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Summary of a statement by Mr. P.J. Lardinois, Member of the Commission of the European Communities, in Berlin on 24 January 1974, on the occasion of the international "Green Week" 1974.

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Speaking in Berlin, Mr. Lardinois gave a serious warning of the danger of disintegration now facing the European Communities. He pointed out that barely one year after the Paris Summit Conference and one month after the Copenhagen Summit Conference the facts provided a striking contrast to the good intentions formulated at those meetings. Instead of progress towards economic and monetary union, coupled with a breakthrough towards a European Union, Europe was clearly in the grip of general despondency. Cooperation and solidarity were in danger of being superseded by a short-sighted policy of "every man for himself", with disastrous consequences for Europe.

Mr. Lardinois stressed the need for the peoples of Europe to join forces at this particular stage, i.e. on the eve of an evident stagnation in the economy. He also pointed to the need for a European identity alive in the peoples of Europe, adding: "A Europe that exists in the minds of the few but not in one single heart has no chance of survival".

Mr. Lardinois reminded his audience that the Commission of the European Communities would issue a statement before long on the "State of the Community". This would constitute an answer to the undesirable developments of the past year, which could not be tolerated, namely too much action at intergovernmental level and too little at Community level, too much attention paid to short-term personal interests, and too little cooperation and solidarity.

Speaking of the Common Agricultural Policy, Mr. Lardinois said that in the past few months it had proved to be the only stabilizing factor in Europe insofar as food supplies and prices were concerned. By way of illustration of the advantages of that policy to the consumer, Mr. Lardinois referred to current world market prices which for a number of products were considerably higher than those obtained in the Community: for such products as wheat and rice prices were up to 70% higher. Mr. Lardinois took the view that as a result of this development, but also thanks to the proposals put forward by the Commission concerning the adaptation of the Common Agricultural Policy, the discussions on European agriculture had been reduced to normal proportions. In no other field, he said, had European cooperation achieved greater progress than in agriculture. Up to now, the Common Agricultural Policy had always proved capable of providing a European answer to any unexpected difficulties.

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