

1969–1979 Completion, deepening and widening

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At the end of the 1960s, the European Economic Community (EEC) of the Six was going through a difficult time. There was a need to end the political and institutional stalemate that had existed since 1967 when General de Gaulle had vetoed Great Britain's entry into the Common Market for the second time. Unification had to be given new impetus. At a press conference held on 10 July 1969, the new President of the French Republic, Georges Pompidou, suggested a meeting of the Heads of State or Government of the Six to discuss the urgent problems faced by the Community. Pompidou summarised the EEC's new priorities in a brief phrase: 'Completion, deepening, enlargement.'

France's partners welcomed Georges Pompidou's initiative and the ensuing invitation from the Netherlands. On 1 and 2 December 1969, the Heads of State or Government met in The Hague under the Dutch Presidency. On the second day, the President of the European Commission, the Belgian, Jean Rey, joined the group. The participants quickly came to an agreement in favour of revival, a position greeted with enthusiasm by the general public.