

Ireland's application for membership to the EEC (Dublin, 10 May 1967)

Caption: On 10 May 1967, Irish Prime Minister, John Lynch, makes a request to the Six for negotiations to begin with a view to the Republic of Ireland joining the European Economic Community (EEC).

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Excellency,

I have the honour, on behalf of my Government, to refer to Ireland's application for membership of the European Economic Community pursuant to Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome which was made in a letter addressed by my predecessor to the President-in-Office of the Council of the Community on 31 July 1961. In that letter my predecessor affirmed, and I wish to repeat on behalf of the Government now in office, that the Irish Government fully share the ideals which inspired the parties to the Treaty and accept the aims of the Community as set out therein, as well as the action proposed to achieve those aims.

In response to the application of the Irish Government, the Council, in the course of its session of 22–23 October 1962, agreed unanimously to the opening of negotiations on Ireland's application for membership. The date for the opening of the negotiations was to be fixed by agreement. The suspension in January 1963 of the British negotiations created a situation in which it was not practicable to take further steps in pursuance of the Council's decision of October 1962.

Notwithstanding the disappointment occasioned by these developments, the Irish Government remained convinced that, in time, progress towards the enlargement of the Community in accordance with the spirit of the Treaty of Rome would be resumed. They continued, therefore, to direct their policy, both domestically and in the field of external relations, with full regard to the requirements of membership of the Community and to the desirability of reviving Ireland's application as soon as favourable circumstances presented themselves. Recent developments encourage the Irish Government to believe that the time is now opportune to propose to the Council of the Community the resumption of consideration of Ireland's application. I have the honour, therefore, to request the agreement of the Council to the fixing of an early date convenient to the Governments of the Member States for the opening of negotiations on Ireland's application for membership of the Community pursuant to Article 237 of the Treaty of Rome.

In considering this request, the Council will recall that in the course of his statement on 18 January 1962, to Ministers of the Governments of the Member States, my predecessor mentioned that because of the close inter-relationship of the economy of Ireland and that of the United Kingdom, and the vital interest of Ireland in agricultural trade, the Irish Government hoped that the discussions for the admission of Ireland to the Community would be brought to completion at the same time as those for the United Kingdom. On the same occasion it was indicated that the Irish Government would greatly appreciate being granted the opportunity of following closely the course of discussions with the United Kingdom and other countries on matters of concern to Ireland and of having their views taken into account before decisions are reached. The conclusion in December 1965 of the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Area Agreement is an added reason for urging the considerations in favour of concurrent negotiations.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.