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VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,  
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NETHERLANDS IN UTRECHT, SATURDAY MAY 8TH 1976 AT 11.00.

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EUROPE'S FUTURE, EUROPE'S CHOICES

Mr Chairman,

It is a very great pleasure and an honour for me to take part in this annual congress of the Dutch European Movement. From the very beginning of the European adventure the people and government of the Netherlands have been in the van of our progress together in unity. You are keeping faith with the European idea and I salute your faith and your efforts to give effect to it.

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What is it that we believe?

The essence of our European faith lies, I think, in our conviction that the exclusive sovereign state is no longer - if it ever was - an adequate or a satisfactory principle for the political organisation of the peoples of our crowded continent.

The century leading up to the Second World War witnessed the paradox of the increasing interdependence and interpenetration of the economies, of the social life and culture of the European peoples, accompanied by the increasing bitterness and conflict between them which culminated in the holocaust of the Hitler war. Thoughtful men and women, reflecting amid the ruins of that war upon the destiny of their continent, concluded that the origin of this paradox lay in its increasingly obsolete division into

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distinct national sovereignties - into separate political systems from whose mutual exclusiveness arose the danger that they might only be able to preserve their raison d'etre by fanning the rivalries and suspicions of their different peoples. So it became evident after the war that the way forward lay in the development of a new principle for the organisation of Europe - a principle which would foster the elements of unity rather than the elements of division in our common European heritage, and which would be flexible enough and dynamic enough to adapt to the ceaseless economic and social changes which are a necessary feature of life in an industrial age.

This was the analysis, and the European Movement was the fruit of it. The genius of the first generation of European statesmen - Schuman, Monnet, de Gasperi, Adenauer - lay in what they did to turn the analysis and the broad stream of ideas that flowed from it into concrete and specific achievements. They built a network of institutions and procedures, of commitments and reciprocal obligations, which turned the dream of European unity into the substance of the European Community.

But the Europe built by the founding fathers of the Community is manifestly not a complete realisation of the European vision. What they did was to lay the foundations. It falls to us and to our successors to complete the edifice.

Let there be no doubt as to the magnitude of this task. What one might call the 'first' Europe - the Europe of the Coal and Steel Community of Euratom and of the Economic Community - is essentially an economic construction. It is based upon the removal of barriers to the operation of economic forces within

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the Community and upon the transfer to the Community of some of the limited regulatory powers which our member-states had allowed themselves in the economic sphere. Although the achievements of this 'first' Europe have been considerable and should not be underestimated - the common market, the common agricultural policy, the common external commercial policy and the overseas development policy - the 'second' Europe which must grow out of it will have to become a lot more positive.

And the making of the 'second' Europe will be even more difficult than that of the 'first' - although we start upon our task with the inestimable advantage of the twenty years' success of the economic Europe, and with the basic elements of European political organisation already in being in the shape of the institutions established by the Rome Treaty. It will be more difficult to build the 'second' Europe because you cannot print power in the way that you can print money - you can only redistribute it or share it. And it is only upon such a sharing or even a redistribution of power that the 'second' Europe can be built.

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So much is clear as a matter of logic. But let us be realistic. A new sharing of power in the Community, or a redistribution of it, is not going to come about merely because it is logically implied in the idea of progress towards further unity in Europe. Those who are charged with responsibility under the present distribution of powers will not lightly

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accept the reduction of their authority. Before they consent to changes they will want to be sure - and in this they will be acting quite properly - that the interests for which they are responsible can be better safeguarded under any new arrangement of powers. Although a time may come when they may accept the need for a comprehensive reconstruction of the Community arrangements within a new framework of European Union, it seems that for the present and for the foreseeable future they will prefer to deal in a piecemeal and pragmatic fashion with each particular problem as it arises - rather than asking of each and every proposal or policy how it can be made to serve the concept of European Union.

In these circumstances there will no doubt be many of you who will conclude that European unity must therefore after all turn out to be a Utopia. There is undoubtedly a malaise in the Community today, one of whose causes - or perhaps it is a symptom? - is our present failure to make further progress together. If the governments of our member states continue to think and act as they do - if they go on seeing Europe as nothing more than a way of pursuing their short term national interests - how can we have any warrant for expecting that the substance of our European faith and vision will in time be more fully realised?

Let me tell you why I am confident that our hopes for the growth of the 'second' more intimate and more effective Europe will in due course be fulfilled.

The fact is that the analysis upon which the European

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Movement was founded remains sound - that there are important respects in which the system of exclusive national sovereignties is obsolete in that it is no longer sufficient to meet our needs in the modern age.

Think of any single major social or economic problem - and therefore political problem - facing any of our member countries today, and ask yourself whether its solutions do not transcend national frontiers and national jurisdictions. At the most fundamental level the expectations and values of our people, the aspirations and appetites which give meaning to their lives and which define the essential problems of the age, are less and less the product of purely national cultures and more and more the fruits of a transnational civilisation - the culture of advanced industrial society - which is wider even than Western Europe in its scale. Inflation, unemployment, economic growth: in the increasingly unified European society of the first quarter of the twentieth century there is not one of these economic phenomena, which necessarily preoccupy governments in every country, that can be dealt with effectively by action at the national level alone.

In the kind of society in which we in Europe live change is incessant and inevitable. It is built into the structure of our economy and of the technological dynamism upon which it is based. More than that, there is also a kind of inner logic in that process of change - a logic of the expanding scale of economic operations, of deepening specialisation and division of labour, of an increasing integration of economic and social forces which is simultaneously ever more complex and ever more wide-ranging in the elements which compose it. It is this

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dynamism, this logic, which is carrying us irresistably beyond the familiar frontiers of the sovereign state system in which the political life of Europe has been cast for these last three centuries, and which is confronting us ever more forcibly with the need for a new and more integrated and cooperative way of organising our affairs in Europe. And that

necessity is flowing not just from an ideal or vision of a European Union but from the increasingly evident fact that national interests and national responsibilities can only be pursued effectively upon the basis of European unity.

I believe that it is in this way and by the light of this understanding of the inadequacy of exclusively national responses to the realities of the present and future that we can best understand the economic and monetary confusions that have been such a prominent feature of the European scene over the past five years. Between 1945 and 1971 the essential political framework for the functioning of the Western European economy - indeed for the economy of the whole of the advanced industrial world - was supplied by American power and American leadership. Since the beginning of this decade that framework - at least in the economic sphere - has been largely dismantled. And we in Europe have thus been confronted by the challenge of living up to our European convictions - by the challenge of making and sustaining our own framework for the management of European economic and monetary forces that can no longer be contained within the familiar structures of national power. The basic theme of European history over the past five years is surely to be found in the efforts of our governments and of the institutions of the Community to come to grips with this challenge even if we have not yet mastered it.

The outcome of these efforts to meet the challenge  
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of change is of course as yet obscure. There is a curtain over the future. But we have already gone so far along the road of European integration that there will be no turning back. No one of our countries can opt out of the unified European economy that has already come into being without doing intolerable damage to itself. The choice which faces the governments and the institutions of our Community can therefore be reduced essentially to the choice between building a viable and enduring framework for the conduct of economic and social change, or allowing that process of change to have its way without the benefit of deliberative political control or guidance.

So much for what one might call the internal motor which impels us towards closer union in Europe. There is also an external motor which impels us with increasing force in the same direction.

The movement of events in the world outside Europe is increasingly imposing upon us the obligation to give form and substance to Europe's international personality - an obligation which we cannot refuse and which manifestly cannot be fulfilled without that personality developing a new political dimension.

This external impulse stems from the two great facts of world politics in the modern age - from the continuing differences between East and West, between the international system centred on Russia and that of the so-called 'capitalist world', and from the emerging dialogue between North and South, between the rich industrialised countries and the poor countries of the developing world.



Europe can no more opt out of these facts of her international environment than her member-governments can opt out of our internal processes of economic integration. We are caught up in a dynamic process of international development in the relations between North and South and East and West which is bound - together with the internal dynamic of economic and social change within the Community - to lead us in time towards a fuller realisation of our European vision. The foundations of the 'second' Europe have already been laid; and both the need to build it and the materials for its building are mounting with every day that passes. What is necessary now is that those who must build it - the governments and peoples of Europe - should comprehend the realities of their situation and set about their task with the necessary will.

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The will that is needed is of course a political will. It is the will to enable Europe to find and exert her strength not in a distant future but over the years immediately ahead.

And for this to occur it is of crucial importance that the governments of our member states should recognise the extent to which the true balance of their interests and responsibilities is weighted in favour of European policies and a European approach.

This is not, I believe, a question of immediate institutional changes or of the perhaps premature acceptance by  
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national governments of a new distribution of formal powers and political competences. Rather, it is a question of them recognising the limits of their capacity to master their problems by acting separately, and of their accepting that European solutions can only work if our governments are prepared to act together to make them work. For at this stage in the development of the Community with its limited institutional powers a heavy responsibility for Europe's future rests upon the governments of its members. The European interest can only prevail when our governments are prepared to ask themselves in relation to their policy decisions not only where lies the national interest, but also where lies the European interest.

What needs to be realised is that the whole of the Community can be, and must be, greater than the sum of its parts. Europe cannot function as the lowest common denominator of the various interests pursued by the governments of its member states. If it is to develop effectively it must be built upon a common recognition of the essential importance of the European interest, and upon a conscious decision that the successful pursuit of the European interest corresponds with the highest national interest of each of the Community's members.

It is not a question of the member states making sacrifices on the altar of European unity. They are being asked to recognise that every contribution they make to the strengthening of the Community enhances their own prosperity and security as members of the Community.

Take, for example, the question of the Community's budget. There are two different ways of looking at the matter - one which regards the Community budget as merely an optional

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alternative to national spending, and the other which recognises that it is the instrument of European policies that make possible the attainment of objectives which are beyond the reach of national programmes.

Take another example - that of the Community's external relations. Each of our countries has its own tradition in foreign policy - a tradition which is the compound expression of its national history and culture and of a continuously reviewed assessment of the enduring national interest amid the flux of world events. The foreign policy of a united Europe will also gradually take shape in its own tradition. But although this tradition will be moulded by the same considerations which have shaped our national policies, it will inevitably reflect a synthesis of all the historical elements and abiding interests that go to make up our Community. Indeed, it will be more even than a synthesis: it will be something quite new and different reflecting the emergence of a quite new and different factor - the European factor - in world affairs.

It will be a policy which projects the essential character and interests of European society, committed to pluralism, democracy, and the social-market economy. It will therefore join us in close ties with like-minded countries all over the world, and notably with the United States. It will also be a policy which reflects Europe's historic concern with the developing world, and the various elements of which that concern is made up - humanitarianism, zeal for cultural rayonnement, the desire to do business with a sense of responsibility. It will reflect the historical ties of kinship and the mutual interests which bind Great Britain to the Commonwealth, and the cultural bonds which join France and Italy to the other countries of the

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Mediterranean border-land and to Africa as well as those which join the Netherlands with the East Indies and the German Federal Republic with its compatriots and neighbours to the East.

All of these historic elements will find their place in Europe's external relations. But they will not do so in the forms they have taken in the past, nor can they continue to be defined exclusively by one or other national connection. Further, Europe will be challenged to fresh creativity as new subjects take their place on the agenda of international relations, as new preoccupations emerge and new instruments of international policy are forged.

And so I believe it can be shown to our governments, and the unfolding of events will bring home to them, that further progress towards European unity is more than a matter of sentiment or faith - rather is it the only way in which they can hope successfully to realise the responsibilities and pursue the interests with which they are charged.

As in the past, so in the future, the development of common European institutions is the key to our progress together. Above all we need a strong and confident European political authority capable of expressing the European will and able to make it effective. Here lies the importance of the European Council of the heads of government of the Member States.

Over the year immediately ahead it may be that the main-stream of European development will be along the lines of further cooperation rather than of further integration. But, amid the ebb and flow of the tides of politics and the shifts of fortune which determine the rise and fall of national governments, there is no substitute for the existence of an accepted and

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established framework of legal, institutional and powerful structures whose essential function it is to seek only to define the European interest. The further development of cooperation between the Member States is of course essential to the future of the European Union. But if the cooperation is going to be sufficient for our needs it must lead up to that element of obligation - the pressure to reach a conclusion in the common interest - which marks the difference between a coalition and a Community.

Experience has shown us that Europe cannot be expected to flourish - let alone find its full vigour - in the stoney soil of national interests, tended only by the grasping hands of national governments. It must be nourished by a generous and lively faith and by the concern and involvement of our peoples.

This is where the importance lies of direct elections to the European Parliament - in its capacity to engage the imagination and interest of the citizens of Europe in every walk of life and in every part of the Community. It will bring into being an essential new political dimension in European affairs. I do not believe that we can expect a directly-elected European Parliament to have immediate effect on the balance of institutional forces within the Community - although the Parliament will of course be greatly strengthened by the enhanced legitimacy which direct elections will give it. The importance of a directly elected Assembly lies rather in the way it will bring to bear both upon public opinion and upon the governments and institutions of the Community the influence of men and women who are dedicated

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to a strong and vigorous Europe and who know that they have the right and the obligation to make their views felt.

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Mr. Chairman: the world in which we live is facing us in Europe with a challenge. It is essentially the same challenge as that which was recognised by the founders of the European Movement and the builders of the 'first' Europe - the challenge of developing a new principle for the more effective organisation of our continent.

We have already begun to come to grips with this challenge. The patrimony of the 'first' Europe which we have been bequeathed by the founding fathers of the Community will endure. Now we must get on with the job of building the 'second' Europe upon these foundations.

There are many difficulties. But it is not only because I am a congenital optimist that I believe we will overcome them. The movement of history which is posing this challenge is also a movement which is on our side. It is possible that we may miss or mar our fate. But if we do it will not be merely a missed opportunity for which our children and our children's children will reproach us. In our progress together towards European unity it is not just the luxury of realising an interesting political possibility which is at stake. It is the livelihood and the liberty of those who come after us which depends upon how we in our generation make our European choice.