

The independence of the OCTs and the renegotiation of association

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Last updated: 01/03/2017

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In the early 1960s, most of the overseas countries and territories (OCTs) associated with the European Community gained independence. This created an urgent need to re-examine the nature of the association and to replace the existing arrangements that had been granted by the former colonial powers with a convention negotiated together with the newly independent states. As the association agreement annexed to the 1957 Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) was due to expire in December 1962, the renegotiated agreement had to enshrine these major changes.

Reflection on how to adapt the association of the OCTs was led in particular by the EEC Commission's Directorate-General for Overseas Countries (DG VIII), the European Movement and the European Parliamentary Assembly, and especially by two parliamentarians, Jean Duvieusart from Belgium and Alain Peyrefitteⁱ from France. On the initiative of the Parliamentary Assembly, a Euro-African conference was held in Strasbourg from 19 to 24 June 1961, attended by MPs from both continents. A total of 18 African states, all French-speaking except Somalia, expressed their desire to negotiate a new association agreement with the EEC to consolidate their privileged position with regard to the Community. Official negotiations between the EEC Member States and the associated states began on 6 December 1961 in Paris and culminated in the signing of the Yaoundé Convention on 20 July 1963.

i HUBER, Sophie. 'Chapitre 5 – L'Europe sans colonies, mais pas sans mission'. In: *Polyphonie sur l'identité de l'Europe communautaire: Aux origines d'un discours (1962-1973)* [online]. Geneva: Graduate Institute Publications, 2013 (consulted on 18 October 2016). Available at: <http://books.openedition.org/iheid/768>. ISBN: 9782940503476. DOI: 10.4000/books.iheid.768.