

Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland

**The Shaping of a New Europe; A Norwegian Perspective on
Membership of the European Union**

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Over the past 20 years I have often been asked by European colleagues: When is Norway going to join Europe?

When asked this question I have found it useful to recall that Norway has been culturally and historically integrated in Europe for 1000 years or more. Our identity and world outlook has been shaped in an interaction with other European cultures. Norway's traditions for trade and communications, not least by sea, has kept us in the mainstream of European developments from medieval time, and even in the most remote Norwegian village along our coast one would find tradesmen and sailors as fluent in Italian or Portuguese as in their native tongue, hundreds of years before the ages of plane travel and fiber optics. Our artists were and are as much at home in Rome or Leipzig as our maritime community is in London, Rotterdam or Antwerpen.

The echoes of the age of enlightenment, and of political ideas such as the social contract and democracy were as resounding in Norway as in other European countries. We were one of the first countries to adopt the political "acquis" of the French revolution when we drafted our constitution in 1814 which is still in force. The purpose of my speech here today, however, is not to convince you that Norway is as European as the present members of the European Union. The purpose is rather to explain why it is the firm ambition of the Norwegian government that Norway should accede to the European Union.

I would not be surprised if many of you thought that the question whether Norway will become a member is even more salient. Guesswork of this nature belongs, after all, to the daily diet of diplomats and observers alike. I shall therefore first of all deal briefly with the political situation in Norway.

A part of the European press has interpreted the results of our recent parliamentary elections as a warning that public opinion in Norway is turning against membership. Such analysis is supported by opinion polls in Norway and in other Nordic countries which have shown a negative trend. Events in other European countries in the course of the past couple of years have reminded us all never to underestimate the force of public opinion. The uncertainty about the future of European co-operation is also reflected in Norway. In addition, our public opinion is influenced not least by the uncertainty of the negotiating process itself. It is a challenge for the Community as well as for Norway to work for solutions which will make the people of Norway feel welcomed into Europe.

I believe, however, that such a solution is possible, and I believe it is useful to look more thoroughly into the political situation in Norway in order to better understand the nature of the present skepticism.

The Labour Party had a very clear message to the electorate on the European issue: A broad political debate involving thousands of party members led to last year's decision at our Party Convention to recommend a Norwegian application for membership. We made it clear to the electorate that our ambition is to complete the negotiations on accession. We will make every effort to achieve a satisfactory result in the negotiations, one that we can recommend to the Norwegian people. It will then be for the people to decide in a referendum if Norway should become a full and equal member and take full part in the shaping of a new Europe.

The elections resulted in a strengthened governing Labour Party, increasing its vote from 34 per cent in the 1989 election to 37 per cent now in September. A broad majority in the newly elected Parliament favoured the Labour Party to continue in Government.

I wish to underline the Government's dedication and commitment to carry these negotiations through to a successful conclusion. There is a broad support for this policy in the newly elected Parliament. A proposal aiming at withdrawing our membership application was overwhelmingly defeated in Parliament just recently.

In public polls, a majority favoured membership two years ago. Since the summer of 1992, also under the influence of the first Danish referendum, this has now shifted to a majority against. But such polls do not tell the whole story. Other polls reveal that a majority support the decision of last November to apply for membership. Asked about what they would vote if it is clear that Sweden and Finland will join the European Community, a majority of Norwegians say they are in favour. Our situation is certainly as open as situations we have seen before in other European countries,

At present we are working to bring the negotiations forward. We are on schedule, and we are ready to continue to negotiate in parallel with the other applicant countries with a view to become members as of 1 January 1995.

It is my firm belief that successful negotiations could lead to a new and stimulating enlargement of a European Community endowed with so many responsibilities. After yesterday's meeting at ministerial level, we have closed a third of the chapters to be negotiated. Fragmented chapters of negotiations do not, however, put our membership aspirations into the right political perspective. I am grateful, therefore, for this opportunity to share with you how we see the challenges and opportunities ahead.

This enlargement process coincides with a period of social, economic and political unrest in Europe. Willy Claes pointed out three fundamental reasons for this situation when he presented the Belgian Presidency to the European Parliament last July: Firstly, a general mistrust, even discredit of Community institutions. Secondly, the deep economic unease that profoundly affects the social fabric of our societies. And thirdly the feeling of impotence, since not only the Community but

also the United Nations and the international community have been unable to contain the crises in the former Yugoslavia.

The new Europe polarizes opinions on account of conflicting political designs for its future. In 1949, in a situation more turbulent and uncertain than that of today, Paul Henri Spaak said that "pessimism is justified only if we do nothing to organize ourselves and save ourselves. If we organize Europe there is no reason for such pessimism to exist."

Today, Europe is organizing itself and we can get rid of the pessimism. The European Community is the hub of the new political order in Europe. Norway has stated clearly from the outset that we support the political objectives set out in the Maastricht Treaty and that we will take an active part in these endeavours.

The debate over Maastricht has sent important messages. The ambitions set out in the Treaty are not such that can be easily realized overnight. We need to bring our efforts closer to the needs of people in their daily life. The creative potential of Europeans will not be unleashed within a distant and technocratic perspective. Europe will need a variety of means for political cooperation tailored to its variety - some supranational, others international, national, regional and local. The debate over subsidiarity cannot be limited to legal interpretation of Treaty provisions. Subsidiarity should underpin our continuous effort to handle our challenges at the level where they can most efficiently and legitimately be solved.

Europeans base their identity on their belonging to a region inside a nation state. This must not, however, blind us to the limits of what we can achieve at home. In today's Europe, there is a danger of resurrecting old-style patterns of power politics which have a poor record as a guarantor of peace and prosperity in Europe.

This is alarming in a world of growing complexities, where goods, capital, services and information move so quickly around the globe. All these challenges defy containment behind traditional borders. The nation state alone can no longer cope. Nuclear weapons, pollution, information technology and a global economy have all rendered parts of nation state autonomy redundant. The concept of integration has become the survival recipe for nation states. As we approach a new century, only much stronger international cooperation will permit Europe to assume the role on the global scene which is inherent in its potential.

When the EEA agreement enters into force next January, we will have created the world's largest single market, one consisting of 18 countries. That is and remains a major achievement. Europe will be better placed to take advantage of its innovative and creative potential. Our industries will be better placed in global competition. As the scourge of unemployment threaten increasing numbers of fellow Europeans, one thing remains certain: If we had not removed barriers, not adopted common rules and not increased co-operation, the problem of unemployment would have been much worse. This is often ignored in the current debate.

But a single market will never be the final goal for our co-operative efforts. There is no invisible hand that will lead the peoples of Europe to stability, peace and development. No matter how strong the political will, there is no single national road to full employment, to monetary stability or to low interest rates.

These are realities common to all, and this is the underlying reason for our membership application. During the months ahead the focus will be on a few problem areas. Then let us not forget the broader perspectives underlying these negotiations. The next enlargement is to include Northern Europe into the centre of European co-operation - as Southern Europe was included in the 1980's and with the prospect that Central and Eastern European countries may follow as soon as they and the Union are ready.

Let me touch more closely on three significant political aspects of enlargement towards the North: The security dimension and the situation in the Far North, a Nordic contribution to the European Community and the challenges we all face from increasing unemployment and social tension.

Security and Co-operation in the Far North

In the North of Europe, the new Russia meets the West. Over the last few years we have established structures for deepened regional co-operation not only in the Baltic region but also in the Barents region in the High North. These regions will play an essential role in the development of Russia's policy towards the West, and for the West's policy towards Russia.

The North-Western part of Russia is a key gateway to Western Europe. Russia's principal ports, St. Petersburg, Murmansk and Arkhangelsk are located in those two regions, as are some of Russia's most advanced industries and military bases.

Norway has been in peace with Russia for one thousand years. We view the decades following 1917 as an aberration from the normalcy of contacts and trade which are a part of our common history. A hundred years ago trade flourished across the Norwegian-Russian border, linking peacefully the then East and West of the Euro-Asian continent.

Our ambition is to restore normalcy across borders which have separated us in the past. Last January the Nordic countries, Russia and the EC Commission established the Barents Euro-Arctic Region. This regional co-operation comprises eight counties from the four countries of the region, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The initiative aims at furthering trade, environmental protection, cultural co-operation, transportation and investment in the region.

The opportunities for economic and cultural co-operation are great, but so are the challenges. Today, Russia is not any longer the great military threat. But the instability of the political situation represents a new kind of security threats which cannot be ignored. It would be irresponsible to overlook the danger of set-backs.

Norway is now the only NATO country that shares a common border with Russia. Russia remains the single largest military power on the continent. The main part of its seabased strategic nuclear forces is deployed in the North. In addition to the 197 km long Norwegian-Russian land boundary, we have an unsettled boundary between maritime zones and continental shelves stretching almost 2000 km from our coasts and into the Polar basin.

The last years have revealed that the region is facing a major ecological crisis. The emissions of sulphur dioxide from two nickel plants just a few kilometres from the Norwegian border city of Kirkenes are three times larger than the total level of Norwegian emissions. The safety of nuclear power stations on the Kola Peninsula are also a source of great concern as are the nuclear waste deposits from the fleet of icebreakers and obsolete warships. Dumping at sea represents a threat, not only to Norway, but to other countries as well due to the sea currents going out of the Barents Region.

These are problems of a magnitude that far exceeds Russia's own capacity to deal with them. Broad-based international efforts will be needed.

It is of vital interest to us all that Russia be integrated into binding multilateral co-operation with the stable democratic zone in Europe. The risks of chaos in our immediate vicinity are greater than the risks of well-organized Russian moves against the interests of the West. The stability of our part of Europe would be enhanced by the accession of the remaining Nordic countries to the European Community. This would give these countries the political leverage to help draw Russia into Europe. Co-operation with Russia in the Far North would also be an important way of pursuing the aims of the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Such cooperation would also fall within the scope of one of the five areas identified at the European Council meeting last month as a sphere for possible joint efforts.

Norway's security depends on solidarity and co-operative efforts with our allies. NATO and the trans-Atlantic partnership are indispensable for Norway and the mainstay of Norwegian security policy, But the new dangers require that we act according to a wider agenda than NATO has offered us so far, - one that includes economic and environmental aspects of stability and cooperation.

NATO is changing. After the Cold War, Europe will have to assume a greater share of the burdens of its own security and its own defence. The Western European Union will play a vital role in its dual capacity as the defence component of the European Union and the means of strengthening the European pillar of the Alliance.

Norway's associate membership in the WEU should be seen in this perspective. As members of the Union, full WEU membership would be a logical next step.

Full participation in the Common Foreign and Security Policy is thus in Norway's fundamental national interest. In our membership negotiations, the chapter on the Common Foreign and Security Policy can be dealt with swiftly. Norway endorses the objectives contained in Title V of the Treaty and agrees to the procedures and means which are foreseen.

Norway is in a position to make a significant contribution to the implementation as well as the further development of co-operation in this field. As a founding member

of the Atlantic Alliance, we will bring with us a strong commitment to foreign and security policy co-operation. We have accumulated experience and expertise that could benefit the Union in a broad range of fields: Arms control, democracy-building, peacekeeping and development co-operation, to mention but a few key areas.

A Northern European dimension

It follows from my focus on the North that the European Community may soon comprise Arctic areas, vast and sparsely populated expanses where the conditions are different from those prevailing here in the centre of Europe.

The inclusion of Norway, Sweden and Finland would add several new dimensions to European co-operation and diversity. If the three Nordic applicant countries join the European Community, the total territory of the member states will increase by 50 percent. The total population, however, will only increase by 5 percent.

In the debate on enlargement, we sometimes hear arguments about a changing North-South balance of the Community. This is a debate which seems to dwell more on geographical images than on political realities. When it comes to the crucial challenges that confront us all, there is no reason for drawing any such dividing line across the European map.

The inclusion of three Nordic countries will strengthen the efforts to promote further cohesion in Europe. We expect to be net contributors to the budgets. The structural funds will be strengthened. With our accession, new regional areas will be eligible for regional aid. But we will not represent a burden on these funds.

As regards Norway, our main request is that we want to be able to maintain our own national cohesion. We do not contribute to European cohesion by reducing our own. In our own national policies we have had to deal with harsh climate and its limiting effect on agricultural productivity and forestry. Our redistributive policies have aimed at providing as equal opportunities as possible in a country where settlements are scattered and far apart. It is the very notion of cohesion that has shaped our national policies of welfare and distribution. Living standards vary remarkably little from one part of the country to another.

We wish to maintain this situation. It is essential to securing settlement from Stavanger in the South to Kirkenes in the North, two towns that are about three hours by plane apart. It is not in Europe's interest that Northern Norway becomes depopulated. The County of Finnmark borders with Russia. It has a population of only 70 000 and it is one and a half times the size of Belgium with its 10 million inhabitants. Special measures will still be needed to maintain the main features of our settlement pattern.

This is the background against which one should read the Norwegian positions on the four essential issues in our negotiations; fisheries, agriculture, regional policy and energy.

These issues have certain features in common. They are all related to our particular demographic, topographic and climatic conditions. They are related to the control and management of natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable. And not least, the solutions to these issues will have a decisive bearing on popular support for Norway's accession to the European Community.

We conduct these negotiations on the basis of the *aquis communautaire*. The EEA agreement has largely facilitated the task. We do, as I have explained, support the *finalité politique* of the Maastricht treaty. The solutions we ask for are meant to cover some dimensions which are not taken care of in the *aquis* developed by the six - then the nine, then the ten and then finally the twelve. They are such that would in all likelihood have been a part of the *aquis* had Norway already been a member when this *aquis* was adopted.

Let me exemplify this by pointing at two sectors; fish and energy. As a significant fishery nation we have learned, sometimes the hard way, the importance of policies securing the sustainable management of renewable ocean resources. Settlements in coastal Norway depend on these resources. The Northern waters represent a particular challenge with their biological and climatic characteristics. Whereas species are heavily overfished in other waters, we have succeeded in restoring the size of many stocks back to their historical level.

Over the years we have developed control and management practices adapted to the Northern waters. For obvious reasons the instruments of the EC fisheries policy

have not been developed with these waters in mind. When joining the Community, it is vital that satisfactory management and control practices be secured.

Norway provides Europe with energy from a climatically difficult, but politically stable corner of Europe. Our continental shelf has been developed by inviting foreign companies to join in exploration and exploitation. This is how it is experienced by major European and American companies, and this is how we want it to continue.

We are an energy exporting country with the ambition to enter into a Community of largely energy importing countries. The petroleum sector is of vital importance to Norway's economy. The contribution of this sector to our GDP equals the contribution from the total mainland industry. We have no problem with the existing *acquis communautaire* in the energy field. But it is important for us that the countries of the Community understand and respect Norwegian concerns in the elaboration of future European energy policies. A failure in this respect could have a very negative effect on the perspective of obtaining a majority in favour of membership. That would not be in the interest of either the EC countries, nor the more than 20 foreign companies active at our continental shelf.

We believe that acceptable solutions are within reach. But there is still some way to go and we will need political understanding of some fundamental dimensions if we are to succeed.

None of the solutions we ask for represent hurdles on the future road towards European integration. Take our agricultural sector as an example. Only three percent of our territory is used for agricultural purposes. Our self-sufficiency is the lowest in Western Europe. An immediate transition to the Common Agricultural Policy would reduce our farmers' income by nearly 50 percent overnight. Our agricultural sector will have very little impact on the European market. But it has a considerable role to play in securing settlement in remote areas.

We accept the market system of the CAP, but we will need a transitional period and some special arrangements adapted to our climatic and topographic situation. To a large extent, we would be ready to cover the extra cost of such arrangements ourselves. What we ask for is flexibility and acknowledgement of the new reality introduced by our Northern areas.

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I would like to conclude my remarks with some views on the most pressing challenge we face today - that of rising unemployment. More than 22 million unemployed in the European OECD countries is a threat to the stability of our political systems and to the cohesion of our social systems.

We believe that firmer economic and monetary co-operation in Europe is absolutely essential. The recent monetary turbulence has brought back memories of times when one country could export its internal problems to its neighbour by means currency devaluations. At the end of the day, this is in nobody's interest. We all end up as losers.

Norway is close to fulfilling the convergence criteria for the Economic and Monetary Union set out in the Maastricht Treaty. This is also a chapter of our negotiations which we can rapidly close.

The convergence criteria of the Economic and Monetary Union are not goals to be achieved for their own sake. We have not necessarily succeeded once they are fulfilled by all. At present we are far removed from fulfilling the overriding objective of employment for all. No national economy is in balance when large parts of the active population is out of work.

One year ago Norway took the initiative to strengthen co-operation between EFTA and EC countries in the field of growth and employment. Last April our ministers met to address the issue together for the first time. The EFTA countries have since co-operated on a substantial contribution to the White Book on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment. We look forward to the conclusions to be presented at the December summit of the European Council. Norway will support a strengthening and further elaboration of the proposals put forward in Edinburgh last year.

Our ability to cope with the employment challenge will determine whether we succeed or fail in the next phase of European co-operation. We will need radical measures and rethinking of old concepts. The closing years of this century will be dominated by a continuous adaptation to a new kind of international economy. In this economy the development of human resources will be the key means of

creating wealth. A major new challenge for our democracies will be to secure access for all to knowledge, training and education.

Knowledge is an inexhaustible resource, there is plenty of it for all. If we are to avoid new and deep social divisions we need to work towards a new societal model of redistribution and strengthened social justice. Europe paved the way to the welfare state. It will be Europe's task to bring our welfare societies into a new age.

In this effort we need joint thinking and joint action. The idea of the "competitive advantage of nations" will not carry the day. Together the countries of Europe have the potential of exploring the "cooperative advantage of nations". Willy Brandt's words summarise the challenge: "We are doomed to creativity together, or irrelevance apart."