

European Community



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PRESS RELEASE

"TWO- OR THREE-TIERED" ENLARGED EC REJECTED GREECE, PORTUGAL, SPAIN ALSO FAVOUR POLITICAL UNION

The following are extracts from a speech by Lorenzo Natali, EC Commissioner responsible for enlargement, in Bruges, Belgium, on 16 March 1978:

The process of enlargement has already begun: the negotiations with the first applicant, Greece, are now on the last lap and the procedures under the appropriate Articles of the Rome and Paris Treaties are under way for Portugal and Spain. The Council of Ministers has asked the Commission for opinions and a text will be submitted to it in April for Portugal and at the beginning of next year for Spain.

Unlike the earlier enlargement, when the campaign between those who were for and those who were against was waged mainly in the applicant countries themselves, in the case of this second enlargement, the danger, the opposition lie elsewhere.

The danger and opposition to enlargement stem this time from the precarious economic situation and the internal, institutional weakness of our Community. The fact is, however, that economic and institutional problems are the only ones at present that can give us cause for satisfaction and optimism because it is for us and for them to make a joint effort to solve them. The problems facing us are such that they can be solved by joint efforts.

The Commission, in its central position of responsibility for this process of enlargement, will shortly be indicating the directions which it considers that the Community and the applicant countries should take to achieve the aim which we have set ourselves together, namely the smooth accession of the three applicant countries.

There are indeed internal, institutional and other weaknesses and for this reason the question arises of what sort of Community we want. We have already given an answer on numerous occasions; we do not want a watered-down Community, a free trade area, a two- or three-tiered Europe, we want a strong, coherent Community progressing towards economic and monetary union and European union.

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Political Union Ultimately

The applicant states share this view; they want to join a Community which is much more than an economic and customs union and which will ultimately develop into a political union, the need for which they feel perhaps more strongly than we ourselves do.

Choosing this course implies that the Community must be strengthened while the process of enlargement is going on. The fact that enlargement is already under way and in some respects well advanced must make us realize that proposals, and not just reflection, are now called for to advance the process of strengthening the Community.

The Community is currently faced with a difficult economic situation; the resulting problems are particularly apparent in agriculture, in some industrial sectors and in foreign trade.

This must lead us on the one hand to step up, and probably reorientate, the measures which the Nine will in any case have to take and, on the other hand, to make a start, together with the applicant countries, on the essential job of reducing the regional disparities in the enlarged Community.

This means that we shall have to concentrate our efforts on two fields; the economic field, of course, with the adjustment or introduction of common policies, and, as a result, the political and institutional field, if we want the Community to be equipped with the instruments it must have to apply the policies which it works out.

Balanced Agricultural Policy

First of all our common agricultural policy must be developed so that a better balance can be struck between North and South, between prices and structures. Our industrial policy must also be expanded; it must be equal to its new task and equipped with corresponding financial instruments. The relatively low level of industrialization in Greece and Portugal in particular, as well as the problems which some industries in the existing Community are already facing and will increasingly have to face, give an idea of the scale of this policy. We shall have to frame our external policy in such a way that the advantages given to the Mediterranean countries, the Lomé countries and the other developing countries are not partially eroded.

Our regional and social policies will have to be able to cope with the new and bigger problems that are going to arise in the Community of Twelve.

The fundamental aim was written in the preamble of the Rome Treaty. It reads: "Resolved by thus pooling their resources to preserve and strengthen peace and liberty..." The signatories of the Rome Treaty called upon all the other peoples of Europe who shared their ideal to join in their efforts.
