

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY
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Statement
by the
President of the European Economic Commission
Professor Dr. Walter Hallstein
at the
Conference of the European Parliament
with the Parliaments of African
States and of Madagascar

1. It is with a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction and with the consciousness that we are living in an hour of historical importance that I address this gathering. The first joint session of the European Parliament with representatives from the Parliaments of Madagascar and the African States also associated with us will one day be regarded as a milestone in the development of this alliance, whose foundations were laid in the Treaty of Rome and the shaping of whose future will be one of our great tasks in the coming months. The participation of the freely elected representatives of free peoples gives our work nothing less than the stamp of democracy and it is of great importance to remember that this goes back to a proposal put forward by the Commission.

The preliminary conference in Rome and the session of the Liaison Committee in Bonn having already settled the procedural arrangements, it now remains for this session to enter into a comprehensive discussion of the substantive questions which interest the participants. In the fact that the representatives of the Community and of the associated States are meeting together for a free discussion in this forum we have the most eloquent proof that our relations today rest on the new foundation of collaboration on a footing of equal rights. Nor could a more appropriate time have been imagined for this first joint assembly. It coincides with the beginning of the work being undertaken to give a new form to our contractual relationships.

2. What then today is the task of the Executive of the European Economic Community - of the Commission over which I have the honour to preside? In everything it does our Commission is responsible to the European Parliament, and this includes the numerous tasks which fall to it in implementing the association with the African States and Madagascar. In practice, however, our task in the exchanges now taking place is determined mainly by the fact that the Commission, as the Community institution chiefly entrusted with taking action and making proposals, has its own essential part to play in the recasting of the relations between the partners in this association. This being so, how could we possibly not feel an obligation towards the representatives of the Parliaments of the African States and Madagascar as well as to the European Parliament? How could we do otherwise than welcome the fact that this joint Assembly holds promise of valuable pointers for our coming work - work which is no longer conceivable without the full contribution of our associated friends? Finally, how could we fail to seize with joy the chance of putting before you our own as yet fluid ideas and having them discussed? By a happy coincidence the Commission has already - on the basis of thorough preparatory work by its staff - largely clarified its ideas on the future form of the association, but has not yet finally settled its formal position. For our role in this joint meeting this in all probability means that in many fields we will be the receivers rather than the donors - however much we may strive to contribute to the discussion by putting our own ideas before you.

3. The association between the European Economic Community and the African States and Madagascar is an alliance through which a solid, close and lasting co-operation in the widest sense of this word is to be established. As an instrument of economic policy this association is therefore primarily a question of concrete solutions to practical problems.

This, however, is not all. According to the express will of the participants, the association is much more than a trade agreement or an agreement on financial and technical collaboration. It is, as I have already said, the basis for a close and lasting economic relationship and its details cannot therefore be merely the outcome of an approach made on purely empirical lines. On the contrary the association must be governed throughout by certain fundamental and clearly formulated principles.

4. This raises the immediate question: What is the historical basis of the association and what are the motives behind it? It was not by chance but for good and convincing reasons that the European Economic Community has turned to the participating African States and Madagascar in just the way it has, and that these States have adopted their particular attitude to the European Economic Community.

At the time when the Member States of the European Economic Community agreed to conclude the treaty which establishes them as an economic union, they assumed that the resolve to take this action must include readiness on the part of each to share the problems of all and to apply to the solution of these problems a policy of "all for one; one for all". This applies equally in the Community's relations with the surrounding world, particularly in its relations with the developing countries. These relationships have been and are many in number and they are diverse in character. Among them are old and solid relations of friendship and collaboration in the commercial field, the cultural field and in other fields. These all have a claim to be nourished, maintained, encouraged and developed. However, among them there were also relationships which, because of the closeness of the economic and cultural bonds they have engendered, may lay claim to a special

status. The reference here is to the relations of individual Member States to certain overseas countries and territories which at that time were still dependent. All Community countries have accepted a common responsibility in this matter with the aim, expressly laid down in the Treaty, of helping to promote the economic and social development of these countries. This comes out in Part IV of our Treaty and the annexed Convention which - as we all know - is due for renewal at the end of 1962. Here then is the reason for our Community's particular approach to you, to which the Contracting Parties at the time gave the form of association.

5. Since the Treaty was concluded there has been a fundamental change in the original situation. The formerly dependent countries and territories have for the most part become sovereign states. The question that thus faced the Community was whether this change, of which it may be said without exaggeration that it is a historic event of the first order, has altered the bases of the original agreement.

The answer to this question is both affirmative and negative.

It is affirmative inasmuch as joint decisions and joint action must from now on replace unilateral decisions and action. No matter what the details of its form may be, the future association can only be the outcome of an agreed arrangement freely arrived at between us and our African and Malagasy partners.

At the same time, however, the answer to the question whether the basis of the original agreement has changed calls for a negative answer, inasmuch as the reasons which led the Community to set itself the aims expressly pursued by the association under the Treaty still exist. As I have already said, accession to sovereignty has brought about a fundamental change in the situation of the countries associated with us. In a world where events are

determined by scientific and technical progress and in which this progress has made possible an immense improvement in the living conditions of human beings, real sovereignty can only survive in countries where the blessings of progress become fully effective; this, however, is a process which, unlike accession to independence, is not brought about by a stroke of the pen. It is much more the result of a long development beset with weariness and toil. You, our friends from overseas with whom we are gathered here today and who meet us as the elected representatives of sovereign nations, thus find yourself faced in the economic sphere with the situations and problems which you inherited and which are now the starting point of your own action and of our joint action. The close inter-connection of your economy and the economy of ^{Europe, especially of} your former mother countries still exists today, and for the European Economic Community this means that the reasons which led to your association with us in the Treaty of Rome are still valid.

Once we have answered this basic question, what questions still remain to be discussed here and now? They are of three kinds: legal questions, economic questions - or, more exactly, questions of economic policy - and political questions.

6. I will not spend much time on the legal problem.

The achievement of independence by the associated countries raised the question whether the legal consequences of the association were still valid. There were jurists who doubted it and who maintained that the decisive basis of the association lay in the "special relationships" between the mother countries and the overseas countries and territories, and that these special relationships were to be found in the state of political and legal dependence of these territories. Against this the Commission has held from the beginning that the association did not automatically come to an end when the associated States achieved independence.