
Brussels, 10 November 1966
IP (66) 129

PRESS RELEASE

Summary of

M. Mansholt's speech to the Fifth General Assembly of Free
Trade Unions at Rome, 9 November 1966

M. Sicco Mansholt, Vice-President of the EEC Commission, addressed the Fifth General Assembly of Free Trade Unions of the European Community in Rome.

Expressing the Commission's sympathy for Italian families stricken by the floods, the Vice-President said that the European Community was not just an economic and social union, but also reflected a solidarity of hearts and minds.

The building of Europe was much more than a customs union, or even than economic and social integration: the final objective was essentially political: a true European Federation.

But this was not to be considered as an end in itself, but as a means enabling Europe to survive, and to fulfil her responsibilities to herself and to the world. The gravity of the present situation was not that these ends were still distant, but that a halt had been made on the path to political union and to Europe's democratic development.

There was a resurgence of nationalism in Europe; a nationalism that was outdated, in that European federation did not exclude but enhance national values. The situation was dangerous, and one might ask whether the progress already made could be preserved and economic and social integration expanded without an assurance that democratic federation was being furthered.

The present uneasy situation should not however be thought to render further economic progress impossible; not only were there forces in the Six propelling the Community further along its path, but the Community itself had responsibilities and commitments towards its nations and towards outside states.

M. Mansholt noted the rebirth of interest in Great Britain and elsewhere in expanding the Community.

The time had come for interested states and the Community countries to affirm their positions clearly. The problems involved must also be studied to see whether they had not changed from those of some years ago.

Present difficulties should not undermine confidence: nationalism was not dominant today. There were forces, such as the trade unions, prepared to fight for a united and democratic Europe. "Trade unions can rely on the Community institutions because the Community has faith in them".