

STATEMENT BY MR WILHELM HAFERKAMP, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE
COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, ON THE OCCASION
OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES AND
THE COUNCIL FOR MUTUAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE

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Moscow, 29 May 1978

Mr. Secretary,

in the first place, I should like to thank you on my own behalf
and on that of my delegation for your words of welcome and for
the hospitality which you have shown us since our arrival.

Mr. Secretary,

when we consider the course of developments since the first visit
of a delegation of the European Communities in 1975, we are obliged
to note that the state of our relations is not in line with the
development of détente in Europe over these past three years. My
visit will, I hope, contribute to an improvement of these relations
and thereby help us to take a step forward along the path of détente.

The Community has firmly advocated the complete implementation by
all signatories of all the provisions of the Final Act of the Confe-
rence on Security and Cooperation. As is well known, the Community
as such took an active part in drafting this important document.

However, the results of the Conference have unfortunately not been
reflected in all fields, and in particular in our relations.

The present state of relations between the Community and individual
CMEA countries, as well as with CMEA itself, is not helpful to the
process of détente.

It is not sufficient to speak in favour of détente. Appropriate action
is needed. An effort is needed to move forward in developing the pro-
cess of détente, even if by small steps only.

It is part and parcel of such an evolution to establish normal re-
lations. These are indispensable for a profound and lasting develop-
ment of our relations. Today, 111 countries maintain diplomatic re-
lations with the Community. The fact that this is not yet so in the
case of our immediate neighbours, is an anachronism. The establishment

of normal relations between the individual countries of CMEA and the Community, and between CMEA itself and the Community, is no more than the logical outcome of one of the most significant facts of the closing years of this century.

We need parallel progress in both these dimensions as a solid foundation for mutual trust.

Mr. Secretary,

in the talks which took place in September 1977 with Mr. MARINESCU, the President in office of the Executive Committee of CMEA, it was agreed to envisage beginning negotiations in the first half of this year. This was a most positive result of that meeting. We expressed the hope that the negotiations could begin at ministerial level.

We repeated this desire in the letter which I addressed to the President of the Executive Committee of CMEA on the 6th of January.

In the interests of making practical progress, we therefore greatly welcomed your invitation to come to Moscow and accepted it immediately, regardless of considerations of protocol or procedure.

In your invitation the meeting was not referred to as an official opening of negotiations. In your view it is to be a meeting for the overall discussion of questions which might form the subject of an agreement. Your statement has confirmed this view.

The Community, on the other hand, had declared its readiness to enter into immediate negotiations for the establishment of working relations with CMEA as early as November 1976. Already in November 1974, the conclusion of trade agreements had been proposed to each Member State of CMEA. When President MARINESCU visited Brussels, we accepted your wish to consider that meeting as a pre-negotiation stage. At the same time, however, we again declared our readiness to take up negotiations at

once. So far as we are concerned, we are still prepared to regard this meeting as the beginning of negotiations, and I should have been glad if you had shared our view.

But I believe that given good will on both sides it should be possible through our talks and through practical undertakings, to overcome these divergencies, which could then be regarded as differences of terminology rather than of substance.

Mr. Secretary,

there are two ways in which the specific problems of establishing relations between our two organizations could be handled:

An effort could be made to examine all forms of relations in the largest number of areas, with a view to moulding these into an agreement which would surely be a highly complex one.

Alternatively, we could endeavour to find out what first joint practical step we might take in order to give real and publicly known content to our common resolution.

I feel that one of the reasons why our relations have improved so slowly and so haltingly is that neither of us is sufficiently familiar with the complex machinery of the other's organisation. We must first, therefore, improve our knowledge of each other and introduce a constant exchange of information. If we were to succeed in that, we would not only have demonstrated our political will to establish solid relations, but we would at the same time have laid a firm basis for future action.

The draft agreement which the Community proposed on the 14th November 1976, is based on these considerations and is in line with the Community's practice vis-à-vis other international economic organisations.

In our view the purpose of the agreement is to establish good relations, practical working relations, between the Community and COMECON. In order to give real substance to such relations, we should in the first place obtain better knowledge of one another's organisation of their past achievements and their plans for the future. I am sure that today's meeting will make an important contribution to this.

Our draft therefore provides for an exchange of information in areas of common interest in which our two organizations have genuine competence. We further envisage contacts with a view to exchanging opinions. I may at a later stage revert in greater detail to the significance of such an exchange of information, i.e. what kind of exchange we should have, what information we would make available to you and what we would expect from you.

In our talks with President MARINESCU, we expressed the view that no agreement would be possible which would not be compatible with the aims, the practice and the institutional rules of both sides. No such agreement could in any way allow interference in the internal affairs of the other partner, or commit him to modify his aims, practices or institutional rules.

The agreement reached at that time is an important factor for the further course of our work. It is immensely valuable to our relations. One of the principles governing international relations is to respect the normal functioning of the institutions of the other side, and its way of doing things. Only if this is assured can an agreement be viable. Neither partner can accept an agreement which is not in accord with his essential interests. We do not want an agreement for an agreement's sake. We want an agreement that is in harmony with our common objectives and general views. In the past we have never commented upon the manner in which your institutions operate, or upon their fields of competence. We shall not change this attitude in the negotiations for this agreement. I make this clear intentionally, in order to prevent any misunderstanding and in order to establish a good atmosphere for our talks.

Nevertheless, it would not be realistic, and would indeed be damaging to our work, if we were to close our eyes to the fundamental differences between the parties. But it is precisely because of these differences and in order to clarify our divergent points of view that we have come here for the purpose of laying, with you, the basis for our future relations. We are convinced that in this way it will be possible to begin some pioneer work with you and thus to clear the way for broader prospects.

The draft agreement communicated to us in February 1976 by President WEISS departs from these basic criteria on a number of essential points:

it disregards our institutional rules concerning the transfers of national competences to the supranational level. In fact, 8 of the 15 articles of your draft agreement would not be compatible with our institutional rules.

Moreover, your draft provides for procedures which would be applied to the Community only, and which are not the same as those which CMEA member states observe in their relations with other partners.

In view of the complex nature of our relations, the agreement which we wish to conclude with one another should be built upon a solid foundation. That foundation should not be weakened through exceptions.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Secretary, I should be interested to hear a little more from you about the relations of your organisation with other international economic organisations. We should also be very interested to know the legal instruments governing these relations.

Finally, I should be grateful if you would explain to us the difficulties standing in the way of the establishment of relations on the basis of the proposals submitted by us, and if you could tell us in what way these proposals depart from your procedures, your institutional rules or your aims.

Mr. Secretary,

in the desire to speed up the conclusion of an agreement between our two organisations I should like to suggest that we decide to continue our negotiations of today at the level of experts. To this end, I would propose that the experts should, if possible, in June examine in Brussels what could be the scope and the modalities of an agreement to be concluded between our organisations. They would naturally have to base their discussions on the results of our talks today. In their difficult task the experts should be guided by criteria which are no longer contentious between us. This means that they should avoid everything which would be incompatible with the aims, the practice or the institutional rules of either party.

An analysis of your proposal shows, furthermore, that there already exists a common basis which could become the core of the proposed agreement. That is why I feel that we can now confidently decide to open this new phase in our negotiations.

The timing for us to make an assessment of the work of the experts could depend on what proposals they submit. At the same time we should be able to take the initiative at our level for a further meeting if this were necessary in the light of the progress made by the experts.

In this way, Mr. Secretary, we should be able to move forward along the road towards an agreement and to reach the goal which we have set ourselves today.

It is our conviction that, if both sides succeed in a better understanding of the motivations and possibilities of the other, and if both sides will act as realistically as the importance of our undertaking requires, it will be possible to reach agreement in a relatively short time.

I shall revert at a later stage to some points of your interesting statement and would like here and now to hand you the draft of a press-communicé which sets out the aims which we are pursuing at this historic meeting.

We do not doubt that the conclusion of an agreement on the establishment of relations between our two organisations at the same time implies the establishment of relations between the member states of your organisation and our Community. This would be both logical and realistic.

The peoples of Europe and of other continents are watching our discussions attentively. They expect us to reach a successful conclusion and concrete results, and thus to make an important contribution to détente throughout the world.

That, Mr. Secretary, is our duty and our privilege today.