

EFTA Ministerial Meeting
5/6 November 1970, Geneva

Annexe 1

Statement by the Swiss Delegation

Item 2 of the Agenda:
Integration

This being the first meeting of the EFTA Council at Ministerial level since negotiations have been opened between candidate countries and the European Communities, it is fitting to express our satisfaction with regard to the results so far obtained. The decisions of the European Communities - which we had anticipated last May - have been conform to our wishes so that by the end of the year all EFTA members will have had their opportunity to open negotiations or exploratory talks. The time schedule - which observes an order of precedence based on practical considerations - also adopts a parallelism of proceedings which we consider appropriate and in keeping with the concept of a comprehensive solution such as we envisaged it within EFTA.

As far as we are concerned, however, we have a wish that goes beyond the 10th November, the date fixed for the opening of a meeting at Ministerial level. We hope indeed that the exploratory talks, which are to be held by the Commission on behalf of the Communities, may begin as soon as possible afterwards.

As I have explained already at our last meeting, the exploratory talks should permit Switzerland to establish - jointly with the European Communities - possible bases for special links to be setup in keeping with Paragraph 4 of the Hague Declaration. These talks should help us to elaborate the objectives of formal negotiations which would constitute a second phase of contacts with the European Communities. Information of Swiss public opinion and consultation with Parliament on these issues will take some time. We would welcome early talks so as not to hold up in any way the general proceedings.

The motives for the establishment of special links which have to be worked out between the Communities and Switzerland are well known to EFTA members. They are in line with the efforts we have made ever since the early fifties with a view to strengthening European Co-operation and to liberalizing



trade. Free trade, such as established by the Stockholm Convention, is part and parcel of the remarkable progress accomplished in Europe, parallel with the achievements of the Communities. It is therefore quite natural that we wish to safeguard these achievements within an enlarged framework. I shall later come back to this point.

In conjunction with the European Communities we aim at establishing special links, taking into account several elements:

- One: We wish to make our own contribution towards the construction of Europe, mindful of the economic importance of this construction and of its significance for the future of our Continent;
- Two: Our statute and our policy of neutrality do not permit us to accept - as required of the Candidates - the transfer of fundamental powers to the Community organs to an extent which would limit the independent functioning of our institutions beyond the point compatible with the requirements of our neutrality;
- Three: We must further take into account our existing close and multiple economic relations with the Six - as well as with the new Community members and other countries wishing to participate in European integration;
- Four: The agreement to be concluded should not be merely static, concerned solely with the traditional activities of the Communities, but dynamic, permitting the progressive participation of Switzerland in new programmes, such as those envisaged under the term of "second generation projects".

As may be concluded from the above points, we are looking for an arrangement which would cover, in an appropriate manner, all our economic relations with the Communities. It should not only comprise the free movement of industrial goods, but also provide mutually advantageous solutions in the field of agriculture. We know that this is one of the prerequisites of the Communities. Arrangements should also be worked out in other fields where the Communities have been active. In addition, we believe that the dynamic character of the European construction will express itself particularly in the search of solutions to problems of the second generation. It seems desirable to us that our country be associated with these developments. We would welcome appropriate co-operation with the Communities in spheres such as economic and monetary policy, industrial policy, technology, etc.

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The establishment between the Communities and Switzerland of special links covering a wide range of subjects demands time and imagination. Those issues, however, where common interests and objectives do exist already are so numerous and of such importance that we have every right to hope for constructive talks and for the achievement of a satisfactory solution.

This leads me to the question of co-operation within EFTA. As foreseen by the Communities, the candidate countries for accession are to be consulted at the appropriate time on the agreements to be foreseen with the countries which seek the establishment of special links. To avoid a time lag, we shall endeavour to inform our partners regularly of the state of progress of our talks and subsequently of our negotiations with the Communities so that our EFTA partners may have full knowledge of the facts before they are called upon to take position in the E.E.C. context. We attach the same importance to this as on being ourselves informed by candidate countries of the progress of their own negotiations. It is this double exchange of information which will make possible consultations in depth which are in the interest of us all.

A comprehensive European solution will require, moreover, that future relations among non-candidate countries be worked out in conformity with our common objective: to safeguard free trade created within EFTA. This aspect of the problem - the importance of which should not be underestimated - has not yet been studied systematically. The moment has come where a start to this effect should be made. For this reason we would welcome the Council at official level to be asked to consider - in conjunction with the Secretariat - what kind of studies to this end might usefully be undertaken.

It would, in addition, be most valuable to keep each other informed of our intentions or of the position taken with regard to the second generation problems. This does not mean, of course, to start here a negotiation which has, in fact, to take place in Brussels. Such a discussion would, however, help us to gain a better understanding of the interests of our partners in EFTA as to the future development of the Communities. Here again a more systematic consultation ought to be set on foot.

We wish to thank the candidate countries who have started negotiations with the Communities for the information they have already supplied us with. We are prepared, on our part, to satisfy the legitimate interests of our partners. As soon as all EFTA countries have made their opening statement, it

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will be possible to bring our consultations fully into play, as agreed upon. The overriding consideration of such consultation may be summarized as follows: in what way can we combine efforts to make sure of the success of our endeavour, and how best can we safeguard free trade as established by the Stockholm Convention within the framework of an enlarged Community in which each of us would participate in an appropriate form.

We will have to perfect our own methods of consultation - the organization of special meetings has already been envisaged at ministerial level or at the level of our negotiating teams - to facilitate mutual decision-taking with full knowledge of the interests of our partners in EFTA. It is in this spirit that I would like the Council to take into account, in the conclusions to be reached in the course of its meeting, the procedural suggestions I have just put forward.

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