

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC
COMMUNITY

COMMISSION

500/51-E

Brussels, January 13, 1961

W E L C O M E

by

Professor W A L T E R H A L L S T E I N
President of the Commission of the European
Economic Community ,

to a group of visitors from
"BRITAIN IN EUROPE"

in Brussels

on 13 January, 1961

Ladies and Gentlemen:

May I begin by saying, a little belatedly, welcome to Brussels and to the Commission of the European Economic Community. I should have liked very much to be able to welcome you yesterday; but I am sure you will forgive me - especially as I am sure that my friend Mansholt will have welcomed you already. Nevertheless, let me add what a great personal pleasure it is to me to be able to welcome you here, and to meet "Britain in Europe" in Europe, so to speak.

I believe I am right in thinking that both our Community and your organization arose from the printed word - in our case the Rome Treaty, and in your case the publication "Britain and Europe". Now you are "Britain in Europe" - quite a change. Personally, I think the change is a real one: for just as our Community is based not only on a Treaty but also on a firm political choice and a continuing political will, so your own distinguished organization represents a very important movement, bringing Great Britain steadily closer to continental Europe, in sympathy and friendship.

This, after all, is as it should be: for the Community and the United Kingdom have very important interests in common. Both are European powers, with long-standing traditions: but both have vital concerns and connexions overseas. Both are manufacturers and world traders - they even have rather similar tariffs. Both have their

problems in the agricultural field. Both are involved, inescapably, in the rapid evolution of the African continent, and in the need to save that continent from the spread of the cold war. Both are powerful allies in the Atlantic Community. Both recognize the interdependence which is more and more characteristic of all our problems in the West. Both are engaged in what a British economist recently called "The Attack on World Poverty". Both stand for peace, freedom, and justice.

I think I may say that Great Britain has always recognized the importance of the European Community. She was the first, indeed, to accredit a diplomatic representative to the European Coal and Steel Community when it was set up in 1952; and two years later she concluded an Agreement of Association with it, in which a great deal of important consultation has taken place. More recently, she concluded a rather similar agreement with Euratom. Earlier this year in the House of Commons, making his last speech as Foreign Secretary, Mr Selwyn Lloyd underlined that Great Britain welcomed "the economic strength and the political cohesion that the Community is bringing about."

Already, I think, you have heard about some of the progress which our Community is making in tackling its internal problems. You know that we are already ahead of our timetable, even in agricultural matters, which are always the most difficult to deal with. You know that there is now much talk of further steps which may carry our progress into the more directly political field. We, for our part, welcome such steps: for we believe that they can consolidate the progress that our Community has already made, and lead on towards the "ever closer union" which is the explicit aim of the Rome Treaty.

Later this morning, I believe that you are to hear something about our external problems - the problems, that is, of the Community's foreign relations. Many of these problems would have existed, and would have faced all our Governments - including the British Government - had the Community never come into being. I am thinking of such problems as the world's underdeveloped regions, the world liquidity problem, the

stabilization of raw material markets, the agricultural problems of industrial nations, the problems of emergent Africa. It is my conviction that the creation of the European Community gives us all a magnificent opportunity to think out afresh - and together - ways of solving these problems, ways which would have been much less easy without the new element of a European Economic Community. For this reason, a very great responsibility rests upon us all; and I am glad to say that the establishment of the new Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development marks the recognition by the industrial nations of the West that this is a responsibility they must accept.

But as well as these truly gigantic world problems, which, I repeat, the Community's existence has not created but facilitated, there are other more limited problems that she herself has to some extent raised. One is the fear, expressed by some of our friends in G.A.T.T., that their exports may suffer from the gradual establishment of the Common Market. Another is the similar fear expressed by some of our friends in Europe. So far, I think it must be admitted, these fears have not in fact materialized. This is not, of course, to deny that they may one day, and in some cases, prove to have been legitimate to a certain degree; and for this reason, as my colleagues from our Division of External Relations will shortly explain, we have always done our level best to provide for ways of meeting them should they prove justified: in G.A.T.T. and in the Committee of 21, and more especially by seeking to pursue policies which will ensure the continued expansion of the Community's market and an ever more liberal policy towards imports from the rest of the world. So far, the figures are a testimony to our success: for in 1960, while trade within the Community increased by 28% over the 1959 figure, trade with the rest of the world also increased - only a little less rapidly - by 23%. The Community's imports, I may add, were somewhat higher than her exports.

But finally, apart from trade problems, and apart from the fears expressed on this score, there were also some other such fears: to

the effect that the creation of the Community, and in particular its political consolidation, might itself create the danger of some kind of rift in the Atlantic Alliance. These fears, I am certain, are utterly vain. They have never been expressed, I may say, by our American friends. The Community, for its part, has never sought to play the role of a so-called "third force". And the Soviet Union has always shown, by its constant attitude towards our efforts, that it regards the European Community as a very important reinforcement to the strength of the West. Clearly, Soviet political strategists are not deceived, by the fact of the Community's having an external tariff - as has Great Britain, as has America - into thinking that our effort at economic integration is likely to divide Europe or divide the Western Alliance.

But I do not need to dwell on such hypothetical fears. How, indeed, could one talk of rift and division when such meetings as the present are so frank and friendly? Rather, let me repeat what I said at the beginning: we have great tasks to tackle, side by side. Let me repeat again what has been said so often: the door of our Community - that famous door in the Treaty - is always open. Meanwhile, there is much to be done: much to be done in common.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope that your visit to Brussels will have shown you something more of what we are doing on this side of that ever-narrowing Channel; and I hope that we shall have many more opportunities in the future of meeting with each other and discussing together the problems that challenge us all. .
