



PRIME MINISTER GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

Der Internationale Karlspreis zu Aachen, 12 Mai 1994

Vielen Dank, Herr Oberbürgermeister, für Ihre Ausführungen. Vielen Dank, Ruud Lubbers für Deine freundlichen Worte

Ich danke auch der Stadt Aachen für den außerordentlich freundlichen Empfang und die große Ehre, die mir gegenüber zum Ausdruck gebracht wurde.

Sehr geehrter Herr Bundespräsident,
Exzellenzen,
Hochverehrte Gäste,

als ich die Mitteilung erhielt, daß das Direktorium des Karlspreises mich als diesjährigen Preisträger ausersehen hatte, befanden wir uns mitten in einer Phase umfassender Verhandlungen über den Beitritt Norwegens zur Europäischen Union. Ich dachte an die besondere Situation, die sich ergeben hätte, wenn wir heute hier versammelt wären, ohne daß die Verhandlungen mit Norwegen hätten abgeschlossen werden können. Mir wurde klar, daß wir Norweger uns in jedem Fall in einer Phase der starken Bewußtmachung über die Bedeutung Europas befinden würden und daß die Frage der Zukunft der Europäischen Union, der Umfang der Union und ihre Prioritäten zu den brennendsten Fragen unserer Zeit gehören.

Wir stehen vor einer möglicherweise völlig neuen Epoche der europäischen Geschichte. Vier grundsolide Demokratien stehen am Tor zur Europäischen Union. Eine weitere Erweiterung nach Osten wäre das Ergebnis eines demokratischen Quantensprungs in Europa und wirkt gleichzeitig begünstigend darauf ein. Die Europäische Union ist im Begriff, zu eben der gesamteuropäischen Zusammenarbeit zu werden, von der viele geträumt haben.

Unsere gesamteuropäische Geschichte handelt von Frieden und Unfrieden, von Handel und Impulsen zwischen Völkern und Regionen, von Bündnissen und Allianzen, von Religionsstreit und Einigung. Heute sind wir der Situation näher als je zuvor, daß ganz Europa sich politisch organisieren und eine Rechtsordnung schaffen kann, die Sicherheit und Zukunftshoffnung geben kann.

Ein geschichtlicher Rückblick zeigt, daß Norwegen zeitweise die europäische Geschichte nur als Zuschauer mitgemacht hat. Doch die Änderungen in Europa haben stets die Entwicklung auch in meinem Land beeinflußt. In der Regel hat Norwegen sich kulturell und wirtschaftlich am stärksten entwickelt, wenn die Verbindungen zu Europa am stärksten waren.

Heute kann das norwegische Volk frei wählen, ob wir der Europäischen Union als gleichberechtigter Partner beitreten sollen. Die diesjährige Verleihung des Karlspreises sehe ich in erster Linie als einen Ausdruck

dafür, daß Norwegen, die norwegische Wirklichkeit und das norwegische Volk in die Union willkommen geheißen werden.

Es ist eine verbreitete und zutreffende Auffassung, daß viele meiner Landsleute der Europäischen Union skeptisch gegenüberstehen und nur zögernd diese Möglichkeit ergreifen wollen. Ich möchte versuchen geschichtlich zu erklären warum Norwegen sich nur schrittweise der Zusammenarbeit in der Europäischen Union angenähert hat, - wer wir sind und was wir wollen.

Meine Damen und Herren, erlauben Sie mir, daß ich die folgenden Ausführungen nun in englischer Sprache halte.

In this town where Charlemagne had his residence, it seems natural to start by going all the way back to the ninth century. It was shortly after Charlemagne's era, in the 880s, that Norway first became a state. Nordic Vikings were already plowing the seas and penetrating deep into the European heartlands. They founded the Slavic state in Kiev, were received with honours in Constantinople, and sailed to North America. The Norwegian King Harald Hardråde raided the Mediterranean and conquered a number of cities in Sicily. The monks in Brittany prayed to be saved from the wrath of the Normans.

Gradually, their hardly blessingful plundering gave way to learning. Crafts, laws and cultural and political ideas sifted back north to Norway.

The Church in Southern Norway belonged to the Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen in the earliest period of Norwegian Christianity. Less than three centuries after Charlemagne, Norway had become so integrated in European culture that tradesmen, craftsmen and pilgrims were frequent travelers to our marketplaces and our towns. The most prominent was Nidaros, present-day Trondheim were Norway's patron St. Olav had been enshrined in 1031. President von Weizsäcker knows this. We have been to the cathedral of Trondheim together.

Still Norwegians had a lot to learn. A guidebook for Norwegian pilgrims from about the year 1150 states that "In Saxonland the most courteous people live, and there Norsemen learn many things that they imitate."

In the fourteenth century, plague weakened the country's population base and dynastic inheritance brought Norway under the King of Denmark. This process was brought to an end in 1536, when the Danish King dissolved Norway's state council and ruled that the Church of Norway should break with Rome and become Lutheran.

Now followed close to three hundred years of colonial experience until the King of Sweden, in 1814, received Norway as booty during the post-Napoleonic reorganization of Europe.

In the spring of 1814, elected people from every region of Norway came together and adopted a modern constitution strongly influenced by the American and French revolutions. The constitution is still in force, but

another ninety years were to pass before our country dissolved the union with Sweden in 1905, and re-emerged as a truly sovereign state. This sovereignty was gained after a long struggle and careful maneuvering between the major European powers.

The newly independent Norway was among the poorest countries in Europe. We were weak, insecure, but rich in identity and willpower to defend our newly won nationhood. Our national identity was strengthened by our polar explorers Nansen and Amundsen. It was interpreted by writers and composers such as Ibsen, Bjørnsson and Grieg. In 1922, Ibsen's epic drama "Peer Gynt" was the most frequently played drama in the German-speaking world.

The need for our old nation and young state to be accepted by all the major European powers was a main reason for Norway's policy of neutrality which was abandoned only after the second world war. We entered the post war period worn, poor, tired, but even more united than ever before.

Different from Central Europe, the Red Army actually withdrew completely after liberating parts of Northern Norway. But the firm Soviet grip on Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and the whole of Eastern Europe made us break with our policy of neutrality and enter NATO as a founding member in 1949. This decision was perhaps the most fundamental in our post-war history up till the present day.

In the fifties and sixties our international economic orientation closely followed that of the United Kingdom, reflecting our trade patterns, our strong monetary links to sterling and the dollar, and our reliance on shipping. We entered EFTA, and applied for membership of the EEC in parallel with the UK and Denmark. Then came the referendum in 1972 with its narrow no to membership. 53 per cent voted no. In the northern part of Norway, where generations had been struggling hard to carve a living of the sea, more than 80 per cent voted against.

In these Arctic regions, the fathers and grandfathers had been rowing their small fishing boats and struggling with nature to make even a humble living. Families depended totally on fish as these regions still do. They were afraid, in 1972, that foreign vessels would come and empty their traditional fishing grounds. They had not been reassured by the Community that this would not happen.

This was also the time when the petroleum era was still in its infancy, and many Norwegians felt that these resources would best enrich the country if we stayed outside the EEC.

The pre-referendum debate in Norway had been fierce, splitting families and friends and bruising political parties including my own. It was clear that any new endeavour to raise the membership issue would have to follow a most thorough democratic process.

In 1985 it became clear that the White Book on the single market would have enormous implications for Norway, since we depend so much on trade with EU countries. It would be irresponsible not to respond to this challenge. On this background, as the labour government took over in 1986, we raised the issue of our role and place in European cooperation.

The EEA agreement settled most our needs as regards the market. But history made its shifts, clearly illustrating that markets alone offer a too narrow political perspective.

When Germany was united, when old dictatorships crumbled, a quiet revolution opened up prospects for a truly all-European cooperation with the European Community, now the Union as the driving force. But these changes were only the top of an iceberg. It became clearer that all nation states, large and small, have experienced a gradual reduction of the powers which are formally vested in our national institutions.

- Important industries would thrive as long as the world economy was growing, but suffer severe set-backs as a result of monetary instability or devaluation in other countries, or dumping charges and other trade measures.
- The illusion that a country can pursue a national interest rate policy could be shattered in a matter of seconds by policy decisions in other countries.
- We could adopt costly measures to prevent polluting industries from damaging our environment, and still the life in our lakes and the health of our forests would be hostage to the smokestacks of Europe.
- We would build up the fish stocks in our waters, and still experience that thousands of jobs were established in other countries because customs barriers made it a losing battle to invest in fish processing for the European market.
- Moreover, issues affecting our security were increasingly being dealt with in fora in which we had no right to participate.

At the same time, another quiet revolution was changing the entire pattern of international relations. Information technology and the globalization of the international economy partially incapacitated national political institutions.

The Nordic scene changed when Finland and Sweden decided to apply for membership. Our neutral neighbours had made a decisive break. In November 1992 it was decided, first by the Norwegian Labour Party, then by the Norwegian Parliament, that Norway should also apply.

During the negotiations, we had to gain acceptance for the special needs related to the conditions prevailing at high northern latitude. We have a coastline of more than 21 000 km, equal to half way around the world. Along the coast, 300 scattered settlements depend totally on fisheries. Our population density is 2 persons per square kilometer in the high North

and 14 is the national average compared to more than 250 here in Germany. We cultivate our land under very different conditions from those in Niedersachsen or Ile de France.

Our ambition was not to obtain exceptions from community rules, but to expand community rules to comprise Norwegian conditions. Norway is not an exception from the rest of Europe, but part of the diversity that is Europe. Many of our European partners had a hard time understanding that issues such as fisheries, climate, the growing season, etc., could determine the larger issues of the configuration of the European Union, but we convinced them in the end. We finally reached a result which we can recommend to the Norwegian people in a referendum.

Why - then have we wished for Norway to join? The idea of democracy that people, through their participation in democratic processes in each country, can make decisions and choices about their own future is today only a half truth.

It is my firm conviction that membership will give more real room for democracy and greater control of forces which cannot be regulated by national assemblies or governments alone.

The challenge today is to deepen and widen the forces of democracy and to lift democratic decision-making also to the international level to allow us to achieve the goals we set and the aspirations we have for our societies.

There are a few Norwegian words in the common European vocabulary, such as "ombudsman", and I believe the next word to be adopted should be "trygghet" "Trygghet" or "zuversichtlichkeit" comprises the ideas of "safety", "confidence" in the future, and guarantees against arbitrariness and discrimination.

Europe can and must eliminate unemployment and provide more security and opportunity for the future of our people, regardless of their family background or origin.

We cannot accept a situation

- where our youth are in danger of not receiving an education or not knowing for what they are taking an education.
- where the elderly in many countries fear for their pensions because of the pressure against their social security systems.
- where environmental improvements are made hostage to the competitive watching-over-our-shoulders- attitude of countries guarding their competitive edge because common action is lacking.
- where 20 million Western Europeans are out of work while we spend 800 billion ECU on unemployment benefits and while there is work crying to be done all over Europe.

Membership of the Union is not an end in itself, but a means to make "trygghet" more real for ourselves, our jobs, our environment and for the coming generations.

European "trygghet" will be incomplete if the Union remains a torso, - cut off by the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. Many EU critics in Norway claim that our country is too small to carry any weight in the Union. I believe on the contrary that in a Union of sovereign states, small nations will count as well large ones and make their impact by the quality of their contribution to the common cause.

As member of the Union, Norway will speak as much as we will listen. We believe that the Union must thrive on change and respond to people's hopes and beliefs about their own future. The Union would become sterile and technocratic without such sensitivity towards cultural and regional characteristics. The Union is not a union of traders and brokers, but of people, struggling in their daily lives, paying their mortgages, providing for their children. Caring about jobs, education, and pension schemes, worrying about crime, violence, environmental threats and about the shrill voices of intolerance and hatred.

We must take great care to address not only democratic legitimacy, but also "social legitimacy". It is not tenable if people believe that Union matters are dealt with behind closed doors without sufficient sensitivity towards the needs of the people.

The Union is now more explicitly confronting our arch-enemy No. 1, unemployment. In the fight against unemployment, price stability is an effective weapon, but price stability must not be described as a goal for its own sake. How would you ask an unemployed young person to vote for the Union because of price stability, or a fifty-five year old who fears for his job to vote for the Union because we need more competition? No, price stability and competition are but some of the instruments by which we must create jobs and opportunity.

I believe it is time to underline the supremacy of states in the Union. It is through the democratic process in each member state that the Union derives its competence.

In its judgment of 12 October last year the German Constitutional Court made it clear that the people of the Member States are the masters, not the subordinates of the Union.

The court underlined that sovereign states have agreed to exercise some of their sovereignty jointly. Any further transfer of competence must be approved by national parliaments, be specific and explicit and must conform to the principle of subsidiarity.

It is a misconception that the Union lacks democratic control. Where European countries meet, so do democracies, and it is hard to conceive of any government surviving for long if it pursued a policy in the Union which did not have its basis in a democratic mandate at home.

In our individual countries, it is the lack of public participation rather than the contrary which is the gravest threat to democracy. There is no other solution than to make every effort to ensure greater public participation, whether in national or Union affairs.

The challenge ahead to improve European democracy and maintain the Union's effectiveness. With Norway as a member, we will pursue these goals at the Intergovernmental Conference in 1996. We are convinced that the Union must be effective whether it has 6, 12, 16 or for that matter, 20 or more members.

In a socially, politically and culturally diverse world, regional cooperation seems to have the greatest potential for the future.

I believe that we are entering a period of stronger regional cooperation, not only in Europe, but globally. Cooperation and integration have progressed unequally far in different regions. The Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, they all need regional cooperation.

If even Europe would be unable to organize itself politically and enlarge the benefits to be shared by all, then it is difficult to see where and how international cooperation can be successful.

The Union must be Europe's modern contribution to the civilization of inter-state relations. Its members will reconcile the reflexes of the sovereign national state with new principles of shared sovereignty and solidarity.

Europe needs more law and democracy. It is within that framework that the strong will be just and the weak secure.