

## ANNEX

## Formal sitting

*Address by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II*

IN THE CHAIR: MR KLEPSCH

*President**(The formal sitting opened at 12.30 p.m.)*

**PRESIDENT.** — Your Majesty, your Royal Highness, it is a great honour and pleasure for me to welcome you on behalf of all the Members of the European Parliament.

*(Applause)*

Your Majesty's visit to this House comes at a time when the European Community is facing major challenges and having to take decisions on important aspects of its future development.

In September this year the European Parliament will celebrate the fortieth anniversary of its foundation. However, compared with the Mother of Parliaments, the British Parliament, it is still in its infancy.

On 1 July it will be the turn of the United Kingdom to assume the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the European Community for a period of six months. Its partners and countries outside the Community are looking forward to the British Presidency with wide-ranging expectations.

Your Majesty, with great esteem for your country and for the British people, may I invite you to address the Members of this House.

*(Applause)*

**HER MAJESTY, QUEEN ELIZABETH II.** — Mr President, in a celebrated speech at Zurich in 1946, Winston Churchill described 'the tragedy of Europe'. He compared the richness and vitality of European achievement, in culture, arts and science, with the succession of self-destructive conflicts which has beset our Continent. Instead of being a force for civilisation and tolerance in the world, Europe and its rivalries have been too often the cause of war, and war on a world scale.

Churchill drew a deceptively simple lesson. He sought 'to recreate the European family... and provide it with a structure under which it can dwell in peace, in safety and in freedom'. As I look around me in this ever more important Parliament of Europe, I believe that Members of Parliament, and all Europeans, can be proud of what has been achieved.

I am grateful to you, Mr President, for your warm welcome. I thank your predecessors, Mr Enrique Baron and Lord Plumb, for asking me to make this visit. I would like today to consider how the European family is growing, and to look ahead to the challenges which face us.

I welcome the opportunity to visit Strasbourg. This great city has long been a centre of learning and culture, drawing its personality from two of our great European

nations, while also suffering from the rivalries between them. After years of conflict, Strasbourg emerged as a triumphant symbol of the reconciliation between France and Germany which the founding fathers of the Community saw as the precondition for a wider European peace.

The European family contains diverse personalities. In this, and in its need for tolerance and mutual support, it is like any family. The founders of the European Community wanted to draw strength from that diversity. They sought to manage and channel differences, to bind nations and peoples together in a common endeavour, as free partners.

They fully recognized the scale of the task but their aims were much more ambitious than just a materialistic vision. For example, they fashioned the first Community, the European Coal and Steel Community, because they saw the coal and steel industries as the essential motor of war and peace, of national destruction or common prosperity. To quote from the *Mémoires* of Jean Monnet:

'Le charbon et l'acier étaient à la fois la clé de la puissance économique et celle de l'arsenal où se forgeaient les armes de la guerre. Les fusionner par-dessus les frontières serait leur ôter leur prestige magnifique et les tournerait au contraire en gages de paix.'

In binding industry together the founding fathers sought to reconcile the peoples of Europe not just by sentiment but through solid ties of mutual self-interest. A European war was to be made not just unlikely but unthinkable. To quote Monnet again the aim was to 'enraciner dès aujourd'hui un intérêt commun.' You are part of an effort which is unique in the world's history. We are all trying to preserve the rich diversity of European countries because if that diversity is suppressed, we shall weaken Europe not strengthen it. Decisions need to be taken as close to the citizen as is compatible with their success but at the same time we have to strengthen the ability of Europeans to act on a European basis where the nature of a problem requires a European response. That was the necessary balance struck at Maastricht.

Standing here today I am conscious of the differences in national parliamentary traditions across the Community. The British Members will no doubt have brought to the deliberations of this House the vigorous tone of Westminster debate: a style which can be confrontational as some of my ancestors found!

*(Laughter and applause)*

The differences of style and opinion are insignificant against the background of the proven commitment of Europeans today to reconciliation and democracy. Far better the tough talking and controversy of a genuine debate for which this Parliament is a forum than drab uniformity. By your deliberations and well-contested

**HER MAJESTY, QUEEN ELIZABETH II**

decisions you reinforce the work of national parliaments. I welcome your contribution to European democracy.

*(Applause)*

The founders of our Community did not envisage a comfortable club with closed doors but a Community of challenge where Members are exposed to different points of view. We have today a dynamic entity which accepts new members while holding out ties of friendship and cooperation to a wider world. It is crucial that the Community continues to fulfil its international responsibility. This Parliament is itself outward looking and you underline it by your relationships, official and unofficial, with other countries and regions. The Community has always welcomed European nations which shared its fundamental aims. I am delighted that the Presidency of the Council is held today by Portugal. Further new members are knocking at the door. We should be confident of opening it to them for with each enlargement the Community has become stronger.

Stronger or not, though, we cannot afford to be complacent. War has not been banished from the European continent. I think particularly of the war-torn republics of what used to be Yugoslavia. The healing process, symbolized by Strasbourg, remains badly needed elsewhere.

But there is much to encourage us. We have shared the joy of the German people at the unification of their country after nearly forty years of repression in the East. We have witnessed the triumph of democracy, and the demise of dictatorship, in Central Europe. With the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the 'Iron Curtain' has fallen. Our task now is to tend and nurture the green shoots of a democratic spring.

The Community is especially well suited to this task. Its institutions were built for reconciliation and to reflect common interest. This is an enterprise which cannot depend upon Europe's efforts alone; it will need the whole free world. But the Community's experience stands as an example of what can be achieved. The Community is reinforcing political and economic change throughout Europe through direct help and increased trade. I am sure that it must do more: I am confident that it will.

We are building on sound foundations. The Community offers the message of Churchill and of Monnet, that

reconciliation *can* take the place of conflict. That diversity *can* be safeguarded within a democratic framework. That cooperation *can* deepen understanding, and build a real community of interest.

So the message from the history of Strasbourg, of this Parliament, of the Community is surely a simple one, Mr President. We must ensure that the friendship and mutual respect, which we have built among ourselves, should extend more widely throughout our continent, and enrich our relations with the wider world. It is a worthy ambition, true to the conviction and example of the founding fathers of the Community.

Others on our continent, long-established or newly emerged democracies, increasingly look towards the European Community. We must not let them down. I began with a quotation from a speech by Winston Churchill. I shall close by quoting one of Sir Winston's most distinguished predecessors — Lord Salisbury. In 1888, in a speech in Wales, he said: 'We are a part of the Community of Europe, and we must do our duty as such.' One hundred and four years on, I salute the wisdom of those words. May God grant the same wisdom to us as we build, together, our European family.

*(Loud and sustained applause)*

**PRESIDENT.** — Your Majesty, may I thank you personally and on behalf of the Members of this House for your address. The importance that you attach to European integration is an encouragement and inspiration to us all. The European Parliament will endeavour to work closely with the government and parliament of your country to create the conditions that will enable us to meet the challenges of the future in the period up to the year 2000 and beyond. The European Parliament is determined to fulfil its role as the body exercising genuine democratic scrutiny in the Community.

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highness, you do us a very great honour by your visit. On behalf of this House, may I express my deepfelt thanks.

*(Loud and sustained applause)*

*(The formal sitting closed at 12.45 p.m.)*