

**The Prime Minister of Norway
Gro Harlem Brundtland**

**Address to the European Parliament
Strasbourg
19 April 1994**

NORWAY'S ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

Mr. President,

Three months ago I had the honour of addressing this distinguished assembly. My objective then was to outline Norwegian views on the final stage of the Norwegian membership negotiations. Several important issues were still unresolved, and we all knew that the negotiations would be complicated.

It therefore gives me great pleasure to be here today, having successfully concluded our negotiations a few days ago. The timetable set was ambitious, almost Herculean. It was imperative to conclude the negotiations in time for the European Parliament to deal with the issue of enlargement if it were to take effect from the first of January 1995.

But we managed. Now I hope it will be possible for this Parliament, as the directly elected representatives of the peoples of the present Member States, to reach a decision.

I believe the Nordic countries have a great deal to contribute as members of the European Union. You will find us on your side in a number of issues. We bring with us sound democratic traditions. We will join those who work for more transparency and an increased democratic legitimacy of this unique kind of cooperation in which the European Parliament will remain an essential pillar of democracy. We want the Union's decision-making capacity and efficiency to be secured. A Union of 16 must be no less efficient than a Union of 12.

Norway supports the political objectives of the Maastricht Treaty. We want membership because we wish to take our share of the responsibility for Europe's future. In today's Europe, we face challenges that can only be satisfactorily dealt with if we act in concert.

The Nordic countries are situated in a strategically important part of our continent. The West meets Russia in the Baltic and the Barents regions. A common European foreign and security policy will not be complete unless Northern Europe participates fully in the European Union.

a concerted effort to bury the scourge of unemployment. We will contribute to raising our ambitions in the field of environment. We will pursue the strengthening of the much needed social dimension of European cooperation. Together with you, we will wish to welcome the new democracies as partners in the future European cooperation.

When we met in January, I discussed four key issues in our negotiations: regional policy, energy, fisheries and agriculture. I said that Norway is different from the present members of the EU in these fields. We sought solutions which would safeguard and take account of Norwegian concerns associated with the management and control of our natural resources. We did not ask for derogations. Our aim was to find solutions compatible with the *acquis*. We want Norwegian realities to be an integrated part of the Union's realities - not an exception to the rule.

In this we have succeeded. New dimensions have been added to EU policies in the fields of agriculture, fisheries and regional policy. In the field of energy, we succeeded in paving the way for energy-exporting Norway to work even more closely with our energy-importing partners among the present Member States.

Thus, in presenting the result to the Norwegian people, we can say with confidence that we can continue sustainable management of our resources and maintain essential elements of our regional policy.

The Norwegian Government is now informing the people of Norway about the terms of accession. Europe has changed profoundly since we held the previous referendum on membership in 1972. The time has now come to join other sovereign and democratic European states in a widened and deepened cooperation - the most successful and the most effective, visionary and promising regional cooperation the world has seen.

So far, against many odds, we have managed to respect the timetable which was agreed by the European Council in consultation with the European Parliament last October. All four applicant countries have made the necessary preparations for national ratification later this year, paving the way for accession on 1 January 1995.

The procedure of ratification can begin once you have given your approval. It is of course important that the timetable can be kept so that we can hold our referendums as planned. The peoples of the applicant countries will appreciate to feel the assurance that they are truly welcome - also by the European Parliament - as partners for the future.