

Re-examining de Gaulle's rejection of British membership in the European Economic Community

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Abstract

This article aims to explain the reasons behind Charles de Gaulle's rejection of British membership in the European Economic Community. Britain applied to join the organisation twice, first in 1963 and then again in 1967, but was rejected by the French president Charles de Gaulle. The rejection seems relevant now since Britain intends to disengage itself from the EU. The cause of rejection, however, was the British close relationship to the United States, which, in de Gaulle's opinion, was a threat to a united Europe. This article also aims to explain the various factors that motivated Britain, which was fundamentally against a united Europe, to join the EEC while knowing that the EEC was based on the concept of a united Europe. Using a historical causal method and a political approach, the writers conclude that while Britain was more or less forced to act by economic issues, de Gaulle's rejection was rather political in nature.

Keywords: Charles de Gaulle, Britain, France, European Economic Community

Introduction

World War II had destroyed Europe politically and economically and there were many calls for peace in order to prevent another similar war from happening in the future (Médiathèque de la Commission Européenne, 1949). One of the most prominent figures that supported peace was Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, who argued that peace in Europe could only be achieved if European countries were united. In a speech at the University of Zürich on 19 December 1946, Churchill promoted the need to set up a Council of Europe to protect Europe from

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potential armed conflicts. In April 1950, the French political figure, Jean Monnet, proposed a geopolitical vision to the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman. This vision was originally intended to foster the development of the French nation and meet its need for modernisation. The idea was to construct a political fusion of the coal and steel sectors, especially between France and Britain, to put coal and steel commodities under the control of international institutions. This idea was developed into the Schuman Declaration on 9 May 1950, and was well received by Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. A declaration was signed in the city of Paris, known as the Paris Treaty (*Traité de Paris*). This agreement embodied a major plan to build the organisational life of member states and continued to be valid for 50 years after the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952. The grand plan was to prepare organisational structures and mechanisms at European level, and most importantly, to establish the High Authority Council (HAC), which would be responsible for the fulfilment and achievement of the objectives agreed by member states.

The HAC would make binding decisions and express opinions, as well as recommendations tailored to the objectives. However, the HAC was contradictory to Churchill's idea of an integrated Europe, which would have a more flexible structure, without central bodies whose decisions were mandatory in nature. If Britain joined ECSC, the country would indirectly surrender some of its sovereignty to the European Supranational Organization (Sarwohadi, 1991), for which reason Britain was hesitant to join. Meanwhile, ECSC, administered by the HAC, developed into the European Economic Community in order to reach a wider market not limited only to the trading of coal and steel. The EEC's aim was the integration of European countries' economies. The EEC was formed in 1957 under the Treaty of Rome (*Traité de Rome*) and was signed by Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany. It was designed to form a common market by eliminating trade barriers between member countries and establishing external trade policies (Farr, 1972). The EEC also created an agricultural policy to protect farmers from imported agricultural products. From a political point of view, the goal of the EEC was to reduce tensions after World War II (Farr, 1972). At this time, the role of Britain in the international political arena was diminishing and, after seeing the economic progress of the EEC, it began to consider the European mainland as an opportunity not only to improve its economy, but also to strengthen its position and influence in international politics. Thus, the decision to join the EEC was made.

On 1 January 1973 Britain officially became a member of the EEC. This was a revolutionary step, since Britain was fundamentally against the existence of the HAC. However, on the other hand, Britain realised that its membership in the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), the Commonwealth, and even assistance from the United States were not strong enough to compete with the EEC economy (Macridis, 1983). The process of Britain's integration into the EEC took a long time and faced many obstacles, both within Britain itself and from EEC member states,

especially France. Domestically, the British government faced opposition groups who wanted to concentrate on organisations with less strict organisational ties, namely the Commonwealth and the EFTA (Macridis, 1983). Meanwhile the outside opposition came mainly from de Gaulle's refusal of Britain's EEC membership, which occurred twice, first in 1963 and then again in 1967. Now, after almost half a century of being recognized as a member of the European Union, Britain issued a Brexit referendum in 2016 which more or less exposed its intentions in joining the organization. British motivation to join the organization in the early years of its establishment and de Gaulle's rejections were, to some extent, connected.

Given the facts presented above, several questions arise about the background of Britain's entry into the EEC, specifically about how the situation that caused Britain to apply for the EEC membership developed and what particular events took place during the process of application. This study aims to explain the various factors behind the entry of Britain into the EEC and the obstacles it faced, especially the rejection by the French president, Charles de Gaulle.

This study uses a historical causal method, which deploys deep historical knowledge, documentary research, and the examination of specific episodes of change to appraise current hypotheses or develop new ones. Historical knowledge makes it possible to identify key instances of relevant variables and events, and allows the detailed examination of causal mechanisms. These analyses typically focus on reasons behind key events such as policymaker goals behind major changes in policy (Skocpol, 1992; Castles, 1989). A politological approach, which is also used in this study, usually involves the study of economics since political interests cannot be separated from economic interests (Kartodirdjo, 1993, pp. 122-123). The political-economic approach is used to assess the motivation of Britain in joining the EEC and de Gaulle's rejection of British membership.

The data sources are press conferences published by the *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères* on the reasons for de Gaulle's veto of Britain's membership of the EEC in 1963 and 1967. In the press conferences, de Gaulle explained in depth the reason for his veto. The data from these press conferences are attributed as the reference sources which became the context of de Gaulle's decision-making regarding Britain's membership.

Secondary sources are Roy C. Macridis' book (1983) *The European Economic Community: Political and Economic Union, Modern Political System: Europe* and K. D. Colyvas' book (1989) entitled *European Economic Community: Approaching Complete Formation*, which explains the EEC as an organisation and describes its agricultural policies as the cornerstones of the organisation's operations. In addition, Serge Bernstein's book (2001) entitled *Gaullism: The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, discusses the concept of Gaullism as the basis of all de Gaulle's political decisions.

A previous study by Sarwohadi, a student of International Relations at the University of Indonesia in 1991 entitled *Masuknya Inggris ke dalam Masyarakat*

Ekonomi Eropa (Britain's Entry to the EEC) focuses on Britain's effort to join the European Economic Community, despite opposition from both inside and outside the country. According to this study, the failure of Britain to join the European Supranational Organization was due to political and economic problems that occurred between 1958 and 1973.

Hansen conducted another study in his thesis entitled 'The Relationship between Britain and France - in the years of Charles de Gaulle as the leader of France', which focuses on the relationship between Britain and France during Charles de Gaulle's tenure as President of France. The study explains the historical background of the animosity both countries held towards each other and which often caused feuds between them.

This research intends to uncover the British pragmatic motivations to join the EEC and de Gaulle's concerns over the British diplomatic position which he considered potentially harmful to the construction of an integrated Europe.

1. The European Economic Community

Before analysing de Gaulle's rejection of Britain's membership of the EEC, we must first understand the purpose, form and structure of the EEC, whose aim was to integrate the economies of European countries. The regional cooperation of the European Community was initially established through three organisations: European Coal and Steel Community, founded on 18 April 1951; the Joint European Market (which later became the Common Market) founded in June 1956 in Val Duchesse; and the European Atomic Energy Community. The agreement to form the last two organisations was signed on 25 March 1957 by representatives of six members of the European Coal and Steel Community, known later as the Treaty of Rome. The establishment of the European Economic Community strengthened the economies of the European countries involved because it brought the national markets of member countries into one trade system, one farming system and one single industrial system (Farr, 1972, p. 7). The Treaty of Rome, which established the EEC, produced 248 articles and 22 appendices that apply indefinitely (Macridis, 1983). The EEC has four basic characteristics - progressive (up-to-date), irreversible, non-discriminatory and open to all European countries-and all six members of the European Coal and Steel Community must implement these characteristics. There are at least four motives behind this unification, according to Article 2 of the EEC (Colyvas, 1989):

- The fear of adverse economic outcome - „It has been found that a common market without the harmonization of policies between members can create problems, especially with production, employment and investment decisions that respond to differential monetary and fiscal policies.” (Overturf, 1986);
- The hope of reaping an economic harvest - „The European Community anticipates that the dismantling of government barriers will promote

competition, generate larger economies of scale, increase productivity, lower prices to the consumer, and increase the economic welfare of nations and the Community alike.” (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, International Trade Administration, 1988¹);

- The desire for a larger market share – „The European industries realize that they cannot compete with companies from the United States, Japan and elsewhere without a large home market. (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, International Trade Administration, 1988).” Integration does not only provide the opportunity to increase sales by opening eleven new markets for each member state, it also provides the incentive, if not demand, to become more competitive;
- The opportunity to bind Europe, politically and socially, as well as economically. The social and political unification of Europe seems to be a wise decision. Some commentators argue that political merger was the true impetus behind European integration rather than economic motives. Despite the effort for political unification, the common view is that „the EC's political power would continue to be substantially less than that of the U.S. Federal government.” (Overturf, 1986).

Based on these motives, the EEC established an agricultural policy called the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy), which was set out in Articles 38 to 47 (Ludlow, 2005). This policy is the most preferred and is used as the main foundation of the EEC (in addition to transport policies, the free movement of people and merchandise, and the reduction of trade tariffs). Article 39 of the CAP states that the objectives of the agricultural policy are to increase agricultural productivity, to ensure appropriate living standards for agricultural communities, to stabilise markets, to ensure the availability of goods and to determine fair prices for trade commodities.

2. The Purpose of Britain Joining the EEC

On 31 July 1961, Harold Macmillan (the then British Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative government) announced the House of Commons that his government would apply to the EEC to open negotiations with the aim of seeking acceptable conditions for British membership of the EEC. The statement of the British government presented by Edward Heath (Minister of Relations with European countries, who led the Britain delegation) asserted that Britain accepted unconditionally the objectives set out in Articles 2 and 3 of the EEC Agreement (Colyvas, 1989). In addition, the British government also approved the abolition of internal tariffs, accepted customs tariffs and joint trade and agricultural policies.

¹ U.S. Dept. of Commerce, International Trade Administration (1988), The EC Single Internal Market: Implications for U.S. Service Industries, 1 August 1988 U.S. Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration.

Britain was willing to take on and meet the expected role of a full member state of the EEC.

Both economic and political considerations played a crucial role in the British government's decision to cooperate with the EEC (Luhulima, 1992). In terms of economics, the British industry was weaker than the German, French and Italian industries. Britain felt aggrieved that these countries could easily sell their products on Western European markets (Benelux countries included). European countries incorporated in EEC were able to launch massive sales in the world market, including in different parts of the British Commonwealth, which had still been dominated by British exports. A lucrative way to overcome this problem was to open the British market as widely as possible. For example, data about trade across the Commonwealth since 1953 showed that British exports to Canada, Pakistan, India, Australia and New Zealand had declined compared to its exports to countries where Britain had no priority over import duties, such as to countries incorporated in the EEC or EFTA (Kitzinger, 1964). The facts suggested that Britain no longer gained enough benefit from Commonwealth sources, which had previously been very reliable. In addition, Britain's efforts to compete with the EEC were thought likely to fail because of the geographical situation of the dispersed EFTA member countries, causing import duties to be expensive.

Another difficulty was the attitude of some Commonwealth countries, which hesitated to open and expand their markets (Luhulima, 1992). The Commonwealth market was considerably large, but it was neither as large nor had it developed as well as the EEC, which consisted of more homogeneous countries with highly developed industries. Furthermore, goods from Western Europe and North America dominated the Commonwealth market, and British commodities struggled heavily in the competition.

In addition to economic considerations, political considerations were also a reason for Britain to join the union. Beginning in 1960, in line with Britain's efforts to become a member of the EEC, the Department of Foreign Affairs took over the matter of expanding the British market. The purpose of Britain's membership was based on economic considerations, but this membership (as with every attempt towards economic integration) demanded the adaptation and coordination of various economic policies and this required political efforts and decisions (Luhulima, 1992). The most important consideration in any British integration venture was the question of sovereignty, and this was the political issue that needed to be resolved first.

3. Agriculture Problems in the EEC and in Britain

In November 1962, negotiations continued and focused on agriculture, a problem that was technically the most difficult. The EEC countries already had difficulties in their attempts to incorporate agricultural issues into their systems and frameworks for integration, so the entry of Britain, which brought with it the

problems of the Commonwealth and EFTA countries, was complicated. In the Treaty of Rome (although agriculture had received a lot of attention) the formulation of the approach to agricultural matters was very vague compared to the formulation of articles on industrial production (Colyvas, 1989). Agriculture in Britain was not highly productive; almost all agricultural products for consumers was imported. Therefore, Britain did not need to protect domestic agricultural products as vigorously as the countries in mainland Europe.

The question arises as to why highly industrialised Western European countries were still struggling with agricultural problems and why agriculture in these countries occupied such an important place. The answer is the rapid population growth in rural areas, which reduced per capita yields in the agricultural sector. The reduced yields of the farmers then forced European governments to support them (Yates *et al.*, 1943).

After World War II, the rapid increase in income and welfare in many European countries was significant in many sectors, but not in agriculture. This income difference enlarged the economic gap between rural and urban societies; thus, governments were obliged to improve the agricultural sector. Consequently, agricultural policies supported by farmers received government attention. The problems of agriculture are indeed very difficult to overcome, especially because agriculture has been the basis or foundation of every civilisation and has been a source of human activity in every community since ancient times (Luhulima, 1992). This difficulty was reflected in the failure of the EEC to determine general standards for agricultural products. The governments had to continue their efforts since the doctrine of the EEC Commission was that the income of the agricultural sector had to be equal to the income in other sectors.

4. De Gaulle's Rejection of Britain's Membership in the EEC

In 1963 and 1967, de Gaulle said in his speech that Britain could not be a part of the EEC, for a variety of reasons, which indicated that Britain would be considered as a disruption to the organisation if it ever became a member.

4.1. Veto of Britain in 1963

For President de Gaulle, the negotiations about Britain's membership of the EEC were stalled because of the conflict of interests between Britain and the EEC countries (Pickles, 1966). According to de Gaulle, the Treaty of Rome was maintained by six mainland European countries that, economically, had the same background. From an economic, social and cultural point of view, there were more similarities than differences among these countries. Then, in terms of economic and social development, as well as technical capacity, the member states were developing simultaneously and at the same pace. Britain, on the other hand, was a country with

a cluster of islands, a maritime country. Through its international relations, markets and supply lines to different and far-flung countries, Britain was essentially pursuing industrial and commercial goals with very little in the way of agricultural objectives (Barman, 1967). Moreover, for de Gaulle, Britain's entry into the EEC seemed to provide 'access' to other countries incorporated in EFTA to join the EEC. De Gaulle was convinced that Britain's membership, which would be followed by other countries, would inevitably change everything that had been established together by the six countries. In the end, the EEC would resemble a vast Atlantic Society under US rule and leadership that would eventually slowly destroy the EEC (Kitzinger, 1964).

One of the events that determined de Gaulle's attitude was the defence agreement signed between Britain and the United States in Nassau, the Bahamas, on 21 December 1962. The core of the agreement was that the United States was willing to equip British submarines with Polaris type missiles (without nuclear warheads). This decision facilitated the organisation and control of the Western defence system and paved the way for political cohesion between the two countries. The nuclear power of these two countries would be the backbone of NATO (Thomson, 1965).

With that agreement, as a European country, Britain had 'sold' its nuclear defence rights to the United States. Therefore, de Gaulle asserted in a press conference on 14 January 1963:

„Referring to the agreement above (the Nassau Agreement), in the Bahamas, the USA and Britain had reached an agreement and we were asked to join that agreement. Of course, I am not talking about this proposal and I am only talking about this agreement because it has been published, and we know its content. This is a question that shapes the so-called multilateral atomic forces in which Britain pays for the means that it has and will have and where America places some of its own. The multilateral troops are assigned to defend Europe and that depends on the US NATO command². (translations by author).”

Furthermore, in May 1958, after reassuming the presidency, de Gaulle felt the necessity to restore French self-reliance, particularly in the military sector (Martin, 2014). He considered that France would not get a significant role in building his vision if the Anglo-Saxon were in power in the community (Martin, 2014). This is because, according to de Gaulle, the European Community was a society dominated by France (Warner, 1962). De Gaulle was aware that the French military power did not have the ability to play a major role in the world. De Gaulle knew that

² Ministère des Affaires Étrangères. (1964), Press conference by President de Gaulle, Paris (14th January 1963), in Western European Union Assembly-General Affairs Committee: A retrospective view of the political year in Europe 1963, pp. 20–22 (retrieved from https://www.cvce.eu/obj/conference_de_presse_de_charles_de_gaulle_14_janvier_1963-fr-5b5d0d35-4266-49bc-b770-b24826858e1f.html).

Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy and Belgium were politically far weaker than France, but Konrad Adenauer (The West German Chancellor) was willing to recognise de Gaulle's leadership. As a result, Adenauer and De Gaulle signed *Le Traité d'Élysée* (the Treaty of Élysée) on 22 January 1963. Nevertheless, the two leaders perceived the treaty differently. De Gaulle saw this opportunity as vital pivot for his European strategic project (Martin, 2014). Therefore, de Gaulle was confident that he would be able to match the United States and the Soviet Union by using the EEC and the assistance of the founding member states of the EEC (Berstein, 2001). On the other hand, the German chancellor considered it as the crowning achievement of the Franco-German reconciliation before he left power. Furthermore, it was a way to restrain de Gaulle's tendency of undermining NATO (Soutou, 1996).

De Gaulle paid no attention to economic considerations, since he focused on military force alone. De Gaulle's concerns were neither strictly directed to any economic matters within the EEC, nor to the future of French farming sector. His views and his mind were focused only on nuclear power and the nuclear power of France. Under the leadership of France, Europe would allow de Gaulle to carry out his long-held hopes and dreams of forming a confederation of European countries stretching from the Atlantic deep into Eastern Europe. Within this framework, France would be the centre of the confederation, while Europe would be the centre of all the advanced industrialised countries, and de Gaulle or his successors, as French rulers, would grasp the power to govern the world (Berstein, 2001). Other founding members (the five nations), however, refused to succumb to French demands (Bange, 1963). Their refusal was in fact due to the pressure made by the USA, which believed that their allies could force France to change its mind if they remained united. The American act was motivated by the fear of the potential monetary power of the Franco-German alliance. There might be a chance that the alliance could expose US monetary weakness by attenuating US gold supply that would later disrupt the dollar position globally (Gavin, 2004).

The Nassau Approval between US President John F. Kennedy and Harold Macmillan was a great obstacle confronting de Gaulle's dreams. The United States had agreed to supply Skybolt, a US-launched ballistic missile, and in return, Britain would allow the United States to build a ballistic missile submarine base at Holy Loch near Glasgow. Thus, the Nassau Agreement would hinder de Gaulle's grand plan. If Britain was a member of the EEC, then the United States would have a direct influence over the development of the EEC and its efforts towards the political and defence integration of Western European countries. Therefore, the United States would also have a decisive role in the framework of the EEC, which was exactly what de Gaulle wanted to prevent. He was determined to free the whole of Europe from the direct influence of the United States. The only way to achieve this was to veto Britain's membership of the EEC, and this was what de Gaulle did on 14 January 1963.

4.2. Veto of Britain in 1967

In April 1966, the new British government (consisting of Labour politicians, with Harold Wilson as a Prime Minister and George Brown as a Foreign Minister) announced that Britain was 'ready to become a member of the EEC provided that the essential interests of Britain and the Commonwealth were guaranteed' (Luhulima, 1992). After various preparations, on May 2 of the following year, Wilson announced the House of Commons (Britain's Lower House of Parliament consisting of elected representatives) that the government would once again apply for EEC membership. Upon the approval of Parliament, on 11 May, a membership application was submitted to the Council of Ministers of the European Community.

In the meantime, the Commonwealth problem had been resolved to a certain extent and was no longer a complex issue; the countries that had developed their industrial capacity had reduced their dependence on Britain, while among those countries based on agriculture and livestock, only the sugar-producing countries and New Zealand needed more attention. What also made it easier was that the opposition of British farmers had diminished as they came to better understand the benefits that could be gained from being within the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy of the EEC (Luhulima, 1992)

In a press conference of the EFTA Council on 23 April 1967, it was agreed that if the British government decided to become a member of the EEC, then most EFTA members would pursue economic integration in Western Europe. Notably, Denmark and the Republic of Ireland applied for membership on the same day as England, while Norway applied on 24 July. In addition to applying for membership, the British government considered it necessary to send the Secretary of State, George Brown, to the EEC to explain the reasons for the submission of the British government for membership and to outline the consequences, both in terms of the benefits and also of the new problems that would arise and which would need to be resolved. Brown's focus was on the establishment of a fully integrated European economic union:

„Although our commitments are still worldwide, our major field of operations from now on must be in and through Europe. In Europe, because that is where we are; through Europe, because only by means of a united Europe can we and our fellow Europeans play our part in the world. And there is a great and influential part which European unity will enable us Britons to play in furthering the process of peaceful change in the world and in helping the poorer nations to tackle the enormous problems of development. These are the impelling motives of our European policies, and of our application to join the European communities. We have said quite plainly that we want to work out

in Europe and with other Europeans our common destiny—and not just our economic destiny, but our political destiny too. Our commitment is total.”³

„An economic union founded on research and development would lead to a political union, and this must be recognised and championed effectively”, Brown said later (Luhulima, 1992). This union would open up two other political possibilities of greater scope and significance: first, a union of Western European countries was an important step in bringing Eastern and Western European countries closer together; second, a united Europe would be able to help developing countries to be more focused and more effective. According to the British government (contrary to the opinion of the French government), changes to the composition of the EEC would greatly increase the role and power of Europe in the development of these two possibilities. On behalf of the British government, Brown then promised that the foundations of the European Community would not be affected by British membership, because Britain would accept the objectives and obligations set forth in the Treaty of Rome in 1957.

For de Gaulle this kind of argument was meaningless. Brown's argument, presented to the Western European Union Council, did not change de Gaulle's opinion. De Gaulle had a picture of Britain that he had gained during World War II and it remained absolute. During his press conference on 27 November 1967, de Gaulle held firmly to the belief that Britain was not yet ready to join the EEC because it still adhered too strongly to its historical affinity with the United States⁴. De Gaulle's argument was political in nature, but from an economic point of view, there were other doubts within the structure of the EEC. The EEC members still worried about the effectiveness of the British economy; they did not believe it could adapt to the economic mechanisms of the EEC, and feared that its membership at its present stage of economic development would impose a burden on other members, as well as on Britain itself (Luhulima, 1992). The arguments put forward by de Gaulle at his two press conferences in 1963 and 1967 regarding his refusal to allow Britain's membership of the EEC were basically founded on the concept of Gaullism, as this was de Gaulle's basic stance in making all political decisions. Gaullism was essentially all of de Gaulle's political thought and doctrine as they had appeared in his speech and writing and it was a powerful and pragmatic political stance. The aim of Gaullism was to prioritise France's own interests, to ensure that its voice was

³ Archives historiques des Communautés européennes (1967), Address given by Lord George Brown. (retrieved from https://www.cvce.eu/obj/discours_de_lord_george_brown_londres_20_decembre_1967-fr-e7ee7494-c6b1-4e1a-901e-8f4f3380f9e2.html).

⁴ Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (1967), La Politique Étrangère de la France. 1er Semestre 1967: Conférence de presse du général de Gaulle 16 mai 1967, pp. 93–97. (retrieved from https://www.cvce.eu/obj/conference_de_presse_de_charles_de_gaulle_sur_l_adhesion_du_royaume_uni_aux_communautes_europeennes_16_mai_1967-fr-646f41cc-dc02-46f2-9cce-2296c2d19a3e.html).

heard, to make it respected, and to ensure its survival. For a nation to remain worthy of its past, it must create a strong state for itself in the present (Berstein, 2001). After de Gaulle was elected President of the French Fifth Republic in 1958, Gaullism was indirectly embedded in the French domestic and foreign policy. The main consequence of this was the notion that France should not depend on any foreign country to survive and that France should reject the aid of any foreign power (Warner, 1962).

Conclusions

During the process of becoming a member of the EEC, Britain experienced many obstacles throughout a very long and complicated process. The length of the process was due to differences in social-economic conditions and, above all, in organisational goals. The founding countries of the EEC shared the same objective of promoting the member countries' economies collectively, guided by the policies on which the organisation stood, namely the CAP. Britain, on the other hand, was motivated only by its desire to advance its own economy without fully engaging itself in policies regulated by the organisation. In addition, Britain had signed a military defence treaty (the Nassau Agreement) with the United States that de Gaulle strongly opposed as it disrupted his ambitions. De Gaulle's veto in 1963 and again in 1967 showed that he indirectly acknowledged the great power of the United States in all fields, especially in military terms and arms. If the USA obtained 'access' to the EEC through Britain, it would indirectly negate the role of France in the organisational system. This would completely obstruct any effort to implement the pragmatic principle of Gaullism, namely that France should not rely on any foreign country to survive and should reject the help of any foreign party. In his belief, de Gaulle always considered France to be above all other European countries. Decisions and policies negotiated and submitted by members of the organisation should first be subjected to the consent of France, since as the founding member, France had the right to regulate and determine whether the policy was important or not. By vetoing British membership of the EEC, de Gaulle prevented Britain, as well as the United States, from destroying the ambitions he had been building for a long time. As we looked into the matter further, we found that de Gaulle's veto was not a decision taken by the French state, but one taken entirely on de Gaulle's own will. At a press conference in 1963 and again in 1967, de Gaulle directly conveyed his opinions and reasons for the veto without going through a representative. It was as if British membership (which would indirectly also include the United States) of the EEC would threaten his position as one of the most influential figures in Europe. Therefore, in his veto, he mentioned that Britain would not have a place in the EEC for reasons of a very different nature from those of other EU members, namely the agricultural problems in Britain and the Nassau agreement. De Gaulle seemed to 'attack' Britain at its points of weakness, so that, indirectly, through the argument he

put forward, other EEC members would feel obliged to defer British membership. Looking at the history of British involvement in the European Supranational Organization, there were not only the formal reasons (such as the economic, political, and social circumstances of the country) which complicated the EEC British membership; it was also the background of the troubled French - British relations.

On 1 January 1973, Britain officially became a member of the EEC. Since becoming a member up until the Brexit debate and referendum in 2016, Britain has never been considered to be fully committed to its membership of the European Union. In fact, Britain still holds firm to its principle of rejecting the existence of the HAC and whenever the issue is raised, Britain seems to return to its original principle of being against supranational institutions. This attitude was evident from the many controversies during Britain's membership, for example its refusal to join the Schengen area (the European region that officially abolished passport and all other types of border controls at their mutual borders) and the Eurozone (the group of countries which adopted the European currency, the Euro), abstaining from the CAP and refusing to subsidise European farmers because of the harm this would cause to British interests. Furthermore, Britain, who joined for purely economic reasons, did not receive beneficial economic development from the organization but, instead, the country is obliged to donate funds to economically weak EU member countries. After the Brexit referendum, it became apparent that British had never had the intention to develop the organization and its members progressively based on the CAP. Thus, de Gaulle's intention to veto Great Britain's first and second membership applications to the European Economic Community became clear and understandable. Seeing through the British-American relationship, de Gaulle thought, quite accurately, that British membership would create problems in achieving the order of the organization. Therefore, de Gaulle's rejection of British membership proved to be relatively correct, although the reasons were not fully aligned to Brexit motivations.

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