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Brussels, 11th June 1985

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DECLARATION BY MR. LORENZO NATALI, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION, ON THE OCCASION OF SIGNING OF THE TREATY OF ACCESSION OF PORTUGAL AND SPAIN IN LISBON AND MADRID ON 12 JUNE 1985

"Amid all the implications for the Community's future -
analysed and re-analysed in the wake of the historic conclusion
of the accession negotiations on 29 March - of its long-awaited
enlargement to include the Iberian peninsula, one, perhaps,
has not been given sufficient attention. At a time when it is
being accused from all sides of inaction and lack of determination,
Europe has, with this latest enlargement, given promising signs
of political vitality; the Community, in pursuing its goal of
integrating all those parts of the old continent which subscribe
to the values of Western democracy, has launched a bold new
challenge - first and foremost to itself. We know how long and
arduous such ambitious projects can be, but history and direct
experience in the building of Europe have taught us that once the
path to be followed has been mapped out, there can be no question
of drawing back. Thus today's signing of the Treaty of Accession
is not just the formal culmination of a process. A specific
political commitment is being made which the Twelve will in
future be called on to translate into coordinated, constantly
evolving activity in pursuit of common goals.

Having been for eight years the Member of the Commission with
responsibility for the negotiations, first with Greece and then
with Portugal and Spain, I cannot but feel personal gratification
at the completion of this re-balancing of the Community between
north and south.

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I have always fought against the notion of a "two-speed Europe". I have always been convinced that Europe, as an ambitious ideal aimed at mediation and solidarity on a continental scale, must either become the dialectical and harmonious sum of all its parts (without exception) or else is doomed not just to fail but in so doing to re-ignite nationalist and hostile passions which forty years of peace have taught us to fear and shun. With the first enlargement (Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom), the trunk of the original Community took on a decidedly northerly configuration. Then, in 1981, Greece joined. And today, with the accession of Portugal and Spain, the geographical equipoise of the Community is such as to leave no place or pretext for "two-tier" thinking. I suspect that the manner in which we accomplish this delicate internal re-balancing process will determine to a large extent the credibility of the Community of Twelve as a protagonist on the world stage, tackling the major challenges of development, dialogue and peaceful coexistence."