

Speech

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Address by M. Jean Rey, President of the Commission of the
European Communities, at the signing of the preferential
agreement between the Community and Spain

Your Excellencies,
Gentlemen,

The Commission sees the conclusion of this agreement as the
happy outcome of long, patient efforts pursued by both sides, and
we are glad that we have been able to make an effective contribution.

A number of years ago I had the honour to preside over the
initial talks between the Spanish Delegation and the Commission,
negotiating on behalf of the Community. No one was unaware of the
difficulties of the undertaking, firstly because of the substance of
the problems, and secondly because of the psychological climate,
which was not always unclouded.

But from the very first day the Spanish Delegation made it clear
that it attached more importance to the progressive, smooth develop-
ment of our negotiations than to haste, a wise viewpoint which coin-
cided largely with our own. Our efforts have now been crowned with
success, and I should like to pay tribute to those who worked for it
on the Commission side, my colleague Edoardo Martino and Director-
General Sigrist. But our thanks go also to His Excellency
M. Ullastres, Head of the Spanish Delegation and a friend to all of
us. His contribution was essential, and his efforts have been
rewarded not only as Head of the Spanish Delegation and of Spain's
Mission to our Community but also as former Minister of Foreign
Trade who did so much to liberalize his country's domestic and
foreign trade.

This agreement is a beginning. It represents a big step for-
ward towards an economic rapprochement between Spain and the
Community, and it certainly should be possible to extend it in the
future.

There are so many historical and cultural links between Spain
and the present member countries of the Community, not to speak of
those that will soon be joining it, that we cannot but rejoice at
this opening. We see in it the beginning of an evolution which may
well enable Spain one day, we hope, to play its full role in the
construction of the European continent.

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