

Statement by Prof. Walter HALLSTEIN, President of the European Economic Community, before the European Parliament on September 24, 1965

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Mr. President, at this hour the Commission of the European Economic Community would like immediately to express to you its most sincere wishes for every success in the exercise of the high office to which you have just been called.

These wishes are particularly pertinent at the moment, for you are accepting this office in an exceptional situation for our Community. Despite every disinclination to dramatize matters, I think that the word "crisis" is the proper one to describe this situation.

It is no more my intention than it was yours to use this occasion for a statement of principles on the nature of this crisis and the possibilities of overcoming it. But it is probably quite in place to tell you immediately that the Commission knows itself to be of one mind with you on a fundamental point on which you focused your important remarks: the fact that law is the basis of this Community. You aptly described the Community as a community of law. Nothing more important or profound can be said about the particular nature of this new path followed in Europe since the end of the second World War with the aim of uniting the Continent politically and economically.

It is in fact a Copernican revolution in efforts to unit the Continent. It is a renunciation of the methods of the past, today designated by the somewhat surprising words "the efforts of the federators", those methods whose essence was the use of power politics - the use of force to put it in simpler and cruder terms.

We have abjured these methods because they seem to us to be disastrous, disastrous both in their motivation and in their consequences. For this method of simply unifying Europe by the use of force presupposes war. It therefore gives no guarantee - nor wishes to give any - of lasting peace.

Nor do these methods guarantee security, since what has been called the right of conquest, the order which is to create unity, is fundamentally nothing else but a permanent invitation to the conquered to win the next war.

Finally, such a method offers no guarantee of justice. Only law can ensure equal treatment and that each man shall get his due.

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It would also be a strange contradiction if we were to be forever citing among the primary aims of European unification the need to see that this Europe did not become the political plaything of other powers but at the same time, when creating a new order in Europe, did not make all those affected by it equally responsible for the shaping and functioning of this scheme of things.

What we have so far achieved on this new basis, which seems to increase our burden, is indeed very much. This shows that this order is not only a good but a useful one.

The whole world has followed this development with respect and admiration. It is probably not an exaggeration to say that this is the greatest success which has fallen to the free world since the end of the last war. This success is based on the fact that the Treaty of Rome - a practical manifestation and application of the law of nations - does two things. It establishes a fair balance of interests, under which - I repeat - each gets his due, and it creates an organizational system which, it is true, since we are a community of States, leaves full powers of decision in the hands of the Governments of the Member States, but on the other hand embodies the Community interests in an independent institution of this Community and gives this institution its proper share in forming the collective will in Community affairs.

Mr. President, the confidence of the Commission of the European Economic Community in the cogency and vitality of this new order is unshaken. We will continue to do our duty in the new situation in which it is more than ever necessary not to neglect the daily task. We will do this by closely following the evolution of the crisis, which is a process rather than a static condition, at all times using every permissible means to restore that harmony of all its members which is a necessity for this Community.

This House may rest assured that we will continue these endeavours with intelligence and imagination and with a degree of circumspection equal to our resolve.

Bruxelles, le 24 septembre 1965

BO/rf


NOTE BIO N. 18783 AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX (dictée par téléphone de Strasbourg)  
o/c aux membres du Groupe

Le Président HALLSTEIN a pris la parole ce matin, après l'élection du nouveau Président du Parlement européen, M. Victor LIEBENS. Après avoir adressé les vœux de la Commission de la CEE au nouveau Président, M. HALLSTEIN a affirmé que ces vœux étaient exprimés à un moment particulier. En effet la situation dans laquelle se trouve la Communauté aujourd'hui a été définie comme une situation de crise. Mais ce mot n'est pas le plus approprié. Il n'y a pas de crise de la Communauté si on est d'accord sur le point fondamental suivant : le fondement de la Communauté est le droit, et cela est la nouveauté de notre entreprise. Après toutes les tentatives d'unifier par la violence le continent européen, nous sommes arrivés à ce tournant copernicien : les méthodes de la force et de la violence ont été éliminées, le droit garantit l'existence des États et l'égalité de traitement. Cette nouvelle méthode, qui est proprement la méthode communautaire, a donné des résultats qui ont suscité l'admiration du monde entier. La Communauté est le plus grand succès du monde libre depuis la fin de la guerre.

Si l'on veut approfondir les éléments de cette méthode nouvelle, il faut remarquer que le Traité de Rome garantit le juste équilibre des intérêts au moyen de deux instruments d'organisation : avant tout les décisions finales continuent à appartenir aux États membres, mais en même temps un organe indépendant qui garantit les intérêts communautaires.

Cette nouvelle méthode est vitale, et c'est pour cela que la Commission déclare qu'elle continuera à faire son devoir, avec tous les moyens à sa disposition, pour restaurer l'harmonie dans la Communauté. Pour cela, l'aide du Parlement sera indispensable.

Pour le Porte-Parole absent

  
Paul Collowald