

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF IRELAND, MR. CEARBHALL O' DALAIGH, DURING HIS  
OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE COMMISSION ON 17 JUNE 1975

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Mr. President, distinguished Members of the Commission.

May I begin by thanking you for the warm welcome you have extended to my wife and me here today and may I also say how honoured I am to have received your invitation to visit the Commission.

Allow me, Mr. President and Members of the Commission, to relate a short historical anecdote :

Every Irish person, arriving here in Brussels, remembers another visit made to Brussels on November 7th, 1607 by Hugh O'Neill, who a few years earlier had been virtually the uncrowned King of Ireland, O'Neill landed in France near Caen. After his visit to the Netherlands, O'Neill passed close by Luxembourg, entered Germany, crossed the Alps and arrived in Rome on May 29th, 1608. He is the last Irish Chief who visited all the countries of the Community of the Six. It was not unfortunately, an official visit. For my part I rejoice at the happy circumstances of my visit.

The past two years have seen dramatic shifts in the centres of world financial and economic power. We all have to adapt ourselves to these changes. The adequacy of our response to them will depend on the quality of the leadership provided by the Governments of the Member States and by the institutions of the Community.

It is twenty-five years since Robert Schuman in his speech of 9th May 1950, spoke of a new Europe that would be made, not all at once, but built through achievements, which would fast create a de facto solidarity.

Achievements in that period have been substantial and indeed it is now possible to say that many of the original objectives of the founding fathers of the Community have been realised. The spectre of fratricidal war has been banished from Western Europe, and in peace our peoples have attained unprecedented standards of living. Moreover, through the adoption and implementation of common policies the Community has given ample evidence of its concern to ensure that this prosperity is fairly distributed and that the Europe we are building is based not only on the principles of political democracy but also on the ideals and the realities of social justice. It is those qualities of justice, compassion and concern for the weak and underprivileged which can be the inspiring feature of the Community both in its internal policies and in its relations with other countries, particularly those of the third world.

As the principal initiating body of the Communities the Commission has a special role to play in the development of a strong and integrated Europe. You Mr. President in your address to the European Parliament on 18th February last outlined the course of that future development, the Commission's vision of how European integration will evolve and the practical steps to be taken to achieve it. It was a reaffirmation too of the Commission's role of presenting to the peoples of Europe not just those sectional policies dictated by the economic exigencies of the moment, but also providing the concept of a Europe in which its citizens can not only live and prosper but of which they can be proud.