

Reply by the Council of the European Economic Community (27 September 1961)


Caption: On 27 September 1961, Ludwig Erhard, President-in-Office of the Council, writes to British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, to inform him of the Council's agreement to the United Kingdom's request for accession to the European Communities.

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Mr. Prime Minister,

I have the honour to refer to your letter of 9 August 1961 and to inform Your Excellency that the Council of Ministers of the European Economic Community has at its session of 25 and 26 September 1961 given its opinion on the application made by Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for the opening of negotiations with a view to acceding to the Treaty of Rome under the terms of Article 237 of that Treaty.

I am glad to be able to inform Your Excellency that the Council has unanimously approved this application.

In the letter referred to, Your Excellency has drawn the attention of the Governments of the Member States of the European Economic Community to the British Government's need to take account of the special Commonwealth relationship as well as of the essential interests of British agriculture and of the other Members of the European Free Trade Association.

The Governments of the six signatory States of the Treaty of Rome have taken note of this and have instructed me to inform Your Excellency that, in order that the negotiations may be begun under the most favourable conditions, they consider it necessary to be fully informed of the problems arising for the British Government, especially in the three spheres referred to in Your Excellency's letter of 9 August 1961, and of the solutions which your Government proposes.

To this end the six Governments have instructed me to invite the British Government to attend a meeting which could be held in Paris on 10 and, if necessary, 11 October 1961. The point of view of the British Government could be put before them at this meeting.

As soon as the Governments of the Member States of the European Economic Community have completed the study of the points thus submitted to them they will, whilst reserving the right to ask for supplementary information, decide by agreement with the British Government on the date when the negotiations proper shall begin. In the view of the six Governments these could take place in Brussels, starting in the first half of November.

(sgd. Ludwig Erhard)