


The issue of majority voting

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The third stage of the transitional period, which began on 1 January 1966, provided that, in future, more decisions would be taken by a qualified majority rather than unanimity. Only the most important issues, such as the accession of new Member States, or controversial decisions, such as the harmonisation of legislation and economic policy, remained subject to unanimity. This was also true of any initiative that went beyond the provisions of the treaties.

General de Gaulle was willing to use all the means at his disposal to avoid the application of the majority rule. In 1960, in parallel to the Fouchet negotiations, he asked Alain Peyrefitte, Junior Information Minister, to study the potential for France to undermine, or at least bypass, the supranational nature of the Community decision-making process. De Gaulle did not participate in the negotiations on the Treaty of Rome, which he accepted in 1958 purely for economic reasons and on the condition that application of majority voting was postponed.