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Brussels, 17 May 1991

**EUROPE: A DESTINY SHARED**

**Extract from a speech by Sir Leon Brittan,  
Vice-President of the European Commission  
to the Federation of Management Consultants Association  
London: 17 May, 1991**

Treaties usually make dull reading. But they are often a good starting point for judging future events. Forty years ago last month the Treaty of Paris, setting up the first of the European Communities - the Coal and Steel Community - was signed. Its first words are not about market power, economic concentration or even increasing wealth. They speak instead of the need to safeguard world peace "by creative efforts commensurate with the dangers that threaten it".

The Treaty goes on to speak in prophetic language of creating European institutions which will give direction "to a destiny henceforward shared".

Forty years on twelve European nations are sharing that destiny.

The force towards unity in Europe has strengthened over time. Today new challenges lie before us.

**The New International Context**

One of the great causes for celebration in recent years has been the return of democracy to Eastern and Central Europe, and the unification of Germany. We celebrate not just because Germany has settled frontiers - undisputed internally or externally - for the first time in modern history, but because this has been achieved peacefully and democratically, within NATO, and within the European Community. The genuine welcome given to German unification last year showed that forty years of European cooperation have overcome the bitter national enmities of earlier this century.

In the days of the Cold War we denounced the Iron Curtain, and the division of a continent. The curtain has now been lifted - but in many respects the divisions remain. That is why it would be shortsighted today to think of the European Community as the natural focus of Western European cooperation alone.

The Treaties set no geographic limit upon the European Community. Nor did the founders intend an exclusive rich man's club. Quite the opposite. The 1980's was a decade of successful enlargements towards the South. And there will be further growth in the years ahead. This is a challenge both for those countries considering applying for membership and for the Community itself.

But I would underline three points in this connection. First, the Community should not be defensive about the suitors at its gate. On the contrary, we should be proud: there can be no more conclusive evidence of our dynamism. The European Community's appeal to countries throughout Europe does not just reflect its economic success, but its embodiment of principles of political and economic freedom: the market economy, the rule of law and the welfare of its citizens. The Community stands as a model of cooperation between independent countries, enabling them to enjoy the benefits of a single market and common policies across a very wide front, without the threat of coercion, domination, or loss of national identity.

Secondly, I believe that membership of the Community is a legitimate goal for all European democracies with open market economies - and one which we should support and welcome. The Community must sustain the belief that membership is at once credible and desirable as a goal for those European countries which are willing and able to accept the obligations entailed.

Thirdly, however, we must be realistic about those obligations. Community membership cannot be automatic. It involves a very wide range of economic as well as political commitments and a sophisticated administrative structure to fulfil them. Open market economies will not be achieved overnight in those countries which have suffered extensive controls over decades. We should - and we are - offering active assistance to achieve the transition. Above all we must be ready to open our market to fair competition from these countries - even in sensitive areas in which our own industry faces difficulties of adjustment.

In the meantime, the Community must adapt its own institutions to the prospects of wider membership. It is essential that as we grow bigger we do not lose our dynamism or our effectiveness. These challenges should be at the forefront of the current Inter-Governmental Conference on political union. There is little point in deciding on new policies, new powers and new mechanisms if they are geared only to the Community we have today. Enlargement will create real difficulties which we should face up to. They cannot be wished away. But they need not and should not cast doubt upon the openness of the Community to all those European countries which are able and willing to take on its full obligations; nor on our desire to create the conditions to enable this to happen.