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Lundi 12 juin 1972

AELE: Résultats de la réunion ministérielle des 4 et 5 mai 1972 à Genève.

Département de l'économie publique. Proposition du 29 mai 1972 (annexe).

Département **politique. Rapport joint du 7 juin 1972** (adhésion).

Département des finances et des douanes. Rapport joint du 1er juin 1972 (adhésion).

Conformément à la proposition et d'entente avec le Département politique et le Département des finances et des douanes, le Conseil fédéral

d é c i d e

de prendre note du rapport du Département de l'économie publique et d'approuver les résultats de la réunion ministérielle du Conseil de l'AELE et du Conseil mixte Finlande/AELE des 4 et 5 mai 1972 à Genève.

Extrait du procès-verbal (proposition avec les annexes) au:

- EPD 10
- FZD 9
- EFK 2
- Fin. Del. 2
- EVD 10

Pour extrait conforme:
Le secrétaire,

SAMUATI

DistribuéPas pour la presseAu Conseil fédéral

EE. 765.1/765.4 - Bru/Bo/Lug/Ay
 AELE : Résultats de la réunion ministérielle des 4 et 5 mai 1972 à Genève

La conférence ministérielle des 4 et 5 mai 1972 sous la présidence du ministre britannique du Commerce, M. Noble, a été avant tout marquée par la discussion sur les questions de l'intégration européenne entre les neuf membres actuels de l'Association qui ont fait le point des négociations de Bruxelles en vue de la conclusion des accords de relations spéciales, d'une part, par la première réunion des ministres des pays non-candidats portant sur l'avenir de l'AELE, d'autre part.

Intégration européenne

Le ministre britannique, M. Rippon, a brossé à grands traits le tableau de l'évolution de son pays en matière d'intégration européenne au cours des six derniers mois. Il a mis l'accent sur la signature du traité d'adhésion et souligné qu'une coopération s'était d'ores et déjà manifestée entre les Communautés européennes et leurs futurs membres afin de préparer le sommet à Dix du mois d'octobre. A ce propos, il s'est étendu en particulier sur la question de la politique monétaire commune. En outre, il a rappelé l'intérêt que porte le Royaume-Uni aux négociations des pays non-candidats avec les Communautés qui est apparu spécialement au cours de la procédure de consultation.

Les ministres danois et norvégien ont insisté tous deux sur l'importance qu'ils attachent au maintien des avantages mutuels acquis par les membres de l'AELE durant leurs douze années de coopération.

Les représentants des pays non-candidats ont saisi l'occasion qui leur était offerte d'exposer à leurs partenaires les problèmes auxquels ils sont confrontés dans leurs négociations avec les Communautés européennes visant à la conclusion d'accords de relations spéciales entre ces dernières et les six membres de l'AELE qui n'envisagent pas une adhésion. Les principaux points abordés ont été la question du traitement à accorder aux produits dits "sensibles" et celle de l'éventuelle introduction d'un volet agricole.

- 2 -

Quant à elle, la délégation suisse a présenté nos vues sur les six sujets suivants:

1. produits sensibles
2. règles d'origine
3. produits alimentaires transformés
4. agriculture
5. clauses de sauvegarde
6. achats gouvernementaux.

En règle générale, on peut considérer que les pays non-candidats sont satisfaits, avec quelques nuances, des résultats déjà obtenus à Bruxelles. Mais il est apparu que pour certains d'entre eux des problèmes vitaux devaient encore être résolus, comme par exemple le papier pour la Finlande, l'agriculture pour le Portugal et la pêche pour l'Islande.

Relations économiques extérieures

Procédant à un tour d'horizon des problèmes majeurs qui alourdisent présentement l'horizon économique international, les ministres ont été unanimes à reconnaître qu'un déséquilibre fondamental caractérise la situation actuelle, à la solution duquel les mécanismes d'ajustement convenus en décembre dernier n'ont pas totalement servi.

Soulignant la nécessité de la mise en place aujourd'hui d'un système monétaire international plus stable que le précédent, les ministres, à l'instar du Chef de la délégation suisse, se sont généralement accordés pour reconnaître que les efforts actuels doivent globalement viser à un renforcement de la coordination des politiques économiques, et porter sur tous les éléments de ces politiques susceptibles d'influencer les relations économiques internationales.

L'unanimité a été complète sur le soutien apporté par les pays de l'AELE à l'initiative des Communautés européennes, des Etats-Unis et du Japon, de commencer et d'appuyer activement des négociations multilatérales de vaste portée dans le cadre du GATT dès 1973.

Si aucun ministre n'a estimé utile, sur le plan institutionnel, de créer de nouveaux organismes, à côté du FMI et du GATT, pour la réalisation de ces objectifs - la délégation suédoise ayant néanmoins rappelé sa proposition d'il y a quelques mois -, certains, notamment du côté suisse et norvégien, ont mis particulièrement l'accent sur le rôle coordinateur que pourrait jouer à cet égard l'OCDE.

Enfin, l'opportunité de la constitution d'un Groupe des vingt, dont la création est envisagée dans le cadre du FMI, a été relevée

- 3 -

par certains, notamment le Chef de la délégation suisse, pour lequel ce Groupe pourrait remplir cette tâche-clé de détermination des différentes options avant les négociations proprement dites au sein du FMI et du GATT.

Abordant le problème des pays en développement, tous les ministres ont été d'accord pour souligner la nécessité qu'il y avait à associer pleinement ces pays à la réalisation de toutes les phases des réformes envisagées; le voeu a été exprimé par tous que la Conférence de Santiago puisse trouver, à cet égard, les solutions appropriées. La délégation suisse a, pour sa part, souhaité qu'une attention particulière soit accordée aux problèmes des pays les moins avancés.

Notant enfin avec satisfaction l'accroissement des échanges Est-Ouest enregistré durant ces dernières années, la plupart des ministres ont exprimé l'espoir que ce mouvement se poursuive à l'avenir.

Activité de l'Association

La délégation suisse a demandé au ministre danois présent de renseigner les conseils sur le problème de la surtaxe sur les importations introduite en octobre dernier. Le représentant danois a répondu en termes généraux, mais n'a pas laissé entrevoir la possibilité réelle d'une abolition prochaine de cette surtaxe.

Enfin, les conseils ont pris congé de Sir John Coulson, Secrétaire général de l'Association, auquel le représentant du Portugal a rendu hommage au nom de tous ses collègues et souhaité la bienvenue à M. Bengt Rabaeus, jusqu'ici Secrétaire général adjoint, qui reprendra les fonctions abandonnées par Sir John.

Prochaine réunion ministérielle

La prochaine réunion ordinaire des conseils au niveau ministériel aura lieu les 16 et 17 novembre 1972 à Vienne.

Avenir de l'AELE

Sous la présidence du Conseiller fédéral Brugger - ministre du pays hôte -, les ministres des six pays non-candidats ont tenu une brève séance non officielle pour discuter de l'avenir de l'Association. En prenant connaissance d'un rapport élaboré à leur intention par les chefs des délégations permanentes, ils sont en particulier convenus de ce qui suit:

1. Les six Etats non-candidats de l'AELE maintiendront le libre-échange instauré entre eux sur la base de la Convention de Stockholm;

- 4 -

2. l'instrument juridique qui garantira le maintien du libre-échange entre eux sera comme à présent la Convention de Stockholm, ainsi que l'accord d'association avec la Finlande.
3. des organes exécutifs ainsi qu'un secrétariat seront maintenus, le nombre et l'importance des organes et du secrétariat devant être établis à un stade ultérieur.

En donnant mandat aux chefs des délégations permanentes de poursuivre leurs études des dispositions de fond de cette convention qui devront être modifiées compte tenu des circonstances nouvelles, ils les ont chargés de préparer les décisions sur les modifications de la Convention de Stockholm qui seront nécessaires. Ils ont en outre souligné que le caractère ouvert de la Convention devait être maintenu et que l'étude des représentants permanents devait également porter sur les tâches futures de l'Association pour ce qui est de ses relations extérieures. Les ministres des six pays non-candidats sont enfin convenus de se retrouver lors de la prochaine réunion ministérielle de l'AELE.

Nous vous

p r o p o s o n s

de prendre note du présent rapport et d'approuver les résultats de la réunion ministérielle du Conseil de l'AELE et du Conseil mixte Finlande/AELE des 4 et 5 mai 1972 à Genève.

DEPARTEMENT FEDERAL DE L'ECONOMIE PUBLIQUE

Annexes:

- Déclaration suisse sur l'intégration européenne
- Déclaration suisse sur les relations économiques extérieures
- Communiqué de presse de la réunion ministérielle

Annexe 1

EFTA Ministerial Meeting
Geneva, 4th and 5th May 1972
Swiss Delegation

European Integration

Statement of Mr. Ernst Brugger, Federal Councillor

For the last two years the introductory statements at EFTA Ministerial Meetings have invariably mentioned and expressed appreciation of further progress towards the common objective of a comprehensive European market. This is particularly true today.

The signature of the instruments of accession marks the successful conclusion of the negotiations with the candidate countries. It represents a decisive break-through in the European development.

This progress has greatly helped the negotiations with the other, the non-candidate EFTA members. These have significantly advanced since we last met.

The type of agreements conceivable for these countries has taken shape. A great measure of agreement has been reached on the purpose and content of the free trade arrangements to be concluded with the enlarged Communities. Furthermore, a considerable number of individual points have been settled. Last week, the Council of the European Communities adapted and completed the directives for the further negotiations with respect to a number of open questions. A significant although not sufficient move has been made in the direction of the negotiating positions put forward by the non-candidate countries. What seems to be most important is that it will now be possible to continue negotiations without delay. The political will to achieve a simultaneous solution for all has been confirmed. The objective remains to conclude negotiations in July. For my country - which needs at least six

- 2 -

months for its internal constitutional procedures - conclusion in July is indeed essential. I am also convinced that we must not only press for a timely signature on account of the parallelism of the entry into force of all agreements, but also on account of other factors. New and pressing tasks will dominate the European scene in autumn. This is why I am of the opinion that each day counts. But I am sure that there is now a good chance of success and that we shall be in a position, on 1st January 1973, to reap the results of the efforts begun twelve years ago, at the foundation of EFTA.

At this juncture, I wish to express a word of appreciation to the acceding countries for the constructive attitude taken during their consultations with the European Communities. I am convinced they will be equally helpful during further negotiations. I would even go a step forward and express the hope that after the 1st January 1973 not only memories of the good old days of EFTA, but also particularly close relations should remain, based on the mutual understanding resulting from our partnership.

Let me enumerate briefly some questions which play an important part in the further negotiations with the Community. Since time for concluding is short we must concentrate on a few essential points. For Switzerland they are as follow :

- 1) Sensitive products: We are gratified that thanks to joint efforts made by all EFTA partners we succeeded in convincing the EEC that the tariff freeze is no appropriate method to deal with particular situations. I am convinced, however, that we have to continue our endeavours to further improve the proposed solutions. It would be interesting to hear the views of my colleagues representing countries which are even more deeply affected than Switzerland.

- 3 -

- 2) Rules of origin: Here, too, some encouraging progress have been made. It will be necessary, however, that EFTA partners continue their close co-operation during negotiations on technical questions. We firmly hope that the rules of origin will allow the division of labour achieved so far within EFTA to be continued and will favourably influence industrial co-operation among all members of the enlarged Community and the EFTA countries. Our first concern in the next negotiating phase is to examine whether the interpretation to be given to the recent decisions of the Council of Ministers of the European Communities does indeed permit - as supposed by EFTA experts - to reach this objective.
- 3) Processed foodstuffs: The new negotiating proposal seems to us to be the right approach. It should permit to maintain a large part of what has been achieved within EFTA.
- 4) Agriculture: Here there is some cause for serious concern. Switzerland could visualize an agreement without or with a "volet agricole" on condition of reciprocity. Reciprocal agricultural concessions are however always difficult to negotiate. What worries us is therefore the time factor since a decision of principle is still outstanding. This uncertainty holds a real danger of delay. The problem of agricultural trade should not be allowed to jeopardize the timely conclusion of negotiations. Even if the decision to be taken may be important for political reasons it does not appear to us to be crucial for the future co-operation between the EC and us in this sector. Indeed, the agreements will contain a clause according to which the Contracting Parties declare their willingness to ensure a harmonious development of mutual trade subject to their respective agricultural policies.

- 5) Safeguard clauses: To us the procedural aspect is of paramount importance, particularly as regards prior consultation. In this respect we must avoid misunderstandings. Some governments seem to fear that preliminary consultations might lead to dangerous delays in urgent cases. Provisions can be made to avoid this. It must be borne in mind that after all contacts within Europe can be established at short notice. What we endeavour to secure is an examination of the relevant facts by all concerned before unilateral action is taken. Furthermore, the willingness and the obligation to consult will be of great psychological importance.
- 6) Public purchasing: We are of the opinion that this should also be covered in one way or another since it is of direct relevance to free trade. Although the Commission sees some difficulties we were told in the course of the negotiations that it is not the objective of the Community regulations to disregard offers by firms of non-candidate countries. Under these circumstances it should be possible to reach a mutually advantageous co-operation in this field.

* * *

In the coming months, or more precisely after the conclusion of the Brussels negotiations, our efforts will have to be directed towards securing a smooth transition from the present to the new structures. The preliminary work carried out by EFTA, about which a report is on the table, is, in our opinion, most useful in this context; I wish to express my thanks both to the Secretariat and to our permanent Delegations.

Among the problems to be solved there are questions of substance, such as the re-erection of trade barriers in marginal areas where it may not prove possible to apply fully the principle

of maintaining free trade, or the question of timing or the question of substituting new rules of origin to those now applied within EFTA. In this respect a legal issue may arise as the EFTA Convention will no longer apply from 1st January 1973 to relations between the new members of EEC and the other EFTA countries. A similar problem might arise if - against all expectation - the free trade agreements between the European Communities and the non-candidate countries did not enter into force precisely on 1st January 1973.

As to what happens after January 1st, 1973, I have already expressed the hope that close and confident relations may be kept up between the old EFTA partners. It might even be worthwhile to examine whether it would be possible to retain among us those elements of EFTA co-operation which will not be covered by the individual free trade agreements, in order to avoid the loss of mutual advantages.

As regards relations among the remaining EFTA members, I should like to confirm that my Government is prepared to continue those relations on the basis of the Stockholm Convention. In my view, this work on the necessary adaptations should be taken up as soon as possible after the summer recess so that all the decisions can be taken in time in capitals and in Geneva.

EFTA Ministerial Meeting
Geneva, 4th and 5th May 1972
Swiss Delegation

Annexe 2

External economic relations

Statement of Mr. Ernst Brugger, Federal Councillor

The events which occurred since mid-1971 in the monetary and trade fields led, in December, to the parity realignment and the decision to initiate work related to the monetary reform and, in January, to the declaration of intent with regard to new trade negotiations within GATT. Since then - and in both fields - endeavours have centered on defining the organizational set up for the negotiations envisaged.

A thorough evaluation of the main problems is indispensable if the decision to be taken about the institutional reforms and negotiating procedures are to be effective.

Thus, the question arises whether we are faced with a situation requiring merely some rather marginal adjustments or, on the contrary, whether there is a basic imbalance which, if allowed to persist, might jeopardize the very foundations of the international system of trade and payments liberalization and prevent the proper functioning of monetary mechanisms - whatever they may be - which are needed to maintain the free flow of goods, services and capital on a world-wide scale.

For my part, I share the opinion that the international economic relations are at present characterized by a basic imbalance resulting from the fact that the mechanisms of adjustment did not achieve their objectives.

- 2 -

It is, therefore, justified to ask whether the recent realignment of monetary parities is likely - beyond the short term period - to have a favourable influence on the constituent elements of the balance of payments. This may be the case in the trade field - at least as far as industrial products are concerned -, in the sector of invisibles and as regards returns on existing capital investments, whereas the monetary realignment can hardly have a direct effect on other important elements of the balance of payments, such as long-term investments, unilateral transfers and development aid disbursements.

These considerations lead us to the conclusion that monetary realignments are perhaps not by themselves sufficient and that our efforts to improve the adjustment process must go beyond the reform of monetary mechanisms; these efforts should strengthen the coordination of economic policies as far as necessary in order to ensure that the national objectives in the balance of payments field are compatible with each other.

This succinct analysis gives rise to the following questions: should we deal with the monetary problems only and by priority, or should a link be established between monetary reform and trade questions? This is, in our opinion, too narrow a dilemma. As a matter of fact, what appears to be at stake are all the elements of our economic policies likely to have a bearing on our external economic relations: rate of inflation; level of interest rates; private and public investments; trade policies, and so on.

The analysis I have just made does not point to the need for new international organizations. However, if we want to make the best possible use of the competence of the existing institutions, there is a strong need to establish a global diagnosis on the basis of which the actions - by necessity complementary - of international bodies such as IMF, GATT or OECD can be defined and carried out in a coherent fashion.

- 3 -

The sphere of competence of OECD extends to every aspect of international economic life. This organization therefore seems to offer the adequate forum to establish the envisaged diagnosis and to create an awareness of the underlying causes of the imbalance of the present economic situation.

The diagnosis - which should reflect an international consensus - would be at the disposal of all the other international organizations and would help to put into correct perspective the negotiations towards a reform of the international monetary system, those envisaged within the framework of GATT as well as the shaping of development aid policies.

OECD would also contribute to ensure the regular coordination of economic policies, thus assuming the collective management of the adjustment mechanisms.

An intermediate task between establishing a diagnosis and the conduct of negotiations proper within IMF and GATT would consist in the definition of the options - and of their respective weight - which would seem to be open in order to redress the economic imbalance. A key task such as this might, for example, be entrusted to the Special Group envisaged to be set up under the auspices of the IMF.

I wish to stress the importance we attach to the work carried out within GATT, for, apart from its possible contribution to world-wide economic equilibrium, this work is of great intrinsic value, as it maintains and furthers liberal economic policies in the world at large.

We also follow with the most vivid interest the course of the Third UNCTAD Conference at Santiago de Chile. More than ever - and particularly in our world of rapid evolution - it is of

- 4 -

great importance to take into due consideration the interests of the developing countries in all respects. Economic progress in those countries leaves indeed much to be desired. A greater effort in favour of development is called for, with special attention to the problems of the least advanced countries. In view of the vulnerability of developing countries and of the repercussions of the international economic and monetary situation on their economies, we understand indeed the wish expressed by those countries to play a more active part in the envisaged reforms. We sincerely hope that the Santiago Conference will find the appropriate solutions.

Finally, progress envisaged on the regional level calls for parallel progress with all our partners, including the state-trading countries.

I wish to reiterate the firm determination of my authorities to cooperate fully in the search of solutions to the difficult problems which face us in the economic, monetary and trade fields.

Annexe 3

Bulletin de presse de l'AELE paraissant plusieurs fois par an

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION EUROPEENNE DE LIBRE-ECHANGE

Genève

No 12/72/F

MINISTERIAL MEETINGS OF EFTA COUNCILS

4th and 5th May, 1972

Communiqué

The EFTA Council and the Joint Council of EFTA and Finland met at Ministerial level in Geneva on 4th and 5th May 1972. Mr. Michael Noble, Minister for Trade of the United Kingdom, was in the Chair.

In the EFTA Council, with the Finnish Minister taking part in a personal capacity, Ministers reviewed recent developments in European integration.

Ministers welcomed the successful conclusion of the negotiations of Denmark, Norway and the United Kingdom for membership of the Communities and the signature by those countries of the accession treaty in Brussels on 22nd January 1972.

All Ministers expressed their satisfaction that the first phase of the negotiations between the non-candidate EFTA countries and the Community had now been completed and that agreement in principle had been reached on a number of important constituent parts of the prospective special relations agreements. On the other hand Ministers noted with concern that a number of problems of crucial importance to the individual non-candidate countries remained unsolved. They stressed the importance of reaching balanced solutions which would be mutually satisfactory and safeguard the free trade already established between EFTA countries.

The Ministers of the acceding countries stated that they would continue to bear fully in mind the importance of these questions during their consultations with the Communities.

As the agreements should come into force at the same time as the acceding countries enter the Communities, i.e. 1st January

- 2 -

1973, sufficient time must be left for the necessary ratification procedures. For this reason, all Ministers underlined the importance of concluding the negotiations before the summer recess.

Ministers reiterated their conviction, which had also been expressed by the Ministers of the Communities, that all new arrangements would be in conformity with the provisions of the GATT.

Reviewing the international economic outlook, Ministers expressed their satisfaction at the efforts being made by governments and the international organizations concerned to contribute to the solution of the basic problems facing the world economy, including the international monetary problem.

Ministers welcomed the initiatives which had been taken by the European Communities, Japan and the United States in putting forward proposals for a new global trade negotiation in the GATT beginning in 1973. All the EFTA countries expressed their desire to participate in such a negotiation and to do everything possible to bring it to a successful conclusion. They believed that the success of such a GATT negotiation would be greatly to the benefit of the world at large and stressed the view of all EFTA Governments that particular consideration would have to be given to the interests of developing countries.

Ministers reaffirmed their support for the efforts being made in the conference of UNCTAD in Santiago de Chile, to improve the conditions of developing countries with regard to trade, financial and monetary matters. In the view of all EFTA Governments, the interests and needs of developing countries would have to be taken fully into account in all international negotiations.

In welcoming the growth and broadening of East-West economic relations which had in general taken place in recent years, Ministers expressed the hope that these favourable trends would continue to develop along with the over-all growth of trade of the EFTA countries.

Ministers paid warm tribute to Sir John Coulson on his retirement as Secretary-General. The services he had rendered to EFTA since 1965 had been of the greatest value and the Association was deeply indebted to him. They expressed satisfaction that continuity in the direction of the Secretariat would be ensured as Sir John would be succeeded by Ambassador Bengt Rabaeus who had been his Deputy since April 1966, while Mr. Alfred Wacker would continue in his function as Deputy Secretary-General.

At the invitation of the Austrian Government Ministers decided to meet again on 16th and 17th November 1972 in Vienna.
