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SPEECH BY MR GASTON E. THORN

PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

EMBARGO

Revolutionary and prophetic are the only words to describe the vision and achievement of the small group of European politicians who advocated a united Europe in the days after the Second World War.

Their design - to bring the divided nations of Europe together and transform their tempestuous, battle-scarred history into a shared destiny - was a grand one. And it is still ours today.

The best tribute we can pay to the founders of the European Community is, surely, to make a clear-headed analysis of Europe's past and

present and draw some conclusions for its future.

If I were asked to put the case in a nutshell, I would make three submissions:

First, I would say that Europe's path has always been marked by setbacks and crises, delays and missed opportunities.

Memory tends to embellish the facts and gloss over the difficulties.

But the truth is that Europe has always had problems. The

pioneers of European integration in the fifties were already running into well-nigh insurmountable obstacles and riding out crisis after crisis. Following the spectacular debut of the Coal and Steel Community, the debacle of the Defence Community led to the failure of the Political Community and blocked the fast lane to integration. The Treaties of Rome became the next milestone on the road to unity.

My second submission would be that impressive progress has been made in a mere twenty-five years. Much of what Europe has achieved is of real historical significance. There is no need for me to quote example after example, or to reel off figures, to convince you of that. The creation of a vast European market and a European Monetary system, the introduction of common policies, election of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage,

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the accession of four new Member States, the spread of cooperation agreements - the Lomé Convention being the most progressive - with developing countries, all of these bear witness to the Community's vitality and its power of attraction.

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However - and this would be my third submission - we are forced to recognize that, despite the record of the last twenty-five years, Europe's achievements and Europe's institutions are frail and inadequate faced with the challenges of today and tomorrow.

It seems to me that Europe's achievement is under serious threat from nationalist and protectionist tendencies and from the short view being taken by Member States as the crisis grinds on,

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as unemployment continues to rise for the ninth year running, as firms close down and public deficits grow. The crisis is widening the economic and social gap between the Member States to alarming proportions; it is sapping solidarity and undermining internal cohesion.

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The European idea is losing popularity as a feeling grows that Europe serves no purpose, that it can do nothing to resolve the economic crisis or relieve international tension.

More generally, I am afraid that commitment to Europe, and the political will to complete the construction of Europe, are

losing much of their stamina. We all know how far actual achievements over the last ten years fall short of the objectives for European Union, and economic and monetary union, set by Heads of State and Government.

What has gone wrong?

To my mind there is a definite causal link between Europe's debility and application of the unanimity rule introduced in 1966 contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Treaties. To begin with, this practice has eroded the Community's capacity to take decisions and made the functioning of the institutions cumbersome. In the second place

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- and this is the worst feature to my mind - recourse to the unanimity rule has perverted the spirit and behaviour of the protagonists, legitimizing their refusal to compromise and making a virtue of exercising a veto. There has in fact been an insidious return to inter-governmental negotiations and traditional deadlocks. Instead of the broad view being taken, there is a growing tendency for the balance between the advantages and disadvantages of Community membership to be struck piecemeal.

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Different interpretations of the nature and purpose of the Community have emerged and have gradually won recognition. Indeed, some Member States have gone so far as to defend positions which are clearly incompatible with the basic principles of the Treaties. All of this has upset the institutional balance and made the Commission's task more difficult.

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The cohesion of the Community and its capacity to take decisions were vitiated at the very time that they should have been enhanced, first of all to offset the inevitable dilution effect of new Member States joining and secondly to initiate new policies which, though not expressly provided for in the Treaties, were in keeping with the spirit of the Treaties and the logic of the Community venture.

Paradoxically, this weakening of the political will to press ahead with the European venture coincided with a period rich in political initiatives, such as the introduction of European Summits, the development of political cooperation and the gradual extension of the powers of the European Parliament. All of this took place on the fringes of the Treaties, if not entirely outside them.

These initiatives were not inspired by an overall view but rather

by a pragmatic approach, opportunities being seized as they arose. Gradually, an exciting grey area emerged. But, because they drew on different sources, the rules governing it did not dovetail with the initial enterprise. Developments of this kind can be tolerated, indeed actively encouraged, for a while, because they allow progress to be made on specific issues and serve as a testing ground for new formulae. But if they proceed unchecked,

if they are not brought under the umbrella of the Treaties, they become dangerous: the imprecision of pragmatic rules tends to triumph over the institutional mechanisms and orderly procedures provided for by the Treaties. To my mind the time has come to review these random developments and put Europe's house in order. We must know where we stand before we move on to a new phase of integration.

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It is true that our situation today bears little resemblance to the situation of Europe and the world at the end of the Second World War. But it is no less true that the factors which militated in favour of European integration in the fifties are as valid today as they were thirty years ago.

There can be no doubt that the major challenges which the nations of Europe must face, at home and abroad, before they step into the 21st century call for closer European integration and increased exploitation of the European dimension.

The job of politicians, and of Heads of State and Government in particular, is to make the necessary possible. If they fail history will take its course without them, if not against them.

If we believe that the only alternative to decline is economic and political integration, then it is for us to create the conditions that will allow the Community to advance.

I am convinced that, if we are to overcome the centrifugal forces now at work and get things moving again, we must take a series of political initiatives. And I think that everyone can sense what

these political initiatives are:

We must solemnly confirm that the Community we want is the Community born of the Treaties, their basic principles and their initial inspiration; and that this Community will continue to be the centre of gravity of the essentially political process of European unification.

We must restore the Community's capacity to take decisions by applying the rules laid down in the Treaties and honouring its basic principles.

We must complete the internal market, launch new Community policies to complement the common agricultural policy and extend the European Monetary System. In short, we must act on ideas the Commission has put to the Council in response to the mandate it was given on 30 May 1980. This is essential if we are to win the battle for investment

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and employment, our number one priority.

We must further European Union and develop the Community's political personality **would be inconceivable without a further extension of the powers of the European Parliament.**

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It would be most appropriate if this ambitious but necessary programme could be approved at a new Messina Conference in this, the Treaties' jubilee year. This would clearly demonstrate our willingness to build a second-generation Europe which will, I trust, be the Europe of generations yet unborn.

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