

**Speeches and statements
made on the occasion
of the signing
of the Single European Act**

Luxembourg, 17 February 1986

The Hague, 28 February 1986

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III

C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
Speech made by Mr H. VAN DEN BROEK, President of the Conference of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States of the European Communities, on the occasion of the signing of the Single European Act in Luxembourg on 17 February 1986	3
Speech made by Mr Siegbert ALBER, Vice-President of the European Parliament, on the occasion of the signing of the Single European Act in Luxembourg on 17 February 1986	8
Speech made by Mr ANDRIESSEN, Vice-President of the Commission of the European Communities on the occasion of the signing of the Single European Act in Luxembourg on 17 February 1986	13
Speech made by Mr Robert GOEBBELS, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, on the occasion of the signing of the Single European Act in Luxembourg on 17 February 1986	16
Statement made in Luxembourg by Greece on 17 February 1986	25
Statement made in Luxembourg on 17 February 1986 by the President of the Conference of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States	26
Statement made in The Hague on 28 February 1986 on behalf of the Italian Government by Mr ANDREOTTI, Minister for Foreign Affairs	27

SPEECHES

Speech made by Mr H. van den BROEK,
President of the Conference
of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States
of the European Communities,
on the occasion of the signing of the Single European Act
in Luxembourg on 17 February 1986

The time has come to complete the process initiated at the European Council in Milan and which, after a period of thorough consideration and intensive work, has culminated in the result which we have agreed to call the Single European Act.

My feelings at this juncture, as President of the Council, are mixed. They are characterized by a certain solemnity - because this is an important moment in the history of the Community; by an unmistakable sense of satisfaction - because a major, complicated venture is being successfully concluded; and by an equally unmistakable sadness - because the list of signatories is not as complete as we had hoped. However, before saying anything further about these various aspects, I wish once again to pay tribute to the Luxembourg Presidency. It is this Presidency which carried the burden of this venture and which throughout the second half of 1985 gave uninterrupted, determined and intelligent guidance to the discussions, thus enabling the Heads of State and Government to conclude an agreement of principle in Luxembourg on 2 and 3 December 1985.

Our great admiration for the efforts undertaken during that period by the Luxembourg Presidency - and here I am thinking in particular of Mr SANTER, Mr POOS and Mr DONDELINGER - has made us decide to sign the Single European Act here in Luxembourg, at the very same venue where the Heads of State and Government reached agreement, albeit with reservations of which we are still feeling the impact.

I should now like to say a few words about the Single Act we are about to sign. Much has already been written and said about it, so I shall not dwell too long on the subject.

The Single Act has been the subject of many comments which have in my opinion been grossly exaggerated in both directions.

If asked to make an objective judgment, I believe we would all agree, now that we have been able to stand back and reflect more calmly on the whole matter, that, despite its unavoidable shortcomings, the Single Act definitely represents progress and a step in the right direction.

It is difficult to quantify the exact extent of this progress; however, I am confident that in practice it will prove greater than we believe it to be at present.

I do not intend to discuss in detail a text the strong and weak points of which you know as well as I do.

I would merely wish to highlight its two outstanding merits which would, in themselves, warrant a positive judgment.

Firstly, the Single European Act is about, and attempts to give an answer to, some of the key questions facing Europe at present which will be decisive for its future, and therefore also for ours.

The main objective is the early achievement of a genuine, completely free market which will finally make the European dimension a reality for the citizen and constitute a factor of economic dynamism and prosperity in all the Member States. In order to achieve this, the Community's decision-making power had to be strengthened, and this we have managed to do by extending qualified majority voting. Simultaneously, the requisite solidarity between the Member States and the instruments available to the Community in this connection - namely the Structural Funds - have been given their rightful place in the Treaty.

A further challenge facing Europe at present has to do with democracy. It has also been possible to take account of this aspect in the Single Act, at least in part, by involving the directly elected Parliament more closely in legislation and giving it a further possibility of influencing the content of decisions.

The third challenge is in the area of science and technology, which everybody regards as crucial for the future. Here, too, the Single Act has something new to offer, namely a legal framework which will provide a platform for the Community's future activities. The same is true for the protection of the environment.

The Single Act thus provides an answer, or the beginnings of an answer, to present needs and aspirations.

To my mind, a second merit of the Single Act is the fact that it has managed to balance conflicting or contrasting demands and aspirations, thus safeguarding the future.

Contrary to the superficial view sometimes held, the European debate is not a simple matter and cannot be reduced to the dualism which some would like to see in it. The Member States may well start from a common premise, but they have different feelings, interests and aspirations as regards the building of Europe. To wish to deny this out of hand would be tantamount to condemning the whole venture to failure. Being European means also to accept Europe in all its diversity and contrasts. The absence of some from this afternoon's ceremony is an example of that.

All this makes the whole undertaking no easier and we were certainly aware of this.

It is the merit of the Single Act that in it the always precarious balance between the possible and the desirable has been struck, and in a fairly short period of time - clear proof of how convinced we all were that the time had come to act.

The Single Act has opened up avenues which we must now strike out on with determination. It is first and foremost an instrument in the service of a political will which, I am convinced, will not falter at the critical moment.

We know from experience that the best and even the most ambitious texts can remain a dead letter when the political will is lacking. When that will is actually present, texts which appear to be modest in scope or open to question can prepare the way for decisive progress.

We have demonstrated the will to draw up and adopt the Single European Act; now we must all be prepared to make the best possible use of it. Its real significance lies in our hands.

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As President-in-Office of the Conference I hereby open the European Act for signing.

In so doing, I am fully aware that not all Governments are prepared or in a position to set their seal of approval to this document today.

I would point out - and I now speak on behalf of those delegations which do wish to sign - that our purpose in signing the Single Act today is to demonstrate our firm political will to carry out this reform of the Community swiftly.

We are not doing so in order to put pressure on anyone - each Member State is completely free to take its own decisions - but to give expression to our conviction that implementation of the results of the Conference is a necessity for the European Community. With the Act, prospects of progress are opened up. Without the Act, regression and disintegration threaten us.

We hope, then, most sincerely, that the Act will shortly be signed by all Member States. The political significance which is being conferred on it today will then be complemented by the legal force which today it still lacks.

Speech made by Mr Siegbert ALBER, Vice-President of the European Parliament, on the occasion of the signing of the Single European Act in Luxembourg on 17 February 1986

We are today witnessing a historic event. The people of Europe expect the signature of the European Act to lend impetus to the development of the Community. It would be wrong to regard the Act as this step. It is only the shell. What will be decisive is what is made from it. Only in retrospect will it be clear whether we saw history being made today, or the first performance of a pantomime.

If not all the Member States have signed, this merely reflects the internal divisions in Europe. Some feel that what has been achieved does not go far enough, while others feel it only just does. Some think it almost goes too far, and still others think it does go too far.

The European Parliament voted in favour of the Act, but grudgingly. None of us is satisfied with what has been achieved, but we would rather have a bird in the hand than two in the bush. We know that the alternative to half a loaf is none.

Of course the objectives of completing the internal market, strengthening the European currency, europeanizing environmental and technology policy, and political co-operation are laudable. But many of these are old and oft-repeated demands. Without an internal market the four freedoms already enshrined in the Treaties of Rome would be pointless. As far back as 1972 the Paris Summit proclaimed political union for 1980.

In European politics it is often amusing to hear someone say that a fresh milestone has been reached. If we examined these milestones more closely we should soon realize that the distance to the end of the road is the same, that we have been at this crossroads once before, and that we have been going around in a circle. Let us hope that this time the European Act will provide better guidance, and that this time we are going in the right direction. The date of this ceremony, not long after Ash Wednesday, does however indicate a repentant wish to turn over a new leaf. So we must hope that the Act will not turn out to be a guidebook to cloud-cuckoo land.

The most important matters still require unanimity, and the statements by some ministers that this or that does not mean exactly what it says are a source of concern. Much has in fact been worded so as to mean all things to all men. Much is so nebulous that it would look more appropriate in a climatology research programme than in a treaty. The texts can be used to produce sensible answers, or conflict and disunity. The crucial factor will therefore be the goodwill of those involved. Success is possible, but not guaranteed.

New elements are to be incorporated in the treaties. That is a good thing. But it is not enough in itself. Even in matters which are already covered by the Treaties, such as transport policy, proceedings have had to be instituted against the Council to make it act.

The fundamental objection is the often rudimentary or completely absent European dimension in the national governments. Nobody objects to the representation of national interests, but in fact many of these "national interests" are simply provincial selfishness. Everybody is in favour of Europe so long as it produces advantages and costs nothing. There is no European solidarity. But only in solidarity and by solidarity will we create the people's Europe we all wish to see.

The internal market and the new technologies are not enough. A Europe of goods and machinery, of businessmen and engineers is not a whole Europe. The individual does not care whether his underpants come from France or Italy, or whether the chemical residues in his salad come from the Netherlands or Germany. He does not want there to be any residues. He wants Europe to mean quality, and not simply business. He wants not only a free market, but the highest standards. Whether these expectations will be fulfilled remains to be seen.

A people's Europe cannot be confined to reductions in frontier checks and minor increases in duty-free allowances. The individual wants to share in the variety offered by Europe and its culture. He wants partnership and exchange, not just at holiday time, but in his working life, education, military service and so forth.

A minister recently said that the internal market was more important than freedom of movement. I do not see it in that way. Both are necessary, and interdependent. We are at a crossroads. The people's Europe must not be reduced to the businessman's Europe. What we need is the European's Europe. I have a nagging doubt whether the Act will provide sufficient impetus for the citizen to identify more with Europe.

It does not remedy the shortfall in democracy. The national executive power still constitutes the European legislature. This arrangement would be unconstitutional in any Member State. It is true that there will be a slight improvement in the status of the European Parliament. In future we shall have the penultimate instead of the antepenultimate word. The European legislative process does not accord with our democratic principles. Law made by officials is not the same as law made by parliaments. In his maxims Chamfort once said that some things are easier to legalize than to legitimize, but this does not justify the perpetuation of an undemocratic state of affairs. Parliament's rights must be strengthened, and the Council must become a genuine federal chamber, with the Member States represented by appropriate numbers of seats and votes, in which the interests of provinces and regions would also be better represented.

All I have said shows that the real tasks still lie ahead. The signature of the Act does not mark the close of a chapter, but the beginning of a new one. What will count is how life is breathed into the Treaties. The European Parliament will play its part in bringing Europe to completion in a Political Union; our Europe, the Europe of peace and the future.

Speech made by Mr ANDRIESEN, Vice-President of the Commission of the European Communities on the occasion of the signing of the Single European Act in Luxembourg on 17 February 1986

The Commission is pleased to be present today at the opening for signature of the Single Act produced by the Intergovernmental Conference.

I should like to thank all the delegations for the contribution they made to the Conference, and the successive Presidencies which directed the proceedings which have culminated in this moment. My thanks also go to the ad hoc Committee on Institutional Affairs. Lastly, the Commission wishes to pay particular tribute to the European Parliament, which, with its initiative on a draft Treaty on European Union, made a decisive contribution to the meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference.

European Union will not, of course, be achieved by the Single European Act. The stage reached today is more modest than that. But it does bear witness to the Community's vitality and capacity for self-renewal. So the results of the Conference, which show just what is feasible in today's Community of Twelve, must not be underestimated.

We now have the first-ever single act covering both the development of the Community through the revision of the Treaty of Rome and that of political co-operation. The adoption of this single framework has made it possible to encompass things economic and things political and to avoid the risk of disrupting the unity of the institutional system.

Thanks to the Luxembourg agreement the Community will be able to do more for its citizens. I am referring to the decision to create an area without frontiers by 1992. The Act will also facilitate progress towards greater economic and social cohesion by increasing economic convergence, by improving the functioning of the structural Funds and by developing social policy. The objective of economic and monetary union has now been enshrined in the Treaty. And, lastly, the Community has given itself a new and much needed technological dimension, which will be underpinned by achievement of the large market.

To achieve these objectives the Single Act provides for improvements in the way our institutions are run.

The main target was to increase efficiency, majority voting is now accepted in the areas which are to form the basis for revitalizing the Community (internal market, technological research and development, strengthening of cohesion, social policy). It will be possible to adopt two thirds of the decisions needed to create an area without frontiers by qualified majority. But it is not enough to have amended the Treaties; majority voting - one of the prerequisites for better and more timely decision-making - must now become a fact of life. And that is not all: decisions must be translated into action. In this respect, the Single Act provides the Commission with the means to implement Council decisions more efficiently.

The other target of institutional reform was to make the Community more democratic. Some progress has been made by giving the European Parliament its first real power in the law-making process through conferring on it the right of amendment through the co-operation procedure.

But we must not forget on the occasion of its signing that the Single Act - the embodiment of what is feasible in Europe - still falls short of what we had hoped for. The Commission would have liked more democracy in the decision-making process. It would also have liked the Member States to display more courage in their commitment to the completion of the internal market and the enhancing of the monetary dimension. Finally, it regrets that nothing has been done for culture.

Our task now is to make real progress within this new framework. The value and scope of the Act now to be opened for signature will be judged by the results. For its part, the Commission is determined to take advantage of what the Single Act has to offer and, to quote Mr DELORS, to make the compromise dynamic.

Its implementation must make a genuine return to the Community method, enabling each country to benefit from the European dimension and laying the political and institutional foundations for renewed dynamism within the Community.

Speech made by Mr Robert GOEBBELS, State Secretary for
Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, on the occasion of the signing
of the Single European Act in Luxembourg on 17 February 1986

I should first like to thank you on behalf of the Luxembourg Government for having chosen to hold tonight's meeting in this city and in this building. We were very happy to agree to this, and we have been looking forward to it, so that we could see the final link put in the chain of events leading the Conference of Governments of the Member States from its inaugural meeting at the beginning of September through our ministerial meetings, and above all the European Council, to today's meeting here.

Those who have spoken before me have presented, described and commented on the Act submitted for signature. I do not therefore wish to repeat what has already been said by those more qualified to comment than the representative of a Government which has now - having completed its task as Presidency - reverted to the bottom of the list in our presidential rota.

What the three Presidents have in turn said should provide food for thought and inspiration for the future activities of the Community and its Member States.

The actual content of the Act probably deserves neither the praise nor the criticism which has been heaped on it.

The negotiations of recent months have compelled us to face up to grim reality. There is nothing finer in politics than a programme, and there is nothing finer in European politics than the draft of a new Treaty. The end result no longer has the attraction of an ideal. But the negotiations have nevertheless had the merit of obliging Governments, Community institutions and all those who - for one reason or another - have embarked together on the long and stony path towards European Union to face up squarely to the ideas involved and the problems of putting them into practice.

At the beginning of the exercise we were faced with a number of facts: the need to form a genuine internal market within a few years; the need also to establish some sort of framework for organizing co-operation between States and defining the role of the Community in the vitally important field of technology and research. A new approach is called for, based precisely on the newly defined objectives, on the decision-making procedure, with a more coherent and more intensive use of the means of decision and action afforded by our institutions, starting with the European Parliament, concerning which it is true to say that the potential inherent in the periodic mobilization of citizens for an election has been inadequately realized - and will continue to be so even after implementation of the Single European Act.

Finally - although there has been less discussion over this because fortunately it is a less controversial issue - laying down arrangements for co-operation on foreign policy in the form of a treaty is an important event.

From the discussions which preceded the convening of a governmental conference it emerged last Spring that - except in the institutional field - ideas about the content of reform were less divergent than ideas about the form it should take. Was it necessary to amend the Treaty, or could substantially similar results be achieved working within the framework of the existing Treaties?

If the Ten - along with Spain and Portugal - ultimately decided to opt for constitutional reform, it was for two reasons:

- the Treaties, particularly in the manner of their implementation, were being imperceptibly but inexorably eroded by a trend back towards classical forms of inter-governmental co-operation, accompanied by a weakening of the institutions and the abandonment of genuine Community procedures;
- what were termed the "new policies" were becoming increasingly likely to fall outside the Community framework proper, thus leading to a kind of European integration which was very different from that originally conceived and from that which European Union was designed to achieve.

From the outset we considered that if this "modernization" was to be credible and firmly based it would have to take the form of a constitutional adaptation of the treaties rather than - as part of the long series of attempted reforms with which the history of the Community is already studded - the form of yet another programme or catalogue of good intentions.

It seems to me that we have now achieved this objective. Of course there will be endless discussion about whether substantially similar results might not have been achieved by the other method. But what is clear from the SINGLE ACT is that the objectives which have been restated or newly defined are to be achieved through argument and counter-argument in a Community framework. In affirming this we are underlining the need for Community cohesion. If we did not do this, or if the solemn promise which we are making in the ACT were not carried out, the seeds of dissent would flourish and ultimately destroy the unity and indivisibility of the Community.

This last fear should give cause for thought to those States among us who see themselves as the "smaller" States. As for the smallest - the baby of them all - it is fully aware of what is at stake.

Mr President,

A number of our Governments openly acknowledge that from the point of view of institutional reform the SINGLE ACT falls far short of what had been hoped for. The Luxembourg Government is of that number.

It has to be said that the SINGLE ACT does not make enough of the potentially considerable contribution which election of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage could make to the consolidation and expansion of the democratic foundations of our Community. My Government - like some others - did not wait until these negotiations to voice more ambitious institutional requirements. However, I owe it to history to make clear today, in this place, that when we held the Presidency and approached each Government in turn, under cover of secrecy, very few of them came up with anything other than alternatives in the same mould. It therefore became clear fairly early on that disagreement over institutions might prove to be the sticking point in the negotiations. The facts have borne out this prognosis.

The Presidency was clearly aware of this risk at the time. As had been agreed, and made clear by the choice of procedure, the Presidency, with substantial backing from the Member States and the Commission, adopted, and has since stood firmly by, a "strategy of unity" as opposed to a "strategy of division".

Thus it was that the negotiations reached their climax at the European Council meeting here in this building. At that meeting we saw the Heads of State or Government and the Foreign Ministers commit themselves personally to an unprecedented exercise, to make a supreme effort to overcome the problems to which a solution seemed to be in sight.

The texts before us today thus bear the stamp of the European Council and represent a political commitment which is to be consolidated in terms of a treaty today, or in the very near future.

Looked at more closely, the SINGLE ACT is, however, not as lacking in new initiatives - even in the institutional field - as might appear at first sight. The role of the European Parliament will at least be changing and evolving in the direction which many wish to see it take.

All in all, the Community will - we hope - have some years to begin working towards the newly defined objectives and using the new methods described. What is certain is that this reform, which on a number of points represents imperfect compromises, marks the beginning of a trial period at the end of which it will be necessary to take stock of the situation and to refine or supplement what, in today's achievement, seems to those assuming the responsibilities which we currently bear to be a valuable asset which can serve as the basis for further progress towards European Union.

I should like to thank the Presidency for having given me the opportunity to add my modest contribution, although I am very sorry that my friend Jacques POOS, to whom I wish a speedy recovery, was unable to speak instead of me as, I am sure you will agree he deserved to.

STATEMENTS

Statement made in Luxembourg by Greece on 17 February 1986

The Government of the Hellenic Republic will sign the text of the Single Act resulting from the Intergovernmental Conference after the referendum to be held in Denmark, irrespective of the outcome of that referendum.

Statement made in Luxembourg on 17 February 1986 by the President
of the Conference of the Representatives of the Governments of the
Member States

The President

- stated that the purpose of the Conference convened that day was to adopt the Single European Act and the Final Act relating to it;

 - stated that the single European Act and the Final Act relating to it would be finally adopted when the last of the three States which had not yet signed had done so.
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Statement made in The Hague on 28 February 1986 on behalf of
the Italian Government by Mr ANDREOTTI, Minister for Foreign
Affairs

Mr President,

At the moment when I am about to sign on behalf of the Italian Government the Single European Act drawn up by the Conference of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States of the European Community, I should like to ask you to have the following statement included in the records of the Conference:

"The Italian Government has always considered - and its own actions have been based on this conviction - that the Intergovernmental Conference to amend the Treaties of Paris and Rome should represent an historic opportunity for relaunching the process of European integration on the basis of the *acquis communautaire*, the Solemn Declaration of Stuttgart on European Union and the conclusions of the Dooge and Adonnino reports, and that this should be done in keeping with the spirit and method of the draft Treaty on European Union adopted by the European Parliament.

Italy has indicated the following priority objectives for joint action: the creation of a large market comprising an "area without frontiers"; the general adoption of majority voting in Council decisions and the simplification of the relevant procedures; the strengthening of the institutional framework, with particular reference to the conferral (as provided for in the Dooge report) of joint decision-making power on the European Parliament; the broadening of the Commission's powers of management and implementation; extension of the scope of the Treaty of Rome to new spheres of activity.

The Italian Government will continue to pursue these objectives, convinced that their achievement will enable the European Community to meet the needs of our peoples. We are supported in this by the fact that these objectives are shared not only by the European Parliament but also by many Member States and by the Commission.

An objective examination of the results of the Intergovernmental Conference shows that the Single European Act is merely a partial and unsatisfactory response to the need for substantial progress in the direction indicated by the European Parliament and by the reports of the Dooge and Adonnino Committees.

As regards the powers of the European Parliament, the Act provides for a double-reading system which does not constitute the joint decision-making power sought by the European Parliament and the Italian Parliament.

As to the commitment to achieve the internal market by 31 December 1992, I would point out that this objective is hedged around by a whole series of exceptions and derogations which reduce its effect considerably.

Moreover, the introduction of majority voting for Council decisions has been confined to a few Articles of the Treaty, with exceptions and the possibility of derogations in extremely important sectors.

Lastly, just as the significant progress hoped for in the field of European Economic and Monetary Union has not materialized, so has there been a failure to extend Community jurisdiction to extremely important areas of European life such as culture, health and the fight against terrorism, organized crime and drug abuse.

The Single European Act does not therefore represent the realization of that fundamental reform of the European Community for which the Italian Government has been striving and which was desired by the national parliament, in line with the suggestions put forward by the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

The Italian Government considers that the Intergovernmental Conference which took place following the European Council meeting in Milan was neither able nor willing to take advantage of the opportunities open to it for enabling our Community to make a genuine, qualitative leap forward. It can therefore do no other than express its deep dissatisfaction. Italy intends to use the opportunity afforded by the signing of the Single European Act to reaffirm its determination to work to ensure that the limited reforms agreed upon are not only applied in full but in addition, and above all, that they are carried out in a progressive manner. In this connection, taking up the requests made by the European Parliament to the Governments of the Member States, the Italian Government calls on the current Presidency of the Council to initiate amendment of the Council's Rules of Procedure without delay so as to make a vote possible when it is requested by the Commission or three Member States.

In addition, the Italian Government calls on the Governments of the Community countries to take the necessary steps to ensure that by 1 January 1988 all the Community institutions carry out an examination of the implementation and operation of the decisions adopted by the Intergovernmental Conference with the aim of verifying their validity and expanding their scope, especially as regards greater participation by the European Parliament in the legislative process, so that the planned reform of the European Community can go ahead.

Lastly, the Italian Government wishes to make clear that it will take all possible steps to make citizens, parties and sections of opinion more aware of the problems involved in European Union and of the best ways of achieving it."

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