

Düsseldorf

Prime Minister  
Gro Harlem Brundtland

DINNER SPEECH, HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL, 29 NOVEMBER 1988.

Mr. Minister President,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to have this opportunity to meet so many prominent representatives of German politics, industry, and public life.

When I welcomed the initiative to have today's Symposium, I did so against a background where we in Norway now are discussing more openly and analytically the various aspects of European cooperation and indeed, of our cooperation with Europe and the implications of the Internal Market.

It was therefore natural for me to choose Norway and Europe as the issue for my presentation. Other Prime Ministers have spoken about similar issues recently; When Prime Minister Thatcher spoke about Europe in Brugge some weeks ago, she commended the audacity of the organizers for having invited her. She said it might have seemed to some people like inviting Genghis Khan to speak about the virtues of peaceful coexistence.

I shall not invite you to reflect the fact that I have addressed the same issues as the Prime Minister of a non-member country. But it certainly is an example of our more active policy towards Europe and European cooperation.

Like Faust we may say:

"Ich fühle Mut, mich in die Welt zu wagen,  
Der Erde Weh, der Erde Glück zu tragen"

For a number of years, and in particular since the discovery of oil and gas in Norway, many people both in Norway and here in the Federal Republic have devoted a great deal of time and effort to expanding the economic relations between us. I know that many of you who are present here today have been actively involved in that process.

These efforts have brought some very tangible results and today The Federal Republic is our most important trading partner. We need to build on this, and there are political as well as economic reasons for strengthening our cooperation and to give it new dimensions as the Internal Market nears completion.

We see more eye to eye than many other countries. We have established so many contacts between us that the basis from which we can address the future challenges exists. We share many

values and views with respect to environmental issues, and I believe that together we can address some of the most critical issues of our time which relate to the environment and the future course of social and economic development.

Therefore it is important for both of us that the Internal Market does not stop at the borders of the EC, but that it will comprise the countries, such as Norway, which have been included in the broader concept of the European Economic Space.

In this context we are pleased and encouraged by the position taken by the Federal Government, which has been repeated in the talks I have had during my visit. The Federal Government, which expressly recognizes that the relations to the EFTA countries has a particular quality in the ECs relations to third countries, is a firm proponent of the parallel approach which means that arrangements must be made with the EFTA countries parallel to the EC's own process leading up to 1993.

We in Norway feel convinced that the Federal Republic will support our efforts to develop Norway's cooperation with the EC and help to build more bridges between us.

Dear guests, we are living in a period of profound changes. History suggests that mankind rarely understands revolutionary changes while they are taking place. Today's and tomorrow's changes are characterized by their great magnitude and speed. Their impact is both centrifugal and centripetal, dispersing, yet at the same time concentrating activities, influence and decisions.

With regard to Europe, we know that earlier in history, it was all but unified, Europe was a land of hatred and strife, of devastating wars and of great human suffering. It was a jig-saw of barriers, and at each barrier a body of officials whose business it was to impose every imaginable obstacle to hinder people's free exchanges.

Let us recall the Abbé de Saint-Pierre who at the time of the Peace of Utrecht pondered on the ill fate of Europe. His vision, ridiculed as incredibly naïve at the time, was of a community of peaceful nations having a common legal framework and common institutions. His most daring vision has come true today. We have a situation where for the first time in history, war between Western European nations is inconceivable and impossible.

The agreement between the EC and COMECON opens even wider perspectives and more hope for the future of Europe. The changes taking place in the Soviet Union must be used to benefit the European people on both sides of the political divide that still runs through our continent.

We must continue our efforts to reduce the practical significance of this divide while taking due account of our common security interests.

Said in another way, one could well quote the words of Busch. I am now referring to Wilhelm Busch, who said: "Die sogenannten

Wahrheiten habe ich doch ein wenig im Verdacht der Unbeständigkeit".

In concluding, dear guests, I hope that the friendly and close relations between Norway and the Federal Republic, as manifested here today, will continue to prevail in the future under all circumstances to mutual benefit of both countries.