



"One of the ways in which the work of the Community can be brought closer to the life of the ordinary citizen is through the European Parliament. As a Member of Parliament for more than twenty years, I attach great importance to enable the European Parliamentarians to subject the work of the Community to a watchful, rigorous and constructive democratic scrutiny."

(European Community - January 1973)

Mr Thomson will have responsibility within the Commission for the Community's regional policy of which the Paris Summit established the principle and set

the first date-lines. The development of this policy will undoubtedly be a major element in the forthcoming work of the Community.

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born January 16, 1921, in Stirling, George Thomson is married and has two daughters.

holding this seat until 1972 when he resigned prior to taking up his duties as Member of the European Commission.

Educated at Grove Academy in Dundee, George Thomson joined the Royal Air Force at the outbreak of the Second World War. On demobilisation he took up a career in journalism. In 1952 he entered Parliament as Member for Dundee East,

From 1954 to 1956 he represented Britain on the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe and was a member of its cultural and economic committees. He was a member of the original organising committee of the Western European

Union, and as its rapporteur played a very active part in the setting up of the Union, on which he represented Britain during the first two sessions of its Assembly.

From 1959 to 1963 he was Opposition front-bench spokesman for Commonwealth and Colonial Affairs and during this time travelled widely in Asia, Africa, the United States and Europe.

When Labour took office in October 1964 he joined the government as Minister of State, Foreign Office, and he was concerned with overseas affairs in all the posts he held as a Minister. For two periods in 1966 and 1967 he was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster with special responsibility for European political affairs. M. Thomson conducted

the British approach to the Common Market countries after the 1966 general election, and this led to the British application to join in 1967. In August 1967 he joined the Cabinet as Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs. When in October 1968 the Commonwealth and Foreign Office were merged George Thomson became Minister without portfolio and from October 1969, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster again with special responsibility for European affairs as the issue of British membership of the Community became ripe once more.

Prior to being nominated to the European Commission, George Thomson was, among his other activities, Chairman of the Labour Committee for Europe.

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Luxemburg Wort - 9/10/72

The Guardian - 18/11/72

Der schottische Unterhausabgeordnete Thomson führte als Europaminister die von Wilson eingeleiteten Beitrittsverhandlungen, die dann unter Heath zum erfolgreichen Abschluß gebracht wurden. Es war Thomson, der in aller Öffentlichkeit die von den Konservativen ausgehandelten Beitrittsbedingungen als voll ausreichend bezeichnete und erklärte, selbst eine Arbeiterregierung hätte keine besseren Bedingungen zustande bringen können. Für diese mutigen Worte verlor Thomson seinen Sitz im Schattenkabinett von Labour und wurde mitsamt Roy Jenkins und den übrigen überzeugten Europäern von der Arbeiterpartei in die politische Wüste geschickt.

"THE SCOTS," said George Thomson—who is one of Britain's two newly appointed members of the Common Market Commission at Brussels, and, what is more tangible, a Scot—"the Scots have been part of an extremely tight common market and political union with England for more than 250 years now. And it hasn't in fact greatly increased our love for each other. It certainly hasn't reduced our separate sense of national identity. I'm sure it won't be any different in western Europe. It's going to go on as a group of very rooted nations, but I believe that the things they have in common will become increasingly more numerous."

**Daily Mirror - 8/1/73**

"I want," says Mr. Thomson, "to give the lie to the charge that the European Community cares only about the rich and the powerful."

One of the fears of those who distrust the Common Market has been that the high-unemployment areas of Britain (and of other members, too) would be left to rot.

There was some justification for the fear. But even before Britain joined, efforts were being made to fill this gap in Market policy.

Now Mr. Thomson, who was Labour's chief negotiator when Harold Wilson was in favour of joining, has a tremendous opportunity.

It is his responsibility to fight for all those who have so far not had a fair share in the prosperity the Market has brought.

It is the job he hoped for. It is a job he will do well.

**The Observer - 7/1/73**

As for George Thomson, he has a dour and rather forbidding appearance, whereas in fact he is a thoughtful intellectual, who in earlier days was a protégé of John Strachey. Unwavering in his convictions, he is nevertheless remarkably modest and excels at getting on with people.

**Le Monde - 9/1/73**

: « Si je suis devenu un pro-européen convaincu, c'est dans une large mesure parce que j'ai pu constater que les classes laborieuses des pays de la C.E.E. bénéficiaient de salaires plus élevés et de services sociaux plus efficaces qu'au Royaume-Uni, et que le chômage y était moins élevé. C'est avant tout en qualité de membre du parti travailliste et non pas comme un fonctionnaire que j'envisage ma tâche. »

M. Thomson aura pour adjoint, à Bruxelles, M. Gwyn Morgan, secrétaire général adjoint du parti travailliste.

### Het Financieel Dagblad - 8/12/72

„Ik zie het dagelijks in mijn brievenbus, aldus Thomson, daaruit spreekt een duidelijke boodschap van zeer vele mensen uit verschillende groeperingen van de samenleving, die hierop neerkomt: Engeland is er nu in; laten we er een succes van maken.”

Het is volgens Thomson niet een zaak van groot enthousiasme in de Britse publieke opinie, maar wel van vastbeslotenheid om van het lidmaatschap het beste te maken. Al het overige — de rol van de conservatieven over immigratie uit andere EEG-landen en de weigering van Labour om leden voor het Europese parlement aan te wijzen — bestaat uit voorbijgaande verschijnselen. Het Britse volk begint duidelijk de EEG als een uitdaging te zien.

### The Financial Times - 8/1/73

Mr. Thomson's ambition is to persuade the Labour Party to take a more constructive attitude to the Community, and his identification with the new regional policy should strengthen his hand in this respect.

### L'Echo de la Bourse - 10/10/72

*M. George Thomson qui, à 51 ans, devient le second membre britannique de la Commission européenne, avait déjà été baptisé « Monsieur Europe » lorsque, en 1969, il fut chargé par le gouvernement travailliste des négociations éventuelles sur l'entrée de la Grande-Bretagne dans le Marché commun. La défaite du Labour en juin 1970 l'obligea à céder la direction de la délégation britannique à M. Anthony Barber, qui fut ultérieurement remplacé par M. Geoffrey Rippon.*

*M. Thomson s'est révélé, dans l'opposition aussi bien qu'au gouvernement, comme un partisan enthousiaste de l'adhésion britannique à la Communauté européenne. Ses convictions l'ont amené, en octobre 1971, à voter aux Communes en faveur de cette adhésion — en dépit des instructions contraires données par la direction du parti. Ces mêmes convictions l'ont amené en avril dernier, à donner sa démission du poste de porte-parole pour la Défense dans le « cabinet fantôme » travailliste, au moment où le Labour avait renforcé sa position « anti-européenne ».*

*Ancien journaliste, ancien membre de l'assemblée de l'U.E.O., M. Thomson apportera en outre à Bruxelles une connaissance approfondie des problèmes des pays du Commonwealth.*

### Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 6/1/73

Großbritannien, Jahrgang 1921, hat zwanzig Jahre als Unterhausabgeordneter hinter sich, in denen er vom ersten bis zum letzten Tag der Labourherrschaft 1964 bis 1970 Mitglied der Regierung auf verschiedenen, aber ausnahmslos außenpolitischen Posten war. Für den 52jährigen ist der Eintritt in die EWG-Kommission anders als für seinen Partner Sir Christopher Soames wahrscheinlich der endgültige Bruch mit seiner parlamentarischen Laufbahn.

Thomson war der „Europa-Minister“ des Kabinetts Wilson, als Labour 1970 die Wahlen verlor. Mit der Zählung und Unverblümtheit des Schottens hat er dann die Abkehr Wilsons vom Europa-Kurs seines eigenen Kabinetts bekämpft und ist im April 1972 protestierend aus dem Schattenkabinett ausgetreten. Die Labour-Fraktion kann den Verlust Thomsons in ihrer jetzigen Krise doppelt schwer vertragen. Er war einer ihrer sympathischsten Köpfe, ein fähiger Unterhändler, ein kenntnisreicher, in der Weltpolitik bewanderter Mann.

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Bio Book



# BRITISH INFORMATION SERVICES

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## RT HON GEORGE THOMSON, PC

The Rt Hon George Thomson became a Member of the Commission of the European Community with special responsibility for Regional Policy when Britain entered the Community in January 1973.

Mr Thomson was Labour MP for Dundee East from 1952-1972. During the Labour government of 1964-70 he had, for much of the time, special responsibility for European Affairs. When Labour went into Opposition he was a member of the Shadow Cabinet (the Parliamentary Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party) and led for the Opposition in the House of Commons on Defense, until April 1972. In that month he resigned from the Shadow Cabinet on the Common Market issue.

George Thomson is a Scotsman, born in Stirling in January 1921 and brought up near Dundee at Monifieth. He was Dux (leading scholar) at his school Grove Academy in Dundee, and at eighteen joined the Royal Air Force with which he served until 1945.

After the war he became a journalist, as Assistant Editor and then Editor of the Socialist weekly Forward; he retained an association with the paper as Deputy Editor after it moved to London. He also wrote in the Manchester Guardian, Scotsman and New Statesman and, after his election to Parliament, as a special political correspondent for the London Evening News.

From 1959 to 1963 Mr Thomson was an Opposition Front Bench spokesman on Commonwealth and Colonial affairs. He traveled widely in the United States, Europe, Asia and Africa; he knew many of the African leaders, one or two from the days when they were studying in Britain. When Sir Dauda Jawara (later to become Prime Minister and then President of The Gambia) was a student in Glasgow, he and Mr Thomson were members of the same political group and used to hold meetings jointly at street corners.

When Labour took office in October 1964 Mr Thomson joined the government as Minister of State, Foreign Office, and he was concerned with overseas affairs in all the posts he held as a Labour Minister. These were: Minister of State at the Foreign Office for two spells up to August 1967, and in the intervening period (April 1966 to January 1967) Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster with responsibilities for political affairs in Europe; the Cabinet appointment of Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs from August 1967 until in October 1968 the Foreign

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and Commonwealth Offices were merged, when Mr Thomson became Minister without Portfolio; and from October 1969, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster again, and Deputy to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, with special responsibility for European affairs.

Mr Thomson conducted the British approach to the Common Market countries after the 1966 general election, and this led to the British application to join in 1967. During his second period as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster he was again concerned with the Common Market question.

He was the first member of the Labour government to visit Moscow officially when as Minister of State, Foreign Office, he went there in February 1965 to sign the new cultural agreement; during the years that followed he made many overseas tours. He was the Minister responsible for Middle East affairs during the progress of Aden and South Arabia to independence; he presided over the Swaziland independence conference and attended its independence celebrations.

Cultural and educational matters form another of Mr Thomson's great interests. He has lectured widely in adult education movements. From 1954 to 1956 he represented Britain on the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe and was a member of its cultural and economic committees. He was a member of the original organizing committee of the Western European Union, and as its rapporteur played a very active part in the setting up of the Union, on which he represented Britain during the first two sessions of its Assembly. He has also been greatly concerned with immigration and integration problems, is a former vice-chairman of the British-Caribbean Association, and has done a great deal of work for overseas students, particularly from developing countries. He was a founder and first co-chairman of the Council for Education in the Commonwealth, and in 1971 he became Chairman of the Standing Committee on Refugee Organization and of the David Davies Institute of International Studies.

Mr Thomson is married, and has two daughters. His recreations include reading - he is particularly interested in archaeology - also swimming and walking.

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George THOMSON

Scottish

Born in Stirling in January 1921

His seat in Parliament, which he has held since 1952, is Dundee East. He was Dux (leading scholar) at his school Grove Academy in Dundee, and at eighteen joined the Royal Air Force with which he served until 1945.

After the war he became a journalist, as Assistant Editor and then Editor of the Socialist weekly Forward; he retained an association with the paper as Deputy Editor after it moved to London. He also wrote in the Manchester Guardian, Scotsman and New Statesman and, after his election to Parliament, as a special political correspondent for the London Evening News.

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Mr Thomson is married, and has two daughters.

Mr Thomson was a member of the Government throughout the period 1964-70 when Labour was in office - for much of the time with special responsibility for European affairs. When Labour went into Opposition he was a member of the Shadow Cabinet (the Parliamentary Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party) and led for the Opposition in the House of Commons on Defence, until April 1972. In that month he resigned from the Shadow Cabinet on the Common Market issue.

Member of the Commission of the European Communities January 1973-December 1976.  
Responsible for Regional Policy.

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