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Biography of Francois-Xavier Ortoli
Vice President Responsible for Economics and Finance
of the Commission of the European Communities

Francois-Xavier Ortoli was born on February 16, 1925 in Ajaccio, Corsica but spent his youth in southeast Asia, where his father was stationed as a diplomat. He received his secondary education in Hanoi and later earned a law degree from the Law Faculty in Indo-China. After a distinguished term of service during World War II in the resistance against the Japanese occupation forces, the young Ortoli left for France to enter the Ecole nationale d'administration in 1947.

In 1948, Ortoli became an Inspector of Finance and over the next 10 years held various post in France's Ministry of Economic Affairs. In 1958 he became the Director-General of the Internal Market Directorate of the European Economic Commission (before the merger of the Community's executives into a single Commission of the European Communities). There he played a crucial role in the formation of the European Community's customs union.

In 1962 Ortoli became a member of Prime Minister Georges Pompidou's cabinet, serving first as technical counselor and later as director. Four years later, at the age of 40, Ortoli became General Commissioner for Planning, responsible for managing France's Fifth Economic Plan. Beginning in April 1967, he was appointed to head various Ministries, serving as Minister of Supply and Housing (1967); Minister of Education (1968); Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance (1968); and Minister of Industrial and Scientific Development (1969).

Ortoli was President of the Commission of the European Communities between 1972 and 1976. In January 1977 he took up the post of EC Commission Vice President Responsible for Economics and Finance.