

Commission

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Porte-parole Group

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

The accession of Overseas Countries and Territories to independence and their association with the European Economic Community

The recent accession to independence of several overseas countries and territories associated with the European Economic Community undoubtedly raises a problem which was not foreseen in the provisions of the Treaty of Rome.

On the 28 June, during the most recent session of the European Parliament, M. Hallstein, President of the EEC Commission, had occasion to specify that it was impossible to await the expiry of the Implementing Convention before tackling the problem of the changed relations between the newly independent overseas countries and the European Economic Community; he considered that an empirical solution could satisfy all sides for a limited time.

Such a temporary solution would mainly depend on whether the parties concerned showed a desire to maintain the bonds of association; accession to independence would therefore not be regarded as a state of affairs terminating all relationships of association, but rather, ~~would this association be assumed to continue on the factual basis~~ would this association be assumed to continue on the factual basis of the previous position.

This was stated quite clearly in Léopoldville on 30 June by the President of the Commission of the EEC who, as is known, was invited to attend the independence celebrations in the Congo. On July 2nd, M. Hallstein had a discussion with the Prime Minister of the Republic of the Congo, M. Lumumba, during which particular attention was paid to the possibility of the EEC and the Republic of the Congo continuing to co-operate.

This possible temporary arrangement has not yet been formally adopted by the different authorities of the European Economic Community, but it has already been discussed between the Commission and the Council of Ministers, at the session in Brussels on 20 and 21 June. There was manifest similarity of views on that occasion and, although the actual particulars have not been decided, M. Lemaigen, the Member of the Commission specially responsible for the problems of overseas countries and territories, was able to confirm at a press conference in Strasbourg on 30 June that any newly independent overseas country could, if it so wished, continue to be represented by the State with which it had special relations or establish direct relations with the EEC.

Asked about the specific case of Togo, M. Lemaigen pointed out that during this first exchange of views with the Council of Ministers last month it had also become apparent that there would be no need to have recourse to Article 238 of the Treaty of Rome. The application of this Article would actually involve a rather long procedure and negotiations which might appear premature, since discussion of the system to replace the Convention which expires on 31 December 1962 will have to begin in the near future. Obviously where these more distant developments are concerned, the representatives of the newly independent overseas countries and territories will be called upon to assist in working out the new system.