

STATSMINISTER WILLOCHS TALE VED MIDDAG I AMBASSADEN I
BRUSSEL 23.NOVEMBER 1983.

Mr. President,

Three years have elapsed since the last visit to the Community by a Norwegian Head of Government. At the same time, however, I would like to recall that my present visit constitutes the fifth contact on Ministerial level between my Government and the Commission during the current year only. This is but a reflection of the importance which the Norwegian Government attaches to the relations with the European Community.

During the first period following its establishment, the Community, quite naturally, concentrated its activities on the development of internal cooperation between its founding member countries. In the course of these early years, the Community made a significant contribution to the economic and political reconstruction and stabilization of post-war Europe. Having successfully accomplished this, the Community then led the way towards a broadening of the integration process in Western Europe through its enlargement and the establishment of a larger European free trade system in conjunction with EFTA. The consistent implementation of the Free Trade Agreements in spite of adverse economic circumstances, constitutes an important

achievement in European cooperation. We recognize today that the results have been very positive and beneficial to us all.

The Western European nations are facing common problems. We are challenged with the important task of stabilizing our economies and inducing new growth. We must fight unemployment and restore competitiveness. We must re-establish monetary order, stem protectionist tendencies, and endeavour to alleviate the heavy debt problems particularly among developing countries. National decisions and domestic action will obviously not suffice in overcoming these and other problems. Therefore, there is a strong need for international cooperation. The

countries of Western Europe must join forces and strive together to achieve our common objectives. In this the European Community, with its political and economic position, is looked upon to play an important part. The Norwegian government is ready to contribute actively in this process.

The words "Europe" and "European" are often used as synonyms for the Community. It is a political reality that today the Community is assuming a European role in world affairs. This places the relationship between the Community and the European non-member states into focus. Europe should have a voice as well as responsibilities in international affairs reflecting the growing economic and

political importance of the region. I have earlier today had the opportunity to reiterate the community of interests between Norway and the European Community. On this basis, the Norwegian Government is genuinely interested in intensifying our contacts and consultations, and to participate in joint efforts for concrete action.

Let me conclude by expressing my sincere thanks to all our guests from the Commission for the most stimulating and interesting discussions that we have had today. I would also like to thank all those who have assisted in preparing this visit, which I have found very useful and rewarding.