

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE GOVERNMENTS DINNER
AT AKERSHUS SLOTT ON 3 JULY 1980 AT 2000 HOURS FOR THE
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, MR. ROY JENKINS

Mr. President, Mrs. Jenkins,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me, on behalf of the Norwegian Government, to extend to you, Mr. President, and to your wife and the members of your delegation, a most sincere welcome to Norway.

The fact that we are giving this dinner in your honour at the medieval castle of Akershus is not meant to symbolize that Norway desires to fortify herself in isolation against the rest of Western Europe.

The historical origin of Akershus may very well

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lead our thoughts in opposite direction. The first fortress on these grounds was built at the beginning of the fourteenth century by King Haakon the Fifth at a time when Norway had recently opened her doors to Europe both diplomatically and politically. King Haakon was instrumental in establishing an active European policy - a policy which the present Government of Norway sees no reason to change.

Much has happened in Europe and the world during the eight years which have passed since we last had the pleasure of welcoming to Norway a President of the Commission of the European Communities. Profound changes in the world economy have left their impact on Europe, in the form of low economic growth, increasing unemployment and high inflation rates. Thus we are faced with new

tasks and responsibilities.

We believe that highest priority should now be given to combating the alarming problems of unemployment and inflation plaguing the Western World. The gravity of the situation was clearly reflected in the communiqué of the Venice summit meeting, and we were encouraged by its call for determined and concerted action.

Such action is a must, not only for economic reasons. It is unworthy for democratic societies to tolerate widespread unemployment. In particular it is unacceptable to let the socially weak and the youth of our countries shoulder the burdens of adverse economic conditions in the form of unemployment. This creates not only frustration but undermines confidence in our democratic institutions.

The fulfilment of Europe's obligations vis-à-vis

the Third World will depend on our capacity to cope with the new challenges. The efforts to hammer out a new development strategy for the eighties will require the full and constructive participation of European nations. Painful structural adjustments in Europe will be part of this process, but through joint efforts we may overcome serious repercussions for our respective economies.

Since Norway's advisory referendum in 1972 the question of membership in the European Community has remained a non-issue in Norwegian politics. But at the same time the Government has enjoyed strong support in the Norwegian Parliament and from public opinion for an active European policy. Close and comprehensive cooperation with the countries of Western Europe and with the Community

is, and will continue to be, of vital importance to us.

Mr. President. We know that you have contributed greatly to the development of the community and European cooperation. It is our hope that, although now leaving your present high office, you will be ready also in the future to serve the cause of Europe. Your experience and skill will be much needed.

With these words, I beg to propose a toast to you, Mr. President, and to the future relations between Norway and the European Community.