

Düsseldorf

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Prime Minister
Gro Harlem Brundtland

SPEECH AT LUNCHEON GIVEN BY MINISTER PRESIDENT JOHANNES RAU, 29.
NOVEMBER 1988.

Mr. Minister President,
Dear Johannes Rau,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very grateful for the generous words of welcome and for this opportunity to meet so many prominent representatives of industry, politics and public life in the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen

There are impressive figures which clearly illustrate the great importance of the economic exchanges and cooperation between us. More than half of the Norwegian investments in the Federal Republic take place in Nordrhein-Westfalen and three-fourths of the German investments in Norway originate in this state.

About one-third of the Norwegian-German trade relates to the State of Nordrhein Westfalen, and many of the companies situated here are among the core of key players in the German-Norwegian pattern of cooperation, companies such as VEBA, led by our most valuable Consul General Mr. Bennigsen-Foerder, Ruhrgas, Deminex and Thyssen.

We are united by gas pipelines and air connections, and by frequent visits by representatives in politics, economy and culture.

Our Crown Prince's visits and the recent visit to Norway by a large trade delegation led by Minister Jochimsen are examples of the firm relations that already exist.

Throughout history Europe has been a cradle of innovations and ideas that have pointed towards a better future, not only for Europeans themselves, but also for the entire world. However, Europe's role in the world today does not reflect its real potential or responsibility.

Nordrhein Westfalen and indeed Düsseldorf is a centre of gravity in the Western economy. From here emanate technological innovations that will shape our future. High technology sectors have come to the forefront together with the traditional industries. The growth of new successful industries have shown the great energy and talent that you possess.

The Internal Market will be a reality in very few years. It may prove to mark the beginning of a new era of economic growth. It has the potential of helping us overcoming the mounting unemployment and the alarming deterioration of the environment. The fruits of integration of the European market should be used to eliminate unemployment and pollution as well as regional economic imbalances.

A stronger, more self-confident Europe should become even more outward looking. It should strive further to overcome the East-West divide, and it should consciously address the increasing gap between the rich and the poor nations.

It is my firm conviction that the issues of environment and development can open more eyes to the compelling demand for closer international cooperation, within Western Europe, across the East-West divide, as well as on a global scale.

We need a responsible sense of mission, a future based on environmentally sound technology, on dialogue, equal opportunities and on social justice.

Nordrhein Westfalen has a great opportunity but also a responsibility in the process of charting the course for the future. I believe you are very well equipped to take on this responsibility. Nordrhein-Westfalen is a cornerstone of the social dimension of European cooperation. The social partners of the Federal Republic have their seats here. So have numbers of giant enterprises.

In Norway we will continue to look to Nordrhein Westfalen for partners as we approach the turn of the century. I am convinced that an expansion of relations between Norway and Nordrhein-Westfalen would contribute to a better utilization of our potential and to a better future for all Europeans in a changing world.

I propose a toast to my good friend Johannes Rau and to a continued partnership between our two European regions - Nordrhein-Westfalen and Norway, and I would like to conclude with the words of Heine:

"Ich habe sie immer so lieb gehabt,
die lieben, guten Westfalen,
ein Volk so fest so sicher so treu,
ganz ohne Gleissen und Prahlen".