however, our

interests would be best secured by more concentration on anticipatory action in industrial restructuring in this age of technology rather than, as is generally now the case, reaction in the teeth of the event.

The harmonisation of legislation, including the removal of technical barriers to trade is a manifestation of Community policy which to the public eye may seem to take rather unpredictable and bizarre directions at times, and which receives a bad press in many of our member States. However, there is purpose in what is sometimes seen as harmonisation for its own sake: the purpose being, of course, the freer flow of trade within the Common Market. Harmonisation has the effect not only of establishing Community regulations for manufacturers, but also of providing a consistent standard of protection for the consumer throughout the Community. Some examples of the draft directives on which we would hope to see progress and perhaps see adopted relate to safety devices on tractors, noise levels for industrial and domestic equipment and consumer and industrial safety measures in the chemicals and electrical sectors.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

To turn to external relations it is clear that this will be one of the major areas of Community activity during the next six months and one in which this Parliament has an important role to play in its own deliberations and in its friendly and constant contacts with other Parliaments. The greatly increased activity in this field is a development which is of course welcome to the Community as a measure of the recognition we are being given. We must acknowledge, however, that an adequate Community response to this wider recognition and to invitations to more extended partnership with external countries requires in turn a corresponding strengthening of the Community itself.

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While this is important in all our external relations, it is particularly relevant in the context of our relations with developing countries. If we are to be able to provide a continuing and broadening response to their needs, we must ensure parallel internal Community development which can make such a response possible. Relations with the United States are of major importance to the Community not only because of our economic interdependence but also because of our shared responsibilities. Our relations assume a particular importance in the current energy crisis. We will be concerned to ensure that during our Presidency relations are maintained at all levels so that misunderstandings can be avoided - for example in the finalization of the multilateral trade negotiations.

I have already spoken of the Community's relations with Japan and the attention we must pay to them.

The conclusion of a trade agreement between the Community and China was an event whose consequences will be far-reaching. At the moment the first meeting of our Joint Commission with China is in session in Peking. The Chinese Head of State will be making his first visit to Western Europe before the end of the year.

As regards relations with CMEA (COMECON), we trust that the difficulties which have delayed the negotiation of an agreement between the organisation and the Community are coming to an end and that substantial progress can be made during the Presidency.

The Community's relations with the developing countries of the Third World have intensified very considerably in recent years. Both in terms of the Community's own development cooperation programme and of its involvement in the global dialogue on

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international cooperation for development, the Community has been in the forefront of efforts to establish a more just and equitable international economic order. It will be one of the objectives of the Irish Presidency to continue the promotion of close and harmonious relations with the developing countries taking fully into account in particular their urgent need for economic and social development.

The evolving relationship between the Community and the developing world is a reflection on the increasing interdependence of the global economy. Our policies must therefore be aimed at giving tangible expression to this reality in an orderly and rational way. While the economic outlook at present is far from propitious, the Third World's demand for greater equity in their economic dealings with the developed world cannot be seriously disputed. In the case of the poorest developing countries there is a clear moral imperative to help to alleviate the conditions of absolute poverty in which such a large proportion of the world's population is, seemingly hopelessly trapped. It is against this background that I feel the Community must help to facilitate progress on a broad range of specific current issues while at the same time contributing to the formulation of new orientations and directions for the development process in the 1980's.

I am pleased to be able to report that we have recently concluded an intense series of meetings and negotiations between the Community and the 57 African, Caribbean and Pacific States for a successor agreement to the Lomé Convention. It is a great tribute to the former French Presidency that agreement was reached on a very broad range of negotiating issues. I was pleased to have been able to assist in the closing stages of the negotiations. Because of the intensity of the pace of negotiations

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over the past few months on such a broad range of highly technical issues, it is understandable that our ACP partners require some time to consider the overall outcome. I believe that we have negotiated a worthy successor to the Lomé Convention - an agreement that retains and consolidates the progressive features of the present Convention while, in its turn, introducing a number of new elements both in the light of the experience we have gained and in response to the specific needs of our ACP partners. It is our hope that there will be a favourable decision on the part of the ACP States so that we may dispose of the necessary procedures and enable the new Convention to take effect on schedule.

The Community will devote special attention over the next six months to the further development of its multilateral and bilateral relations with other developing countries. In the case of Turkey, an associate of the Community it will be our aim to consolidate and strengthen the association and to contribute as effectively as we can to international efforts for the improvement of the difficult economic situation in that country.

Negotiations for the conclusion of a co-operation agreement will be pursued with Yugoslavia, as will trade negotiations with Romania.

In the case of existing cooperation agreements in the Southern Mediterranean framework, it will be our intention to proceed with the conclusion of the necessary adaptation protocols arising from the accession of Greece to the Community. Relations with ASEAN, to which I have referred earlier, will be pursued with a view to putting the Community's partnership with this increasingly important regional association on a more formal footing. Particular attention will also be paid to the

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so called non-associated developing countries and I would earnestly hope that the Conciliation Procedure which has been initiated on this issue will yield a satisfactory conclusion as expeditiously as possible.

EPC Material

I should like to touch briefly on the process of political cooperation among the member States of the Community.

Although political cooperation is outside the strict Treaty framework and takes place in an intergovernmental context, in my view, it adds an important political dimension to the Community's activities in the external field. Political cooperation now covers a wide range of topics and provides a useful and pragmatic means of extensive consultations among the member States on key foreign policy issues. Undoubtedly, this process will continue to grow and develop. We should not forget, however, that there are constraints on the process of political cooperation as it now stands. The task of reconciling different national positions based on historical and current interests is not always an easy one. Yet, I am convinced that, despite such constraints, it will become possible to extend progressively the number of policy areas on which the Member States will be able to speak with one voice and thus enhance the weight of Europe's presence in world affairs. In the course of the Irish Presidency, I will seek to avail of any opportunities that may arise to achieve further progress on a practical and realistic basis.

During the second half of this year, the Nine will have to consider a number of important political issues.

First, the situation in the Middle East remains a cause for

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widespread international concern. Most recently on 18 June last the Foreign Ministers of the Nine recalled the basic elements which in our view must be included in any peace settlement.

The Nine will do all in their power to promote a comprehensive settlement which can be the only true guarantee of a just and durable peace.

Second, the Nine will be following closely developments in Africa and will be concerned to encourage the emergence of conditions that will allow for stable political development in Southern Africa. Unless there is adequate progress towards the establishment of basic human rights in South Africa and independence and genuine majority rule in Namibia and Zimbabwe/Rhodesia, there will be the risk of continuing armed conflict with unpredictable consequences.

Third, as I mentioned earlier, the problem of Indo-Chinese refugees will continue to be a matter both of humanitarian and political concern to the international Community. Tomorrow I will present the viewpoint of the Nine at the important meeting which will take place in Geneva under the auspices of the United Nations.

Fourth, a wide range of political, economic and human rights issues will arise at the 34th Session of the United Nations General Assembly later this year. The Nine will endeavour to seek a common position on these issues. The ability of the Nine to coordinate successfully on such issues is an important factor in increasing the influence and weight of the European Community in world affairs.

Fifth, detente, economic cooperation and humanitarian questions will be considered in the continuing preparations among the Nine for the next follow-up meeting to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) which is due to be held in Madrid next year. Intensive consultations in regard to the CSCE process, in all its aspects, remains a prominent and active area of political cooperation and is characterised by a close identity of interests and common perceptions of the member States. The Nine are determined to ensure that the principles enunciated in the Helsinki Final Act will be respected and that its programme of cooperation will be implemented fully. They would hope to see the Madrid meeting give a fresh impulse to the CSCE process and thereby to maintain the vitality and relevance of the Final Act.

These are some of the main issues which will continue to be the subject of political consultations among the Nine. Other issues also will undoubtedly arise as political cooperation strives to keep pace with changing developments and realities.

I would like to mention here that I expect that, during our Presidency, the Nine's Agreement on the Suppression of Terrorism will be opened for signature in Dublin.

Over the next six months, as new developments in political cooperation occur, I hope to report fully on progress among the Nine at each of your part-Sessions. I look forward to the opportunities that will arise for dialogue with you during your debates, during replies to your questions, and in particular, on the occasion of the two colloquies with the members of your Political Affairs Committee, which I will have the pleasure of welcoming to Dublin during the Irish Presidency.

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INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Before concluding on that most topical subject, relations between the Council and the Parliament, let me say that we are looking forward with the greatest interest to receiving the report of the Three Wise Men on the functioning of the Community institutions in the context of enlargement. Their report is due in October and will be considered by the European Council in Dublin at the end of November. I am sure we can rely on three such eminent personalities to produce proposals which will be at the same time imaginative and practical. The Presidency will do everything possible to expedite consideration of their report and agreement on its implementation.

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen, each of you here represents strands of interest and concern from our individual member States. As I mentioned earlier, it is stimulating to reflect on the breadth and depth of opinion from all over Europe that you collectively represent. Your obligation in the European Parliament, and mine in the Council of Ministers, is to reconcile national, regional and political interests. Our overall purpose is the Community's gradual - but, I hope, inexorable - progress towards European union. It follows naturally that it is incumbent upon us in our respective institutions to harmonise our roles in order to contribute effectively - and to be seen clearly to do so - to that greater purpose. I mentioned at the beginning of my address my consciousness that moulds harden quickly. It is with single-minded purpose that at this vital, inceptive stage in relations between our two institutions, I declare my intention to cooperate most fully in the establishment of real dialogue, both formal and informal, between us. We have set a great common objective. Let us now together mould our

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cooperation and marshall our collective energies toward
that objective.

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your attention.