

## EDITORIAL COMMENTS

*The New Enlargement*

Steady progress has been reported in recent weeks in the discussions between Greece and the Community on the terms of admission to full membership of the former in the Community. Substantial agreement appears to have been reached on the crucial topic of the treatment of Greek agricultural products (especially citrus fruit, vegetables and wine) and earlier French objections in this field appear to have been resolved. It now also appears possible that negotiations with Spain on the terms of her full membership of the Community could well begin before the end of 1978. Whilst few would underestimate the difficulties involved in resolving specific problems, for example in relation to trade in farm commodities, it is more than ever necessary that the dimensions and effect of this new series of accession negotiations be considered in the round.

The principal arguments advanced in favour of the Greek case have tended to stress, firstly, the declared objectives of the existing association agreement and the Community obligations under it (especially under Article 2 and Article 15 para. 1); secondly, the fact that the effects of the association have, on the whole, been positive, although weaker than those expected or necessary for a thorough-going transformation of the Greek economy; and, thirdly, the need for Greece, in its new political climate, to participate fully in the processes of European integration. It is often suggested that the accession of Greece would substantially contribute toward the establishment of a new constructive relationship between the Community and the countries of South-East Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean; this, in turn would form a cornerstone of the Community's future policies toward Eastern Europe and the Arab and African States. Three premises would seem to underlie these arguments. The first is that Greek accession should not be considered in the context of the possible accession of other Southern European countries. The second is that Greek accession would not seriously disturb the Community's present institutional balance or central economic policies (particularly in relation to agriculture, regional development and industrial modernisation). The third is that the operation of the association agreement itself, had it not been for the dislocation caused by the period of dictatorship, would have led naturally to an application for full membership—possibly at the time of enlargement in 1973—very substantially in advance of the target date of 1984 set in the 1961 agreement.

The fact that the principle of Greek membership was accepted rapidly both by the Commission and the Council in early 1976 has tended to obscure the real problems thrown up by the application. These relate to the structural weaknesses of the Greek economy, to the financial burden on various Community resources that Greek accession would involve, to the impact of a further enlargement upon the development of Community institutions clearly in need of reform and strengthening in their existing form, and, above all, to the political problems involved in the Community extending its southern boundaries so as to encompass, progressively, Greece, Turkey, Spain and Portugal. Of the last mentioned, the most immediate, of course, concern future Greco-Turkish relationships (notably with regard to the question of Cyprus and the Aegean Sea dispute), the security of the Mediterranean, the development of new links with Yugoslavia, and the preparation by the Commission of an opinion on the application by Spain for full membership of the Community which was received in July last.

So far there has been a preference on the part of a majority of Member States to adopt a piece-meal approach toward the problems of a further round of enlargement negotiations and to take a political stance toward the Greek application, based primarily upon a public acceptance of the democratic credentials of the applicant Government. Whilst this is understandable, it indicates that the task of analysing the common problems underlying both the existing and the potential applications for membership has been pushed into the background, as has the urgent need for the Community to re-examine, *ab initio*, the bases of its external activity and policy. The negotiations with Greece cannot be conducted as if the criteria for Community membership were simply political acceptability and economic compatibility. Further enlargement inevitably must involve a reconsideration of the pace of integration, of the nature of the Community's "identity", of the direction of institutional development, and of the evolution of a European (not only a Mediterranean) foreign policy.