

'Overseas countries associated with the Community gain independence' from the Communauté européenne (July 1960)

Caption: In July 1960, the monthly publication Communauté européenne considers possible links between the European Economic Community (EEC) and the associated overseas countries on the verge of gaining independence.

Source: Communauté européenne. Bulletin mensuel d'information. dir. de publ. Fontaine, François. Juillet 1960, n° 7; 4e année. Paris: Service d'Information des Communautés Européennes. "L'accession à l'indépendance des pays d'outre-mer associés à la Communauté", p. 3.

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Overseas countries associated with the Community gain independence

The Common Market proposes a way of maintaining links between these countries and Europe

The recent (or imminent) accession to independence of several overseas countries and territories associated with the European Economic Community is creating a problem not anticipated in the provisions of the Treaty of Rome.

Addressing the European Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg, Mr Hallstein, President of the Commission, stated that we could await the expiry date — 31 December 1962 — of the Convention of Association to solve the problem of new relations between these overseas countries and the Common Market, or that a sufficiently flexible pragmatic solution could be found that would undoubtedly satisfy both sides for a limited time.

Assuming, of course, that the countries concerned are in favour of maintaining the ties of association, this provisional solution would also be justifiable from a legal perspective: gaining independence would not be viewed as a situation bringing the association links to an end, but rather the association could be continued on the basis of the former de facto situation.

There has already been an exchange of views between the Commission and the Council of Ministers on this arrangement, which has not yet been formally accepted. A clear convergence of opinion has become apparent and, although the practical aspects have not yet been decided, Mr Lemaigen, Member of the Commission with special responsibility for problems in developing countries, has nevertheless confirmed that newly independent overseas countries could, at their choice, either continue to be represented by their former capital or establish direct relations with the Economic Community. Naturally, the maintenance of these association links, confirmed by the free will of the partners, would extend to potential assistance from the Development Fund.

Over the longer term, it will undoubtedly be desirable to endeavour to draw up a new convention without too much delay. This will have to be discussed with the representatives of the newly independent overseas countries and territories.