

Communiqué of the meeting of Heads of State or Government of the Member States at The Hague (1 and 2 December 1969)

1. On the initiative of the Government of the French Republic and at the invitation of the Netherlands Government, the Heads of State or Government and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the European Communities met at The Hague on 1 and 2 December 1969. The Commission of the European Communities was invited to participate in the work of the Conference on the second day.

2. Now that the Common Market is about to enter upon its final stage, they considered that it was the duty of those who bear the highest political responsibility in each of the Member States to draw up a balance sheet of the work already accomplished, to show their determination to continue it and to define the broad lines for the future.

3. Looking back on the road that has been traversed, and finding that never before have independent States pushed their co-operation further, they were unanimous in their opinion that by reason of the progress made the Community has now arrived at a turning point in its history. Over and above the technical and legal sides of the problems involved, the expiry of the transitional period at the end of the year has therefore acquired major political significance. Entry upon the final stage of the Common Market not only means confirming the irreversible nature of the work accomplished by the Communities, but also means paving the way for a united Europe capable of assuming its responsibilities in the world of tomorrow and of making a contribution commensurate with its traditions and its mission.

4. The Heads of State or Government therefore wish to reaffirm their belief in the political objectives which give the Community its meaning and purport, their determination to carry their undertaking through to the end, and their confidence in the final success of their efforts. Indeed, they have a common conviction that a Europe composed of States which, in spite of their different national characteristics, are united in their essential interests, assured of its internal cohesion, true to its friendly relations with outside countries, conscious of the role it has to play in promoting the relaxation of international tension and the rapprochement among all peoples, and first and foremost among those of the entire European continent, is indispensable if a mainspring of development, progress and culture, world equilibrium and peace is to be preserved.

The European Communities remain the original nucleus from which European unity has been developed and intensified. The entry of other countries of this continent to the Communities – in accordance with the provisions of the Treaties of Rome – would undoubtedly help the Communities to grow to dimensions more in conformity with the present state of world economy and technology.

The creation of a special relationship with other European States which have expressed a desire to that effect would also contribute to this end. A development such as this would enable Europe to remain faithful to its traditions of being open to the world and increase its efforts in behalf of developing countries.

5. As regards the completion of the Communities, the heads of State or Government reaffirmed the will of their governments to pass from the transitional period to the final stage of the European Community and accordingly to lay down a definitive financial arrangement for the common agricultural policy by the end of 1969.

They agreed progressively to replace, within the framework of this financial arrangement, the contributions of member countries by their own resources, taking into account all the interests

concerned with the object of achieving in due course the integral financing of the Communities' budgets in accordance with the procedure provided for in Article 201 of the Treaty establishing the EEC and of strengthening the budgetary powers of the European Parliament. The problem of the method of direct elections is still being studied by the Council of Ministers.

6. They asked the Governments to continue without delay within the Council the efforts already made to ensure a better control of the market by a policy of agricultural production making it possible to limit budgetary charges.

7. The acceptance of a financial arrangement for the final stage does not exclude its adaptation by unanimous vote, in particular in the light of an enlarged Community and on condition that the principles of this arrangement are not infringed.

8. They reaffirmed their readiness to further the more rapid progress of the later development needed to strengthen the Community and promote its development into an economic union. They are of the opinion that the integration process should result in a Community of stability and growth. To this end they agreed that within the Council, on the basis of the Memorandum presented by the Commission on 12 February 1969 and in close collaboration with the latter, a plan in stages should be worked out during 1970 with a view to the creation of an economic and monetary union. The development of monetary co-operation should depend on the harmonisation of economic policies.

They agreed to arrange for the investigation of the possibility of setting up a European reserve fund in which a joint economic and monetary policy would have to result.

9. As regards the technological activity of the Community, they reaffirmed their readiness to continue more intensively the activities of the Community with a view to co-ordinating and promoting industrial research and development in the principal sectors concerned, in particular by means of common programmes, and to supply the financial means for the purpose.

10. They further agreed on the necessity of making fresh efforts to work out in the near future a research programme for the European Atomic Energy Community designed in accordance with the exigencies of modern industrial management, and making it possible to ensure the most effective use of the Common Research Centre.

11. They reaffirmed their interest in the establishment of a European university.

12. The Heads of State or Government acknowledged the desirability of reforming the Social Fund, within the framework of a closely concerted social policy.

13. They reaffirmed their agreement on the principle of the enlargement of the Community, as provided by Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome.

In so far as the applicant States accept the Treaties and their political finality, the decisions taken since the entry into force of the Treaties and the options made in the sphere of development, the Heads of State or Government have indicated their agreement to the opening of negotiations between the Community on the one hand and the applicant States on the other. They agreed that the essential preparatory work could be undertaken as soon as practically and conveniently possible; by common consent, the preparations would take place in a most positive spirit.

14. As soon as negotiations with the applicant countries have been opened, discussions will be started with such other EFTA members as may request them on their position in relation to the EEC.

15. They agreed to instruct the Ministers for Foreign Affairs to study the best way of achieving progress in the matter of political unification, within the context of enlargement. The Ministers would be expected to report before the end of July 1970.

16. All the creative activities and the actions conducive to European growth decided upon here will be assured of a better future if the younger generation is closely associated with them; the governments are resolved to endorse this and the Communities will make provision for it.