

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY INFORMATION SERVICE

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BACKGROUND NOTE

No. 19/1974

October 23, 1974

COMMUNITY GRANTED OBSERVER STATUS AT THE UNITED NATIONS

The European Community was granted observer status at the United Nations General Assembly by unanimous consent on October 11. A draft resolution proposing EC observer status was drawn up by the member states and presented to the UN General Assembly by French Ambassador to the United Nations Louis de Guiringaud earlier that day.

Following is the text of Guiringaud's statement:

"Speaking as the representative of a country which provides the current President of the European Economic Community (EEC), I have the honor to propose to the General Assembly the adoption of a draft resolution which reads as follows:

'The General Assembly, wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the European Economic Community, requests the Secretary General to invite the European Economic Community to participate in the sessions and work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer.'

The request that the [Community] is thus submitting through me is, I should like to explain, made on behalf of the Community itself as and of its member states: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany (Federal Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Now that I have explained the position, I should like to say how pleased the Community would be if the Assembly were to act favorably on its request.

There is no need for me to recall here the slow but determined progress towards unity in Europe which has marked the history of our peoples since the end of the Second World War. Out of a Europe which lay in ruins, whose lifeblood had been drained and whose peoples seemed to be locked in an everlasting conflict of hatred, there arose a determination to overcome the mistakes and sufferings of the past and to join forces in a task of reconstruction which would, at the same time, result in the building of an era of progress.

We do not claim that these efforts have all succeeded, nor that the road that still lies ahead is not strewn with obstacles. Nor do we conceal from ourselves the fact that many efforts will still have to be made in order to attain all the objectives laid down in the Preamble to the Treaty of Rome, [creating the European Economic Community]. Those objectives concern first of all the achievement of a very high degree of economic cooperation and with this in view the signatory states have delegated to the Community bodies a substantial share of their jurisdiction and competence in economic and social matters.

Among the goals of the Treaty of Rome, the Assembly will find also one which prescribes that we should lay the foundations for an ever-closer union between the peoples of Europe.

What we have already achieved in respect of trade, common policies, and in particular a common policy for agriculture and for aid to development, is considerable. And that is why the establishment of consistent cooperation between the Assembly and our Community seems to us likely to produce a good many advantages for each party.

European economic unity, which was established in order to put a final end to the war in Europe, cannot but serve to maintain peace and international equilibrium. That is the second point that I should like to discuss briefly with the Assembly today. The Assembly is well enough aware of the situation to know that the countries of the European Community share the same interests, I would even say an identical destiny, and that none of them can or wishes henceforth to dominate the others.

The institutions and machinery which have been set up within the European Economic Community reflect a desire for a deep-rooted equilibrium which in itself is an assurance of peace and security. I should like to add that the constructive attitude of the European Economic Community is clearly expressed in the Preamble to the Treaty of Rome, the signatories to which have proclaimed that they will abide by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

I spoke of the wish for progress and then the wish for peace entertained by the European Economic Community. Lastly, and in particular, I should like to emphasize its desire for cooperation. Our Community is necessarily open to the outside world. Far from confining itself to organizing freedom of trade within its own frontiers, it has contributed in a liberal spirit to a whole series of international tariff negotiations. It is continuing and will continue in the same desire for openness and mutual concessions to follow the expansion of international trade which it proposes in particular to support by means of the form of general preferences that it will grant to developing countries, whether or not they are associated with the Community.

Once again I shall mention and emphasize particularly the especially close relations which the Community maintains with many developing countries, members of this organization.

The Community long ago undertook to provide them with aid, whether the aid granted under the Yaounde Conventions, the principle of which has just been restated at the Kingston Conference last July, or whether we are talking as well of food aid, the volume of which has grown considerably in the course of the past few years, or lastly of emergency assistance to the countries most severely affected by crises, which the European Economic Community has just voted on.

To speak, finally, of the procedural aspects of the cooperation we propose to set up between the General Assembly and the European Economic Community, I should like to say the following. The type of cooperation that we envisage is not unprecedented, the European Economic Community already having observer status in the Economic and Social Council and in UNCTAD [UN Conference on Trade and Development]. The rules and customs of the United Nations for that matter have clearly determined what observer status is: observers do not speak in the Assembly itself, but can ask to speak in its committees, conferences, or working groups. The European Economic Community will abide in every respect with the rules and regulations thus laid down. It would hope to participate actively in meetings and work of the General Assembly, that is to say, in the working bodies of the Assembly.

In view of the scope and range of the questions covered by the Treaty of Rome, the participation of the European Economic Community may not be limited only to the activities of the Second Committee. It will participate in a spirit of constructive collaboration, believing that the organs of the Assembly will be pleased to hear such a body as the [Community], whose existence is now firmly established, expressing its own views.