

## Address given by Lord George Brown (London, 2 November 1967)

**Caption:** On 2 November 1967, addressing the House of Commons in London, the British Foreign Secretary Lord George Brown sets out the objections put forward by the French Government to the introduction of the British pound into the Community's economy

**Source:** Archives historiques des Communautés européennes, Florence, Villa Il Poggiolo. Dépôts, DEP. Edoardo Martino, EM. EM 169.

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**URL:** [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/address\\_given\\_by\\_lord\\_george\\_brown\\_london\\_2\\_november\\_1967-en-d2821a1c-f6d8-44ff-8335-90d33688893f.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/address_given_by_lord_george_brown_london_2_november_1967-en-d2821a1c-f6d8-44ff-8335-90d33688893f.html)

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[...]

Although our commitments are still world wide, our major field of operations from now on must be in and through Europe. In Europe, because that is where we are; through Europe, because only by means of a united Europe can we and our fellow Europeans play our part in the world. And there is a great and influential part which European unity will enable we Britons to play in furthering the process of peaceful change in the world and in helping the poorer nations to tackle the enormous problems of development. These are the impelling motives of our European policies, and of our application to join the European communities. We have said quite plainly that we want to work out in Europe and with other Europeans our common destiny — and not just our economic destiny, but our political destiny too. Our commitment is total.

Our sincerity in this is, I believe, no longer doubted. Time and again over the past few months, we have been able to demonstrate the support which the Government's European policies command. I will mention only the overwhelming all-party vote here in this house on 10 May; and the substantial majority given at the Labour Party Conference for our policy.

This support within the country has naturally had its effects abroad. For we have been able to remove the last doubts which some of our friends still held about our motives; but also to cause them in their turn to see more clearly than they did before the greater opportunities which are now within Europe's grasp if only we can unite. There is a tide of public opinion now flowing throughout Western Europe pressing us all forward to achieving the really effective European unity we want, and — the essential prerequisites — the admission of Britain. But instead, the French apparently now claim to see the role of sterling and our economic position as the principal obstacles to our entry.

These issues were already touched on in the report of the European Commission. The conclusion there recorded was that the Community would need to discuss with us a number of questions about the prospect of our economy and how sterling could best be fitted into the Community's own monetary and economic arrangements. Therefore, let me say straightaway, that we think it not a bit unusual that the Community should want to do this.

We are, after all, a sizeable country with substantial resources. What happens to our economy will affect theirs, and the addition to the Community of an international currency such as sterling will be no small detail.

We ourselves think that this, which will have to be tackled like other problems, when the negotiations begin, is soluble. We think it offers them new opportunities for financial and commercial expansion and could add greatly to the Community's collective influence in the world at large. But the Community are entitled to be reassured on these points and we are very willing to discuss them.

We shall, of course, assume that whatever doubts the Community may express on this subject, will be serious ones, not just difficulties raised for the sake of delaying progress. We should expect the objective of any such discussions to be clearly formulated and any proposals for change would have to be realistic. We would not, for example, think it realistic if any one were to propose that sterling's international role could suddenly be abandoned.

Sterling is an important part of the world monetary system. The Six, like ourselves, have substantial interest in maintaining that system in working order. The system has evolved in the past, is evolving now and will continue to evolve whether or not we join the Community. Evolution historically is slow. It involves consultation with other interested parties, including, of course, the holders of sterling.

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