

The Hague Summit

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The Hague Summit

On 10 July 1969, having recently taken over after the resignation of General de Gaulle in late April, the French President, Georges Pompidou, suggested that a Summit Conference of the Six be held in order to discuss negotiations for the enlargement of the European Community and other issues. Unlike his predecessor, Pompidou was not in principle against Great Britain's joining the EEC. Elected on a pro-European manifesto, he was in favour of ending the near paralysis that had characterised the Community because of some of the radical positions taken by General de Gaulle on a number of European issues.

The Netherlands, which held the EEC Presidency at the time, made the most of the occasion and called a meeting of Heads of State or Government in The Hague on 1 and 2 December 1969. France, however, in the person of its Foreign Minister, Maurice Schumann, insisted that the Hague Summit should examine the threefold policy based on completion, deepening and enlargement. The event inspired great hopes in the public and in the Community hierarchy. At the end of the meeting, the European leaders agreed on the opening of negotiations between the Community and the four applicant countries (Denmark, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Norway). In addition, the Foreign Ministers were instructed to draw up a report on how to make progress in the political unification of the Community.