

From 10 to 12: Enlarging the European Community to Include Portugal and Spain (December 7, 1984)

Abstract

In this speech to the Bundestag, Chancellor Helmut Kohl explains why it was in the national interest to quickly conclude accession negotiations with Spain and Portugal and to allow them to join the European Community by January 1, 1986. He points out that the inclusion of those southern European states in the European Community would strengthen their democracies. Nonetheless, agricultural policy remained a sticking point and Community interests collided with national ones.

Source

Policy Statement by Chancellor Helmut Kohl before the German Bundestag on December 7, 1984

[...]

The enlargement of the European Community to include Spain and Portugal was the focus of the European Council. I would like to state once more that here in the German Bundestag—also in the last session of the legislature—we have declared again and again, in complete unanimity, that it is our wish to keep the promise made by the democrats of Europe to the democratic parties and forces in Spain and Portugal and to offer them, after their return to the free world from an authoritarian or dictatorial regime, the opportunity to join the Community as quickly as possible.

When we repeatedly expressed this very generous promise, we were all well aware that the path to the accession of Spain and Portugal would be filled with great difficulties. Despite these problems, I would like to declare once more in the name of the federal government that it is our declared objective and wish that the scheduled date of January 1, 1986, be met; it must and can be met.

As can only be expected in such a context, economic interests are at the center of discussion in negotiations on the treaty-documents. I would like to stress once more to the German public: I believe that the interests that individual countries are introducing in this context are thoroughly understood. Whoever understands the significance of the fishing industry for our French and Spanish neighbors, for instance, knows that it is only too likely that difficulties will arise when discussing the future development of this important sector of the European economy.

The important thing is whether, for the sake of the most important objective, one is ready to summon up goodwill and the willingness to make compromises. At this European summit in Dublin, we had a serious, somewhat heated discussion on the issue of wine surpluses in the EC after the accession of Spain and Portugal. This, too, of course, is a question of great interest for an important segment of our population. In recent days, I have occasionally heard: they're just arguing about wine. I would like to point out that the subsistence of thousands of vintner families is profoundly influenced by this development and that it is obviously the task of a government to arrive at compromises that protect its own justifiable self-interests but also tie in with the obligation to serve the common goal. After some bitter experiences regarding European agrarian policy, our goal must be to achieve concrete limitations on the costly wine surpluses in time, before Spain—that is, another major wine producer—joins the Community.

I'd like to say something else regarding this matter. I believe that what President Mitterrand has

repeatedly emphasized in this context is correct and of considerable importance: intellectually, it is only fair if we discuss and clear up the existing difficulties before these countries join the EC. We know from concrete past experience that it is much more difficult to come to an agreement on such issues after accession takes place. As you know, in March the Community resolved to limit the guarantee for milk. Here in Dublin, it was possible to reach a compromise on regulations for wine. I hope that despite Greece's objections it will be possible to clear the way for Spain and Portugal to enter the EC. This means that the Commission has the option, subject to confirmation, to negotiate with Spain and Portugal over the coming weeks on all questions that still remain open, including the trade of agricultural products and issues regarding fishing.

I know that these talks will not be easy. But it is a great step forward that the Community is now agreed on what it wants to achieve and what it can offer. The quick conclusion of these talks—and this, too, must be said—will now depend upon the Spanish and Portuguese governments' willingness and ability to compromise.

Despite the difficult negotiations in Dublin, I assume that the accession will proceed as agreed on January 1, 1986. This can be achieved if all involved parties show the necessary goodwill to reach an agreement. We, the [German] federal government—and I think you will support us in this—will do all that is humanly possible to contribute to ensuring that this promised deadline is met.

[...]

Source: Erklärung von Bundeskanzler Kohl vor dem Deutschen Bundestag am 7. Dezember 1984, in *Bulletin* (Press and Information Office of the Federal Government), December 8, 1984, no. 152, pp. 1337–43; reprinted in Auswärtiges Amt, ed., *Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Dokumente von 1949 bis 1994*. Cologne, 1995, pp. 520–21.

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