

Luxembourg: Ministerial meeting between EFTA countries and the EC and its Member States

Joint Declaration



General view of the «Jumbo» meeting in Luxembourg.

A meeting at ministerial level between the European Community and its Member States and the States of the European Free Trade Association was held on Monday 9 April 1984 at the Kirchberg European Centre, Luxembourg.

The meeting was chaired, for the Community, by Mr. Claude Cheysson, Minister for External Relations of the French Republic and President-in-Office of the Council, and, for the EFTA countries, by Mr. Mats Hellström, Minister for Foreign Trade of the Kingdom of Sweden and current ministerial chairman of the EFTA Councils. The Commission of the European Communities was represented by Mr. Wilhelm Haferkamp, Vice-President.

The participants adopted the following joint declaration at the end of the meeting:

1. Stressing the very special importance they attach to relations established by the Free Trade Agreements between the Community and the EFTA countries, Ministers of the

Member States of the European Community and of the States of the European Free Trade Association and the Commission of the European Communities met to take stock of more than a decade of cooperation in free trade, and to lay down orientations to continue, deepen and extend cooperation within the framework of, and beyond the Free Trade Agreements.

2. With the abolition, in early 1984, of the last remaining tariff barriers and quantitative restrictions affecting their bilateral trade and industrial products, the Community and the EFTA countries have attained the goal set more than ten years ago.

There has thus been established the largest system of free trade in the world, within which one quarter of world trade takes place, with over 300 million consumers, and which future enlargement of the Community will be sure to widen further. This achievement has been a major element in the

considerable growth of trade between the European countries concerned. The results which have been achieved are a major success for European cooperation, particularly when one considers the economic difficulties and protectionist pressures which have faced us since the early seventies.

This development has contributed substantially to the progress towards economic recovery, and should lead to even further expansion of trade.

Ministers were therefore convinced of the importance of further actions to consolidate and strengthen cooperation, with the aim of creating a dynamic European economic space of benefit to their countries.

3. With this in mind, Ministers considered it essential to continue to oppose protectionist pressures and to pursue their efforts towards improving the free circulation of the industrial products of their countries, in particular in the following areas: harmonisation of standards, elimination of technical barriers, simplification of border facilities and rules of origin, elimination of unfair trading practices, State aid contrary to the Free Trade Agreements and access to government procurement. In this regard the Community's efforts to strengthen its internal market are of particular relevance. Ministers are confident that, as in the past, it will prove possible to find well-balanced solutions based on reciprocity, in the spirit of the Free Trade Agreements.

4. Ministers stressed the importance of continued pragmatic and flexible cooperation between the Community and its Member States and the EFTA States beyond the framework of the Agreements. Such cooperation has developed over the years in numerous fields of mutual interest as a natural extension of ever-growing trade relations.

Ministers agreed to broaden and deepen such cooperation between the Community and its Member States and the EFTA States. Increasing economic interdependence between the Community and the EFTA countries calls, in particular, for cooperation in research and development. Ministers stressed the need to increase these efforts, for instance within the framework of COST and in organisations involving some of the countries concerned, and particularly to promote mobility for European research workers. They wanted particular attention to be given to certain industrial and technological fields of the future, such as telecommunications, information systems or the new audio-visual media.

5. Cooperation and/or consultations in fields such as transport, agriculture, fisheries and energy should be intensified.

Consultations, contacts or exchanges of information with regard to working conditions, social protection, culture, consumer protection, the environment, tourism and intellectual property are also envisaged, taking into account the work also pursued in other international fora, in particular the Council of Europe, and with due regard for their individual spheres of competence.

6. Ministers confirm the need to continue efforts to sustain and consolidate the economic recovery and to reduce the unacceptably high level of unemployment—which affects the young in particular and creates a major problem for the economies and societies in their countries—without rekindling inflation. They will seek to concert their policies in these fields. It is essential for both sides of industry to take an active part in this process.

7. Lastly, through closer cooperation, Europe will be in a better position to create conditions for growth and to play a more important role in the world, particularly by increasing contacts in the sphere of economic and monetary policy.

With this in mind, Ministers agreed to increase their consultations and exchanges of information on economic problems and current trade difficulties with a view to finding equitable solutions with their principal trading partners in particular, with the aim of strengthening the open and multilateral trading system. In this connection they recalled the commitments taken in OECD, GATT and other international fora.

They also agreed to increase their consultations on development questions, particularly in the context of the North-South dialogue, in order to achieve closer cooperation with the developing countries. They particularly stressed that there should be greater integration of the Third World into the multilateral trade system, and that problems of indebtedness should be tackled in an orderly way.

Ministers agreed to pursue these goals together both in international fora such as OECD, GATT, IMF, the World Bank and also bilaterally.

8. Ministers expressed their political will to work towards achieving these objectives. ■



Press conference in Luxembourg.