

## 'Europe's race against time' from Le Monde (26 July 1962)

**Caption:** On 26 July 1962, the French daily newspaper Le Monde reports on the difficulties encountered during the negotiations for the United Kingdom's accession to the European Economic Community (EEC).

**Source:** Le Monde. dir. de publ. Beuve-Méry, Hubert. 26.07.1962, n° 5 449; 19e année. Paris: Le Monde. "Une course européenne contre la montre", p. 1.

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## Europe's race against time

The natural world evolves gradually, but Europe tends to do so in fits and starts. Following days of exhausting work which brought Ministers close to nervous breakdowns, will the negotiators from the Six and Great Britain remain true to tradition and extend their talks, set to resume on Wednesday afternoon in Brussels, until they run out of time and energy?

The British are quite prepared to nibble away at the holiday period in order to ensure that all issues are clarified. They know that the end of July, which is the current deadline for laying the foundations for a sort of outline 'framework agreement' with the Six, is now too close at hand to be feasible. There is now talk of 3 August, and Mr Macmillan, questioned yesterday in the Commons, intimated that talks might continue beyond that date.

The reasons for the British Prime Minister's haste are well known. He is concerned at the growth in opposition at home, and he would like to submit a sufficiently well-documented dossier on the talks prior to the Conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers that opens in London on 10 September.

The Six appreciate the situation and have agreed to extend the talks by one week. However, they would probably be reluctant to go beyond that.

Will ten days be enough to find out whether the attempt to get Great Britain into the Common Market has paid off or not?

From the outset, the talks were broken down into six or seven chapters covering the main themes of the debate. To date, only two agreements have been concluded, and they do not fully cover even two chapters in the talks. One concerns exports to Britain of manufactured goods from the developed countries of the Commonwealth (Canada, Australia and New Zealand), and the other concerns farm incomes after Britain joins the Community.

To achieve a positive 'overview' before going off on holiday, the Six and Great Britain will have to reach a compromise on each of the following points in turn: exports of manufactured goods from India, Ceylon and Pakistan; Britain's request for the abolition of customs duties on some Commonwealth products, the most sensitive of which are aluminium, lead and zinc; Common Market association status for some African and Caribbean states in the sterling area; the situation of British fruit and vegetable growers (a particularly vulnerable group) and, finally, the export of temperate-zone agricultural products from Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

In fact, the negotiations will centre on the last-named issue, and it would not be going too far to believe that, once agreement is reached on this point, the rest will fall into place. The Conference will therefore return to this, the main course on the menu, first.

The efforts of the second-rank negotiators do not seem to have brought about much progress on this issue since the most recent meeting at ministerial level held on 29 June.

So, once again, the British will insist on their proposal that Commonwealth countries be guaranteed 'comparable outlets' to those which the United Kingdom currently offers them, and the Six will once again say that the commitment to accept a given tonnage of Canadian wheat or New Zealand butter every year is incompatible with the principles of the common agricultural policy.

A new race against time is under way, and the stakes are higher than at any time since the birth of the Common Market.