

The Prime Minister of Norway  
Gro Harlem Brundtland

Remarks at the Opening Ceremony of Zeepipe.  
29 April 1994

Prime Minister Dehaene,  
Ministers,  
Excellencies  
Honoured guests,

There are a number of people who deserve credit today - people whose contributions have been crucial for the completion of the whole Zeepipe project. This huge project will unite us and ensure that we are partners far into the next century and will secure the stable delivery of environmentally friendly energy from Norway to Central Europe.

On this occasion, I would like to pay special tribute to the Prime Minister of Belgium. Prime Minister, when Belgium held the presidency of the European Communities, now the Union, last fall, you came to Norway to discuss the prospects of Norwegian membership.

We used that occasion to discuss energy policy. I appreciate your personal willingness to acquaint yourself with our energy policy and how it could be continued and reconciled with rules of the Community.

It was not least thanks to that personal involvement that we reached an agreement with the Union on energy policy which is satisfactory and which has removed a potential stumbling block for Norway's entry into the Union.

Norway intends to remain a reliable supplier of clean energy to Central Europe. Our natural gas is an environmentally friendly source of energy. If it can replace other more polluting forms of fossil fuel, it will help to counter acidification, Waldsterben, and the erosion of the architectural and cultural heritage of Europe.

We remember the times of widespread coal-firing. The sun would be shining but we would hardly see it because of smog. We remember how prevalent were the respiratory diseases.

A safer, cleaner energy future is the only option for Europe to champion its right to live and shine.

In the development of the energy industry in Europe, small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honour by their contribution to the common cause. Today, we are celebrating a major step in this direction. Thank you.