

European Community



European Community Information Service
350 Sparks Street, suite 1110, Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7S8

COMMUNIQUE

PORTUGAL OPENS MEMBERSHIP NEGOTIATIONS WITH EC

Jenkins: "You Clearly Opted For A European Future"

Following is the text of the speech by EC Commission President Roy Jenkins at the opening of accession negotiations with Portugal in Luxembourg on 17 October.

On behalf of the Commission of the European Communities I express my profound satisfaction at this formal opening of the negotiations which are designed to lead to Portugal's accession.

Our meeting today, and the prospect of Portugal's accession, are made possible by the return of your country to democracy and liberty in 1974. In doing so, you clearly opted for a European future. You have subsequently passed through difficult and testing times, problems inevitably aggravated by the aftermath of decolonization. We rejoice in the reestablishment of democracy in Portugal, recalling as we do so the words of the solemn declaration of our heads of state or government in Copenhagen in April of this year that "respect for and maintenance of representative democracy and human rights in each member state are essential elements of membership of the European Communities".

For the Commission, the opening of these negotiations is a further recognition of the effort to unite all the countries of Europe in a powerful and dynamic Community. The Community rests on the solid foundation of the Treaties, and on the achievements which it has already accomplished.

But it is far from having attained all its objectives, nor should it be seen as something rigid or static. Rather it is a living organism, evolving and adapting itself to new ways of serving the European idea. As an example I mention current efforts to create a European Monetary System, which should one day be an integral part of an economic and monetary union. This in turn would be a part of the eventual European Union which is our ultimate objective.

Perhaps the other single most important development to which I should draw your attention are the forthcoming elections to the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage. These elections will further consolidate democracy in Europe. Already the existing Parliament is following the process of enlargement with the liveliest interest, and the Commission will keep it and its directly elected successor informed of progress in the negotiations with Portugal.

../2

NR (78) 30
20 October

As far as current and future development of Community policies is concerned, the Commission will, of course, equally keep the Portuguese Delegation fully informed.

As for the negotiations themselves, I can assure you that the Commission will do all in its power to bring them to an early and successful conclusion. We carried out that role faithfully in previous enlargement negotiations, and we shall do so again. We want arrangements satisfactory to both Portugal and the Community as a whole.

As the President of the Council has already pointed out, these negotiations with Portugal will concern the terms of accession and the adjustments to the Treaties. But there will be many difficulties to be faced and overcome as Portugal progresses towards integration into the Community, we are aware of the economic problems you face at the moment and we appreciate the efforts your government has already made to strengthen and reorganize your economy, efforts which will need to be further intensified if you are to face the challenge of full membership.

Discussions will take place between the Commission and Portugal to see what the Community can do to support your efforts. These discussions should take place separately, but parallel with the accession negotiations.

These economic efforts will be an important factor in the integration of Portugal into the Community. Their success will necessarily affect the accession arrangements, including the length of the transitional period. We must not be under the illusion that your present economic difficulties will be solved simply by joining the Community.

I shall not dwell on aid to your balance of payments, nor on the financial protocol, as these points have already been touched on by the President of the Council. But I underline that the Commission indicated in its "General Reflections on Enlargement" earlier this year that Portugal's integration into the Community should be eased by "joint actions" to support the reorganization of your economy. The Commission is ready to examine with you such possible initiatives. We believe that contacts should be established as soon as possible to examine those economic sectors which both parties consider sensitive. This will enable the Community and Portugal, even before accession, to coordinate the strategies necessary for rationalization and adjustment. The Commission is ready to open consultations on all these matters as soon as possible, to establish the nature and the scale of your needs, and to see to what extent the Community could support your Government's initiatives.

The enterprise on which you, for Portugal, are now embarked can be compared with those great enterprises of your forefathers who over five hundred years ago changed the face not only of Portugal but of the whole world. Today is, I hope, a date that will be recalled with deep satisfaction by future generations of Portuguese as of all our European peoples. Let us ensure, as our negotiations proceed in the months to come, that we bear always in mind the noble aims that we have set ourselves, and bring to success the work to which we set our hands.
