

**SUMMIT MEETING OF EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND VISEGRAD GROUP  
LEADERS, LONDON, 28 OCTOBER 1992**

**STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER JOHN MAJOR AND PRESIDENT JACQUES  
DELORS**

1. It is for us a particular pleasure to welcome to London today leaders of the Visegrad Group of countries: Prime Minister Antall of Hungary, Prime Minister Suchocka from Poland, Deputy Prime Minister Baudys and Prime Ministers Klaus and Meciar from the Czech and Slovak Republic, as well as members of their governments.
  
2. Our meeting demonstrates the support of the European Community and its member states for all the newly democratic countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and particularly for the tough political and economic reforms which they have undertaken. It symbolises our wish to work together and to cement our new, strong relationship. For the Visegrad countries, who see the European Community as the cornerstone of their restored place in the family of democratic European nations, it is an opportunity to express their determination to join the European Community as soon as possible.
  
3. Since the dramatic events in Central and Eastern Europe only 3 years ago, we have shared with the Visegrad countries a common commitment to democracy and human rights, to market economies and to liberal trade. We have all fought for the greater democratisation of Europe, for greater understanding and cooperation between our citizens, to make up for lost opportunities since the Second World War. The European Community and its Member States have given concrete expression to their support through technical assistance, coordination of G24 activity and, where appropriate, balance of payments assistance.

4. We told the Visegrad leaders that the European Community had conceived the Association or "Europe" Agreements signed last December as a way of underpinning these shared common values. These Agreements are broad in nature. They underline the Community's strong commitment to help market-based democracies through open markets, technical assistance and cooperation. We welcome the fact that there has already been significant trade liberalisation and that it has been agreed to discuss a further package of measures this year. The Community is determined to make a success of these Agreements, to develop and improve them in order to help the Visegrad countries prepare themselves for eventual membership. With the Visegrad leaders we recognise the importance of free trade stretching right across the continent, thereby creating the necessary conditions for economic growth, prosperity and stable democracy. We express our keen desire for an early, balanced and comprehensive agreement in the current GATT negotiations.

5. We agreed today to encourage intensified, practical cooperation between the Community and the Visegrad countries. This will strengthen our links and encourage similar cooperation between countries of the region. We looked in particular at four areas for enhanced cooperation:

(i) Towards more open and liberal Markets

More open markets and liberal trade are indispensable to the development of our economies. We welcome the intention of the Visegrad countries to work for a free trade area which will complement more liberal trade between us. The Commission will consider technical assistance and training under the PHARE programme to share Community experience in this area, particularly through a series of seminars some of which will be held in the capitals of the Visegrad countries over the winter months.

(ii) Local and Democratic Links

Pluralism and civic society are essential elements of democracy. The Community's regional fund is already bringing together local and regional authorities from the Community and Central and Eastern Europe in order to encourage democratic practice. The new PHARE democracy programme will offer assistance to Parliaments, political parties and other major representative bodies. It will also help in such fields as journalism and human rights. We agreed to encourage more links between towns in the Community and in the Visegrad countries to promote a better appreciation of problems common to local institutions and organisations.

(iii) Training and Education

The Commission will offer to develop a programme of industrial training attachments in Member State companies and organisations. This would be for a number of qualified technical and commercial middle managers from each of the Visegrad countries. These attachments will concentrate on the development of the private sector. We welcomed the intention to establish a branch of the College of Europe in Warsaw.

(iv) Parliamentary Links

The President of the European Parliament has proposed building on the establishment of Joint Parliamentary Committees with each of the Visegrad Parliaments in order to strengthen the parliamentary dimension to the Community's relations with the Visegrad countries. We commended this initiative, and hoped that it might also involve Member State national Parliaments.

4.

6. Taken together these initiatives will assist the process of democratisation and the creation of closer links between our countries. The Commission will report to the Edinburgh European Council on the development of closer cooperation. We also welcome the role of the Council of Europe and the European Convention on Human Rights in spreading shared values between all European states.

7. Our meeting today also discussed a range of international issues. We are delighted that the Visegrad leaders were able to lend their support to our approach on Yugoslavia, particularly the declaration on Yugoslavia adopted by the Birmingham European Council. And we welcome today's agreement to sign a Joint Declaration on political dialogue. This will set the framework for regular discussions between the Community and its Member States and the Visegrad countries on major foreign policy issues which confront us both. It is through such regular and practical discussion that our thinking converges, and that we develop the habit of working together in response to world events. Our talks today also usefully covered events in the former Soviet Union. Over lunch we had an enlightening discussion on the problems of post-communist societies.

8. We have today held a most significant meeting. The European Community and the Visegrad countries will soon be joined together by powerful Association Agreements. As leaders, we have demonstrated the value of cooperation and the depth of understanding between us. We all look forward to the development of ever closer cooperation which will give substance to the Visegrad countries' Association with the European Community.