

Prime Minister  
Gro Harlem Brundtland

SPEECH AT LUNCH ON OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE DELEGATION  
OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES IN NORWAY,  
9 NOVEMBER 1987

Chairman of the Council of Ministers  
Members of the Commission of the European  
Communities  
Members of the European Parliament  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

The inauguration of the Delegation of the Commission of the European Communities in Oslo today is an event of political as well as practical significance. The presence of so many distinguished representatives of the Presidency, the Commission and the European Parliament together with the ambassadors of EC countries is an indication of the value and extent of the close cooperation between Norway and the Communities.

My visit to the Commission earlier this year not only provided an opportunity for a useful exchange of views on our cooperation. It also gave me an opportunity to underline how much we would welcome the delegation, which we are inaugurating today.

The establishment of a separate Norwegian delegation to the EC earlier this year is another important means of strengthening contact, communication and the basis for even closer cooperation to our mutual benefit. We are also determined to make active use of our presence in EC member countries to extend and deepen cooperation and contacts in the political, economic and cultural fields, thereby adding new dimensions to our relationship to Europe.

The new and accelerated phase of integration in the Community is of fundamental significance for Europe, for Norway and in a wider international context.

Europe has an important role to play on the international scene politically, economically and technologically. Europe has a responsibility for and self-interest in contributing to economic growth and sustainable development in a global context as well.

The Single European Act reflects new and dynamic designs. The commitment to complete the internal market by the end of 1992, the aim of strengthening the scientific and technological base of European industry, and the provisions on European Political Cooperation and on the environment set a new stage not only for cooperation within the Communities. These developments also pose new challenges to non-member countries such as Norway.

Almost 70% of Norwegian exports go to the EC. Our industry is a major supplier of inputs to EC industry and is making active efforts to adapt to the pattern and structure of demand and requirements in EC markets. Norway is a major supplier of oil and natural gas to members of the EC. We have the willingness and the resources necessary to continue and to increase our contribution to satisfying energy demands of Europe on a stable and long-term basis. Norway's role as supplier of the strategic commodities oil and natural gas is not only of economic, but also of political significance, strengthening the bonds and prospects of closer cooperation between us in a wide perspective.

It is our policy to participate actively in a necessary revitalization of Europe, both bilaterally and through EFTA. We regard the "Europe of the 12" as a catalyst for the "Europe of the 18".

Last May my Government submitted a Report to the Storting on Norway's relationship with the EC and European Cooperation. The White Paper identifies tasks and challenges facing Norway and provides the basis for a more comprehensive and up-to-date debate on Norway's relationship with Europe and our country's role in European politics.

It is my government's firm desire to cooperate actively with the Communities to the full extent which is practically possible.

We realize that we shall have to adapt to changes in Europe to an increasing extent to avoid new obstacles to trade. We are encouraged by the openness shown towards the EFTA-countries, as expressed in the declaration adopted by the EC and EFTA ministerial meeting in Luxembourg in 1984. I have noted with great satisfaction the subsequent confirmation on both sides of the political will to endorse the goal of developing a large area of economic cooperation embracing all of Western Europe.

The openness shown by the EC in the field of research and development is a key to future economic growth and development. By participating in EC programmes, we can join forces to mutual advantage also in this important future-oriented field.

The relationship between the Communities and Norway rests on a firm foundation. It is characterized by close cooperation, goodwill and shared interests. It is fostered by a common cultural and historical heritage, shared social values, geographical proximity and cooperation in the fields of trade, industry, energy and shipping.

We are happy to welcome to Norway as a distinguished representative of the Commission of the European Communities a prominent Welshman, who shares with us Norwegians a geographical background somewhat on the fringe of Europe. This can add to his other excellent qualifications for not only understanding and communicating Norwegian perspectives and views on Europe and European Cooperation. But also for keeping us informed of developments in EC cooperation and for giving us insight into the thinking of the Commission that he represents.

Ambassador Hughes, I am pleased to learn from the media that you are prepared to take up your new duties with keen interest and dedication and that you have been wise enough to include in your luggage a pair of skis and a volume of Snorre Sturlasons Edda in Norwegian. This augurs very well for an inspiring and rewarding mission in Norway.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me propose a toast to an important mile-stone in the relationship and cooperation between Norway and the EC, the inauguration of the Delegation of the Commission of the European Communities in Oslo.