

## **THE ENLARGEMENT**

The Parliament's right to reject or accept new entrants had never been called into question until then. It was indeed laid down in the Treaty, but this time use was made of it, so that those countries keen to accede did their utmost to secure the Parliament's assent. We were also geared in principle to assent, through all the preliminary discussions, but also through the contacts held by the political groups with their counterparts in the countries concerned. Of course, as always, there was a group that was opposed, but it was quite unimportant. Thus it was possible to achieve those accessions.

## **ACCESSION OF TEN MEMBER STATES**

Unfortunately, the Council decided to admit the new Member States all in one go. This was the famous EU-27 enlargement. And then Bulgaria and Romania were added, having in reality met hardly any of the requirements. I would have opposed it, had I still been President. But then my idea from the outset was for the accession of new Member States to be done step by step, to properly integrate the new members into the Community. Because it was inevitable that there would be problems, given that the individual countries were all at different stages of progress.