



Østerreichischen Gesellschaft für Aussenpolitik  
Vienna, 21 October 1996

"The Future of European Integration - a Norwegian View"

More than fifty years ago, during the dark hours of war, future political leaders from the Scandinavian and German-speaking countries met regularly in Stockholm to ponder on the future of Europe. They foresaw a future of integration as the most secure path to peace. Years before the Coal and Steel-community was created, this generation of political leaders looked toward what they saw as the most effective common endeavor aimed at saving this war-ravaged continent from new destructions.

Prominent names: Bruno Kreisky. Willy Brandt. Also the Scandinavian participants later rose to high public office.

History would take Norway and Austria along different paths. Norway, which until the outbreak of war had been a neutral country, entered NATO as a founding member. True, the Red Army liberated North Norway from the Nazi occupation, and unlike the situation here in Austria, the Soviets withdrew from Norway. Still, the chain of events in Central Europe, not least in Czechoslovakia, led us to the cautious and decisive step to join NATO.

We were able to prosper under that shield for decades - a NATO membership tempered with our own bases-policy and our own nuclear policy. On a unilateral basis, we decided not to have foreign bases on Norwegian soil, and not to deploy nuclear weapons, as long as we were not threatened, - as defined by us.

In hindsight, we can safely say that our policy was successful. The relations with Moscow, were stable and manageable, also in times of grave crises elsewhere. Norway is the only NATO member with a common border with Russia. We have, together with the Russians, managed our neighborhood without grave incidents. Outside our coast, and that of the Russians in the high North of Europe, we find some of the most valuable fish stocks in the world. Together we have managed important fisheries resources. We have fruitful experience to build on as we now envisage increased cooperation in the energy sector in Northern waters.

Today, we have embarked upon a wide array of cooperation projects with new democratic Russia, ranging from fisheries, to marine scientific research and cooperation in environmental affairs, such as how to avoid and prevent nuclear contamination.

We were thus not inexperienced in relating to Russia when Gorbachev set a new chain of events in motion in the latter half of the 1980s. Neither was of course Austria, which had been uniquely placed during Cold War years to play the role as a center of East-West trade and negotiations.

We were both experienced partners also as EFTA members, who had dealt quietly but effectively with Western European trade, between us and beyond us, trimming our relations with the EC.

Until the coming of the Single Market was announced. We - the EFTA countries of that time recognized that a collective response was needed to safeguard our position in Europe's economic life.

And we met, Chancellor Vrantizky and I, and our EFTA colleagues, under the inrun of the Holmenkollen ski jump, in March 1989, to lay the foundation, yes it was the "Anlauf", to what was to become the Agreement on the EEA - the European Economic Area.

But before we could sign that agreement, the Hungarian and Austrian governments opened Europe. They cut the barbed wire. And a peaceful avalanche started. The Wall fell. The barrage broke.

All our concepts of Europe, cast and hardened in a bipolar world, had to be rethought and recast. And all our militaries had to redefine their missions. All our institutions, shaped in the aftermath of the war, had to redefine their purpose. And they did, and are doing just that.

Our two governments made parallel efforts to join the new European Community. New in the Maastricht sense, and new in the sense that soon, it may comprise a good part of what used to be the East Bloc.

I have congratulated Austria upon its decision to join, which is likely to be good for its people, even if the pace of progress may be uneven.

The Norwegian people decided differently by a narrow margin, 52 per cent against, 48 per cent in favour. That result has been analyzed back and forth, but at the end of the day, there are some main facts: One, - we had the EEA agreement and were an integral part of the internal market, and two - we are members of NATO, and the question of belonging in the wider and new security perspective did not arise with the same force as in non-aligned Sweden and Finland. For them, membership meant a decisive shift, towards a more solid integration with the West. Norwegians felt they had solidly belonged to the West since 1949.

What does non-membership mean for Norway?

That is too early to say. I continue to believe that it would have served both Norway and European integration if we had a seat around the table. Although the Nordic dimension has been strengthened by Sweden and Finland joining Denmark as EU members, we are loosing in influence by not being present at the numerous meeting at different levels.

True - the EEA-agreement opens possibilities to convey Norwegian views into the decision-making process and the policy discussions concerning market conditions in the EU. But we are without a vote. And we have to work hard in the daily struggle for attention in Europe, not least in the present situation, when the EU is grappling with a whole set of daunting

tasks, as evidenced by the Inter Governmental Conference, future enlargement negotiations, and the realization of the EMU.

So we have intensified our efforts to reach key capitals of the EU. We have experienced that when we have valuable views to offer, then Europe and Brussels listen - as when we share our views on the Middle East Peace process or our experience in managing cooperation with Russia in the North. And we know that the EU listens to our views when it comes to the shaping of a more coherent European energy policy, a more forward looking fisheries policy or the construction of a European shipping policy.

We are fortunate to be on the best of terms with a number of countries which include us in policy deliberations. We have reorganized the traditional Nordic cooperation to focus more on the European agenda. And I would like to underline that Chancellor Vranitzky himself has been extremely helpful in organizing discussions between the Scandinavian and German-speaking social democratic governments and parties, particularly about employment, economic policy, and renewal of our welfare societies.

So while this is oddly enough my first official visit to Austria, I have been here frequently before - not least while the Chancellor himself is a prime custodian of the traditions of cooperation between Scandinavia and Austria. For this we are grateful.

What is our view on EU enlargement?

We support it. We never held the view that since Norway is not a member of the European Union it should not grow stronger. On the contrary, we are more dependent upon and integrated with the EU than many of its present members. Through the EEA agreement we have taken over the whole *aquis communautaire* with exception of the common agricultural and fisheries policies. We depend as much as Austria upon Europe solving its pressing problems of unemployment, and the need to renew the welfare societies to meet new demographic trends.

We share the same environment. Ninety per cent of acid rain in Norway originates in Europe. We are a large exporter of clean energy to the European continent, in particular natural gas. We are likely to remain an important supplier for at least another century. Today, natural gas from the North Sea reaches Austria. By 2005 its market share will rise to 20 per cent.

We share the same technology base, which by and large will decide if we succeed in changing the course away from disruption of the global climate.

We too, are served, when the countries of Central and Eastern Europe modernize their economies, so that we may see the day when our internal market comprises the real Europe, not only the West. Meanwhile, while we await such enlargements, we the EFTA countries are expanding free trade relations with the candidate countries, in parallel with similar efforts by the European Union. For us, enlargement will mean that the scope of the

EEA-agreement will be equally enlarged, and we must be prepared for that new situation.

We favour innovative thinking on how we can share the benefits of integration. To mention just one example; for forty years, Nordic citizens have traveled in the Nordic region without passports. Now, EU members build their zone of similar characteristics. Together, the five Nordic countries approached the Schengen countries to find a way to link the two zones together. - It can't be done - the pessimists said - because Norway and Iceland are not members of the EU. But we did it - through an associate agreement. We proved the pessimists wrong - just as we did when we created the EEA.

So while we work towards all these goals, we in Norway are doing our share to integrate Russia and what we used to call the East, more firmly in Europe.

In the days of the Cold War, as I told you, we were clear in our minds that Norway held a special responsibility for security in Northern Europe, not least in our dealings with the Soviet Union.

Russia meets the West at the shores of the Barents Sea and the Baltic Sea. After the Cold War we wanted to act rapidly. Today we engage in a variety of cultural exchanges across the land border in the North. We support Norwegian companies who want to get involved in Northwest Russia. We encourage people to travel, to trade and to create new networks. And they do just that - both ways. We and the Russians are conscious that there has been unbroken peace between our two countries for 1000 years, and that frozen contacts must be seen as a 75 years historic aberration which we must rectify.

In 1992 we initiated the Barents cooperation - inviting Russia, Sweden, Finland and the European Union to join in a new regional setting. We engaged the Northern counties of our countries to build new networks of cooperation. Today, the Barents cooperation is a unique focal point for pragmatic cooperation involving people, business, universities and the research community.

Further South, the countries around the Baltic Sea have taken new steps to deepen regional cooperation. In Visby last May, Prime Ministers from all eleven countries sat side by side and discussed prospects for economic and political integration across the Baltic sea. The Russian Prime Minister sat next to the prime ministers of the three Baltic states, endorsing a declaration that calls for rapid EU membership of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Who would have imagined that only five years ago?

We discover new opportunities - but also new challenges. In the high North we have to focus on a military threat of a new character. There are close to 120 decommissioned Russian nuclear submarines at the Kola peninsula. They do not represent a military threat - but an environmental one.

We are working with the Russians to remove the threat of nuclear contamination from the reactors of those submarines and other storage of nuclear waste. We are engaged with the Americans and Russians in projects aimed at reducing the environmental threats posed by military nuclear material.

It is natural for us to focus on Northern Europe where we have a certain advantage through geography and history. Germany and Austrians have their own particular competences and advantages in their immediate surroundings in Central Europe. The most important thing is that we act in a harmonious manner with a common objective in mind:

Integration in Europe. Sustainable development. Employment. Support for stability, democracy and economic and social progress among the people, our neighbours, who suffered under totalitarianism.

We approach these goals as a member of NATO. Austria does so as a non-member. We believe that Norway can do a better job, and that we have more tools to work with as a member of NATO. Austria has another tradition and another experience.

Contrary to what was a widespread belief some years ago, NATO has succeeded in renewing itself - in fact no organization created in the climate of the cold war has demonstrated such an ability to reform. It's strategy was renewed. It's structure is being renewed, and it's membership will be renewed.

For nearly half a century NATO has served as the backbone of Western security, protecting not only our territories and our democracies, but our stability and well-being. Shielded by credible security guarantees, we have had the confidence to invest, as nations and people, in stability and progress. NATO's strength has always had its source in its commitment to values and the will to act collectively should those values be challenged.

Today, our challenge is to create a common culture of security cooperation in Europe, something which has never existed in Europe's past.

Succeeding in this endeavor will require the best of the whole range of political and economic means available to us. Our organizations must work together, - the European Union, the WEU, the OSCE and NATO. By building interdependence, and increasing the benefits for all - by integrating our economies and promoting growth and social progress we are determined to make war as impossible as it has been among Western countries for fifty years.

Our main task today is to engage new countries in democratic processes which must include their armed forces and how they are controlled. NACC and Partnership for Peace are important instruments in this regard. Both concepts can be strengthened and further developed.

Then there is the process of NATO enlargement. Two years ago, the NATO countries opened our doors to new members. We have embarked upon a

gradual and transparent process in which the legitimate interest of everyone, every country's - large or small - will be kept in mind.

Democratic nations may apply for membership of NATO. And adoption of new members will be decided by democratic processes among the current members. No countries will be able to veto the organizational affiliation of other European countries.

Lasting security in Europe requires active participation by Russia. We are working with Russia. Expanding cooperation with Russia. Holding joint maneuvers with Russia. Our common enemy is not any specific country, but fear and suspicion.

Today's challenges to European security come more from ethnic tensions and minority issues than from territorial ambition. Former Yugoslavia entails all of these. We learned the hard way when European countries were late in arriving at a common understanding of the situation. Neither did the Transatlantic dialogue and the division of work between international organizations function well enough. We were reminded that plans and intentions depend upon capability, command structures and of the importance of America for Europe and for NATO.

The IFOR-operations represent a watershed in the post-Cold War era and will have a profound effect on the future course of European security as well as on the role of NATO. In Bosnia, more than 30 countries, including Russia, are working together. The Nordic countries are working in a common battalion with troops from Poland and the Baltic states. It has never happened before.

IFOR is a unique learning experience. Bringing the IFOR mission to a successful conclusion must go hand in hand with efforts to rebuild this ravaged country, its infrastructure as well as its economy and political system, so that ordinary citizens can experience the benefits of peace. Last month's elections were a first step. We will continue to have a stake in the future of Bosnia and we should continue to shoulder our responsibility. We must succeed in this task, or the IFOR mission may end up as little more than the most expensive cease-fire in history.

The challenges in Europe are many. Norway and Austria will have to face them with courage and perseverance. But our two countries are also known for looking beyond their own borders - and take their share of responsibility for the shaping of a more just global order. We both maintain high levels of aid to development countries. But the terrible fact is that the broad financial flows go from South to North and not the other way. We need to hold governments in the richer part of the world responsible for making a mockery of the agreed target of allocating 0.7 per cent of GDP to development aid.

And we must stand up to other gigantic historic management challenges. We live in a world of finite resources. Europe, a region that has lost much of its forests, important species, and where pollution has taken its toll - knows that growth must be managed, guided and directed so that we may

leave for common generations, an earth that will give them at least the same opportunities as we have today.

The burning of fossil fuels has consequences beyond the regions - it effects the whole global climate, threatening to disrupt natural balances upon which human activities are based. The course of development which the populous countries of Asia takes will have a decisive impact on life on earth. Coal-fired growth in China may have a devastating effect on the global climate, making no difference of people living in Beijing, Bangkok, Vienna or Oslo.

Later this year we will start the final work on a climate protocol. No challenge is more global than climate change. We owe it to present and future generations to come up with a binding agreement which is cost-effective, equitable and verifiable. That process will require a combined political and scientific craftsmanship which must draw on every experience we have made in multilateral diplomacy so far.

There can be no civilized world unless we unite to strengthen multilateralism. That was the conviction of Bruno Kreisky, Willy Brandt and the other young political leaders who gathered in Stockholm in the early 1940's.

Establishing global norms. Building and raising the minimum standards of inter and intra-state behaviour. Building new norms of international accountability.

These are challenges that Norway and Austria are facing together.