

STATEMENT BY MR. CHRISTOPHER TUGENDHAT,  
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION OF THE  
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, TO A PRESS CONFERENCE  
IN LEEDS ON THURSDAY 25 NOVEMBER 1982 AT 15H30  
TO LAUNCH THE DOSSIER "BRITAIN IN THE COMMUNITY  
1973-83: YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE".

Ten years of British membership of the EEC has been of benefit to Europe and of benefit to the UK. But it has also coincided with ten years of serious economic difficulty for Europe as a whole.

One lesson which we should learn from this period is that if European countries do not co-operate then Western Europe as a whole risks losing its leading world economic role. If that happened it would affect jobs and living standards in all Western European countries. No-one could insulate themselves from it.

Britain has brought to the Community its world-wide connections, particularly with Commonwealth countries, its commitment to a unified European voice on foreign policy, which it has helped to develop, and its traditional support for international free trade.

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We have benefitted from the existence of a large tariff-free market and from a wide range of Community policies. Our exports to Europe now account for over 40% of all exports. Exports to Europe have grown by 28% a year on average between 1972-1980, and imports by 24%. This compares with an export growth to the rest of the world over the same period of 19% on average. Europe is our fastest growing market.

This growth of trade represents added wealth for the economies of Britain and its partners, potential for British businesses, and jobs for British people.

Oil has of course been an important factor in boosting the export figures but many other sectors, including manufactured foods and agricultural products, various high technology goods, woollens and chemicals, have improved or maintained their trading position.

British exports and imports of manufactures with the EEC have remained in roughly the same proportions until this year, exports covering some 88% of imports. In 1982 the situation has deteriorated. This general picture contrasts with the sharp deterioration in the manufacturing trade balance with other industrialized countries (U.S.A. exports as % of imports down from 96% in 1979 to 66% in 1980, and Japan from 48% to 28%). British manufactures lost their competitiveness more rapidly in the decade before 1973 than since.

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The position of the UK as a member of the European Community has also made it a more attractive base for new capital investment from the U.S.A. and other third countries. It provides access to a market of over 270 million people and over the last ten years has been an essential selling point for any British development agency, local authority or government department seeking to create new jobs by attracting mobile international investment. Nearly 59% of U.S. direct investment in the Community in 1980, excluding oil, came to the U.K.

These are facts which affect all of us in the U.K., including the Yorkshire and Humberside region. But let me draw certain specific points concerning this region to your attention:

- a recent CBI survey among 93 companies in the region showed that their exports to the rest of the EEC are increasing faster than those to the rest of the world. 14% of the total workforce of the companies surveyed (8,000 jobs) is dependent on exports to the Community.
  
- the region has benefitted from many grants and loans from the Regional Fund, the Social Fund, the ECSC, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Farm Fund, totalling £655.8M since 1973.

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- Community finance helps the coal industry, e.g. an ECSC loan of £190M to the NCB for the new mine at Selby, North Yorkshire.
- Community action on the steel crisis has provided a more stable market for steel than would have been possible on a national basis, and this has helped alleviate some of the serious problems of the steel industry.
- the U.K. wool textile industry, concentrated in the region, sends nearly 45% of its exports to the EEC, and there is evidence of potential for significant further expansion of such exports.
- in 1972 British exports of clothing to the EEC were worth 94% of imports: by 1980 the figure was 138%, a remarkable increase.
- the fishing industry of Humberside, like that of the U.K. generally, needs a Common Fisheries Policy which can provide more security for the future.

These are some of the points to emerge from the dossier on Yorkshire and Humberside and the 'national dossier' on the impact of EEC membership which are being presented to you today, a few weeks before the tenth anniversary of UK accession to the European Community.

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We are doing this because we hope that this anniversary offers an opportunity for reflection on and discussion of Britain's experience in the Community along more reasoned lines than is sometimes the case. Our regional documents have been prepared for us by local journalists who have sought to report regional views fairly, both the successes and the difficulties. They are designed to provide a summary and a basis for further inquiry by those interested in looking at some of the issues raised by EEC membership.

These documents discuss the past ten years. What of the future? The harsh winds of recession are buffeting everyone on this globe and the wolves are out. Membership of the Community is our best protection. It means jobs and the promise of more jobs. It gives us an enormous market, there for us to develop and compete in. It enables us to hold our own when disputes arise with our major trading partners, as we have seen on both steel and the gas pipeline. Community solidarity gives us strength. Together with our partners we have the best chance of shaping our own future.

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