

European Community



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

NEWS RELEASE

"EUROPE IS INCOMPLETE WITHOUT SPAIN" - JENKINS

Accession Talks Open

Following is the text of the speech by EC Commission President Roy Jenkins on the occasion of the opening, in Brussels on 5 February 1979, of the Spanish Government's negotiations to join the European Community.

On behalf of the European Commission I express my great satisfaction at the formal opening of the negotiations which are designed to lead to the accession of Spain to the European Communities.

This is a happy day for us as well as you. Spain is part of Europe, and Europe is incomplete without Spain. The geography, history and civilization of your country are part of the very pith and marrow of Europe, and have been so from the beginning. If in the 1970s you have need of the Community, so the Community has need of Spain. The Community represents a gathering in of the European peoples at a time when their position in the world has greatly changed, is in some respects diminished, but has a new cohesion and underlying strength which comes from our growing unity. Your membership will add to that cohesion and strength, and enrich the Community, in the same way that I believe the Community will strengthen and enrich Spain.

You come to this table with the immeasurable asset of full support from your people and all the political parties through which Spanish opinion is expressed. I pay tribute not only to your government but also to your sovereign for the remarkable and peaceful way in which Spain has undergone profound constitutional change in such a short time.

The new institution of parliamentary democracy in Spain and your respect for human rights have together created the conditions for Spanish membership of the Community. I recall the declaration of our Heads of State and Government in December 1977 that "respect for and maintenance of representative democracy and human rights in each applicant country are essential elements of the European Community".

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The Commission rests on the foundation of the original Treaties but it is an organism in evolution rather than a static construction. Even if we are far from having attained all our objectives, I know of none which has been abandoned and none to which we are not closer than we were just over 20 years ago.

We are, I think, all agreed that enlargement of the Community should not cause either its dilution or the enfeeblement of its institutions. The Commission sees in enlargement the opportunity to concentrate our common political, economic and social interests and to strengthen our common institutions. Hence the particular importance of the forthcoming elections to the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, and the early establishment of a European Monetary System. Just as you will have to look to your own economy and your own institutions, so we in the existing Community will have to look to ours. I will not go over the detailed points made in the excellent speech by the President of the Council. I would like simply to affirm and reaffirm that we in the Commission will do everything in our power to bring negotiations for the accession of Spain to a timely and successful conclusion. There will be difficulties. But we are convinced that it is possible to find arrangements satisfactory to both Spain and the Community as a whole.

Your considered decision to seek membership of the Community has made possible the opening of these negotiations today, a day that I trust may be recalled with deep satisfaction by future generations of Spaniards as of all our European people.
