Speech by Lord Chalfont at the Meeting of the General Assembly of the Association of European Journalists on 9 October, 1967 in Brussels

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It is very kind of you, Mr. President, to invite me to address this General Assembly. It is not the first time I have spoken to many of you here and it will not be the last.

2. As you are expert in the affairs of the Community you are no doubt looking to me to go into the details of our application to join. I hope you will not object if I leave the details till another day and use this rather grand occasion to talk about the main or long-term issues of our application.

3. We are meeting today five months (minus two days) after the presentation in the rue Ravenstein of the British application to join the Communities. We have still not received from the Communities anything more than a formal acknowledgement of our communication. I have read in the newspapers that a week ago the Council of Ministers considered the Opinion offered to it by the Commission but that no decision to negotiate has been taken yet.

4. This five months delay compares with an interval of two months only in 1961 when Britain applied for the first time, two months between presenting the application and having the first meeting of the British team with the member governments and the Commission.

5. We hope that our waiting period will soon be over and that I as leader of the British Delegation will be settling down in Brussels to discuss the technical details which I have chosen to put on one side today. We are ready. We hope the Six will be soon.

6. In the last few months we have heard various doubts and hesitations expressed about the possibility of British membership. Some of these, it seems to me, lack substance and need hardly be mentioned before an audience of this kind. I have in mind, for example, the suggestion that we are not really European. Such a statement can have meaning only if a rather odd definition is given to the word "European".

7. Or there is the suggestion that we do not really accept the terms of the Treaty of Rome or do not properly understand what is meant by being a member of the Community. I do not know what more the Prime Minister or the Secretary of State or I can say or do to convince anyone that we are now switched on to the European idea and do properly understand what is meant. We have said what we mean and stand ready to show by our actions that we are sincere. Our sincerity can easily be tested by negotiations.

8. These and other vague suspicions I leave on one side in order to have time to look more closely at two other grounds for doubt or hesitation which do seem to have some plausibility.

9. The first is the understandable fear that extending the Community beyond the present Six members to some larger number, whatever it may be, would weaken the institutions of the Community and damage its chances of dynamic growth.

10. It is rather difficult for a British Minister to comment on this issue. Whilst we are certainly interested parties, we are not yet the guardians of the Community conscience or signatories of the Treaty of Rome. But it does seem to me extraordinary that anyone who is involved from the inside in the present Community should even mention the possibility that the geographical limits of the Community cannot be extended. It was certainly not the understanding of those who planned and created the Community in its early years. The contrary opinion is clearly stated in the Preamble to the Treaty, which expresses the determination shared by His Majesty The King of the Belgians, the President of the French Republic (M. Coty of course), the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, the President of the Italian Republic, Her Royal Highnes the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg and Her Majesty The Queen of the Netherlands "to establish the foundation of an ever closer union among the European peoples" and they also called "upon the other peoples of Europe who share their ideal to join in their efforts". We have answered the call. I cannot accept the view that the call was never made or meant.

11. The second point I want to examine is the suggestion that whilst British membership of the Community is desirable in the long run, this is not the right time for it because the Community should first of all make further progress towards the completion of its economic union.

12. My reply to this argument is, do you seriously believe it? Is it not an excuse, plausible perhaps, for putting off indefinitely the question of British membership which for some people may be inconvenient or unwelcome?

13. Is this argument not another aspect of the technique of expressing sympathy for the British but saying that whatever proposal happens to be made by them is in fact the wrong proposal? In the period up to 11 May we heard suggestions that nothing could be done because we had not applied under Article 237. Now that we have applied it is suggested that the time is not right or that we should have done something different. This technique of sending the stranger to knock each time on a different door has now been exhausted. We have found a door that is clearly labelled and

we have knocked on it loud and clear. And we intend to go on knocking until the door is opened.

14. It is now being suggested in some quarters that the Community should move forward undisturbed to Economic union. But what kind of timetable is envisaged for us? I do not need to tell you who follow Community activities so closely the kind of timetable which is necessary for producing regulations or other legal instruments on matters in fields such as transport, energy, taxation, company law, patents, customs procedures and so on. If the proposal is that Britain should patiently wait until these and other matters have been settled, the answer seems to me to be equivalent to a veto by postponement. Agreement on matters such as these is bound to take some years at least to reach. In addition it will be a matter for discussion and argument at what point economic union has in fact been achieved. There is no obvious criterion for determining the achievement of economic union. It is a vaguer and more complicated idea than, for example, the achievement of a customs union which can be clearly defined and verified by reference to published tariff schedules.

15. To accept the argument, that the British application should wait upon the completion of the economic union would be a confession of failure, a confession of lack of faith in the Treaty of Rome and the potentiality of the Community to develop. First of all, it would be recognition that the high hopes entertained in 1956 to 1958, when the Treaty was being drafted and brought into effect, are doomed to disappointment; a confession that the Community cannot extend geographically, not even to take in a country which in population, industrial development, geographical location and political purpose, is an obvious candidate for membership. If the Community cannot contemplate British membership what can it contemplate? What will it be able to do for the other countries of Europe which are or may be candidates for membership or association? What will be its future?

16. Secondly, the Community would be denying itself the real chance of rapid and vigorous internal development. Solving the question of relations with Britain, which has been in the wings ever since the Community was born, would itself produce an upsurge of confidence and enthusiasm in the Community, a new feeling that great things are possible. There are many aspects of the development of the Community towards an economic union which make sense only if Britain is a member. The whole of the scientific and technological side of economic life comes immediately to mind. Britain's leading position among the countries of Western Europe in terms of research effort, numbers of scientific and technological personnel, develop-

is increasing its lead over the comparable industries of Western Europe. If people in the Community mean what they say about the importance of science and technology and about the need to accelerate to the pace set by the Americans, then they must logically demand Britain's admission, and soon.

17. The need to have Britain in soon has implications which reach right through the economy. Western Europe is not going to catch up with America by virtue of some clever trick, whether the trick is a sudden increase in government expenditure on research, or by getting access to some secrets of science or management alleged to exist in America but not in Europe. It stands a chance of catching up, or at least of not dropping too far behind, if it can bring about a freer and more vigorous exchange of ideas and activities on a wider scale covering a whole range of aspects of economic life. I have in mind a great number of issues. New ideas, new enterprises and new confidence are needed such as the exchange of patents, the modification of industrial standards, the possibility for companies to operate freely in a number of different countries, the easy flow of finance inside Europe and the free movement of workers. As you know only too well all these matters are being studied in the existing Community. In some cases, for example patents, British membership would immediately facilitate the solution of the problem. In other cases, for example the free flow of finance, British membership would mean that the solution found would be more effective because existing facilities would be more easily available to people and companies here.

18. There is also the probability that in this new atmosphere progress could also be resumed on the political side of the Community.

19. Some people in the Community seem to think that the Community is now faced with a choice between completing its economic union and accepting the membership of Britain. I think that is wrong. The choice is between achieving both or achieving neither.

20. We have shown that we too believe that economic union is desirable. Tariff abolition alone is not enough; EFTA has been a great success but it was never intended to be more than a step towards wider and closer unity in Europe. The next step is enlargement of the Common Market. We accept that customs unions are not enough and there is no doubt on our side that economic union is a superior form of organisation. But the ultimate success of the Community will depend not only on whether it can organise economic union but also on the material it can organise into that union. Would the present Community be able to achieve the minimum size for competing adequately with the technological giants in

meaning and interest if it could not lead to a Europe maintaining its place among the front runners of developed economies. The full benefits of economic union are linked with enlarging the scale and scope of the Community, first and foremost by the accession of Great Britain.

21. There are other reasons too for believing that British membership and economic union are linked together in practice. If Britain's plain request for membership, delivered by Sir James Marjoribanks on 11 May, is rejected or rejected in effect by postponement, that failure to live up to the promises of ten years ago and the statements in the Treaty of Rome is likely to have unfavourable repercussions on the internal life of the Community itself. On the other hand, if Britain is admitted in the fairly near future, I believe that the Community, invigorated by that success, will be equipped to go on to further successes.

22. I hope you will forgive me for not having revealed to you today exactly what solutions Her Majesty's Government envisage for the continued export of New Zealand butter to the United Kingdom after Britain's membership, or for the financing of FEOGA after 1969, and other such fascinating problems. I have no doubt that you and I will have plenty of chances in the future to go into them.

23. I thought it right, on this my first speech in Brussels since taking up residence here, to set before you the main lines and the main choices as I see them. I hope you will not think me too apocalyptic in my vision. I hope that this brief description of the promised land will keep us all going during the next few months when, as we negotiate, you and I, we will be marching through the wilderness.

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