Recommendation 303 (1961)[1]

European economic relations

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly,

2. Noting that the idea of creating a multilateral European Economic Association for strengthening European unity as set out in its Recommendations 229 and 266 did not materialise;

3. Welcoming with great satisfaction the decision of the Governments of the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland to request the opening of negotiations with the Members of the European Economic Community with a view to determining on what conditions their countries could accede to the Community;

4. Welcoming also the statement of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Council on 31st July 1961 that "all member States of EFTA declare their intention to examine with the European Economic Community the ways and means by which all Members of EFTA could take part together in a single market embracing some 300 million people",

5. Notes that the Council of the European Economic Community has agreed to enter into negotiations with the United Kingdom concerning the latter's accession to the Community, and in the course of these negotiations to examine the three problems raised in that country's application; that it has also agreed to Denmark entering into negotiations and is considering the Irish application; and that it will speedily make the necessary arrangements for the opening, co-ordination and active pursuit of these negotiations;

6. Hopes that the other member countries of the Council of Europe and Switzerland will decide soon to join in this new attempt to build up Europe by requesting to enter into negotiations with the Six with a view to their adhering to or becoming associated with the European Economic Community;

7. Considers it of the utmost importance that the negotiations should lead to the conclusion of agreements whereby all these countries may become part of a vast integrated European market, while respecting the essential interests of each European country and avoiding injury to third countries, and especially seeking continuing and extended cooperation with those countries and territories which traditionally maintain close relations with Europe;

8. Recommends the Committee of Ministers to request the Governments of member countries taking part in the negotiations to be guided by the following considerations :

a. The proposed arrangements should not have the effect of weakening the European Economic Community or of detracting from its character as a community. Negotiations for the accession of new countries to the European Economic Community or their association therewith must not result in calling in question either the objectives or the basic clauses of the Rome Treaty, to which only those adaptations rendered necessary by the admission of new Members should be made. Any exceptions to certain provisions of the Treaty shown to be necessary in order to meet the specific difficulties of a given country should be governed, wherever practicable, by protocols.

b. The arrangements aimed at should respect the principle of reciprocity of rights and obligations as between the contracting countries, bearing in mind the stage of economic development which they have reached.

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1. Assembly debate on 27th and 28th September 1961 (17th and 19th Sittings) (see Doc. 1337, Report of the Economic Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 28th September 1961 (19th Sitting).

c. Negotiations must not be allowed to hold up the progress of the European Economic Community and its Members towards integration. The Six must be able to proceed without interruption with the working out and putting into operation of the policies provided for in the Rome Treaty. During the period of the negotiations the member countries and institutions of the European Economic Community should establish with the countries which have applied for membership a procedure whereby such countries may be extensively informed and consulted at all levels about the implementation of the Treaty clauses, in particular the preparation of a common agricultural policy and the revision of the terms of association with the overseas countries and territories.

d. The negotiations, including joint negotiations, should be so co-ordinated that the agreements between the European Economic Community and the various European countries concerned may enter into force as rapidly as possible and at approximately the same time.

e. The negotiations should strive to establish the closest possible links between all the participating countries. Consequently, every step should be taken to permit as many as possible of them to accede to the European Economic Community under the terms of Article 237 of the Rome Treaty, recourse to Article 238 being appropriate for European countries which for political or economic reasons are not in a position to undertake the commitments of full membership.