

Enlargement

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The accession of the United Kingdom to the EEC had twice been thwarted by the absolute veto of the President of the French Republic, Charles de Gaulle. However, after being defeated in the referendum of 27 April 1969 on regionalisation and the reform of the Senate, de Gaulle resigned. Georges Pompidou, his former Prime Minister, succeeded him on 15 June 1969.

The new French President adopted a more pragmatic approach towards Great Britain, since he understood that France could not oppose its partners on this issue forever. He chose to concede ground on the question of enlargement in order to be in a stronger position with regard to institutional reform, since he had every reason to believe that the United Kingdom would help stop any drift towards supranationalism. Ireland, Denmark and Norway all had close trade links with Great Britain and joined Britain in the accession process.