

'After The Hague', from Luxemburger Wort (4 December 1969)

Caption: On 4 December 1969, the Luxembourg daily newspaper Luxemburger Wort is pleased with the Six's determination to revive European integration, as shown at the end of the Hague Summit two days earlier, and sets out the issues that the European Community will have to tackle in the future.

Source: Luxemburger Wort. Für Wahrheit und Recht. 04.12.1969, n° 338; 122e année. Luxembourg: Imprimerie Saint-Paul. "Nach Den Haag", p. 1.

Copyright: (c) Translation CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/after_the_hague_from_luxemburger_wort_4_december_1969-en-1e41930c-c9a3-4800-bd23-018acc919e0f.html

Last updated: 06/07/2016



After The Hague

The Summit Meeting between the Heads of State or Government belongs to history. Now, the analysis of the decisions that were taken or of the expectations that remained unfulfilled has begun. Rather conspicuous in this context is the clearly undisguised satisfaction of the politicians and the restrained scepticism of the journalists. Great words have already been spoken. Prime Minister Pierre Werner, who will make his statement this afternoon to the Chamber of Deputies, said in private that this Summit Meeting had by far been the best of the three that he had had the privilege of attending as Head of Government. Even Joseph Luns remarked that there was every reason to be satisfied with what had been achieved. Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt, meanwhile, emphasised yesterday before the Bundestag that the Heads of State or Government had decided in favour of the future of Europe and that Europe now had a chance, a great chance. Opposition Leader Rainer Barzel showed a little more restraint when he said that the Conference in The Hague had avoided an open crisis but had failed to take the crucial courageous step. The result, according to Mr Barzel, was a compromise that was acceptable if all parties now cooperated with goodwill and tenacity. It is therefore obvious that everyone in Paris, at the Elysée as much as the Matignon and the Quai d'Orsay, can be satisfied.

Foreign Minister Gaston Thorn, at a press conference yesterday afternoon, also seemed very satisfied and optimistic. He admitted that he could not understand how anybody might be disappointed with the result. The maximum of what had been politically possible had been achieved. It would be completely wrong and out of place now to underrate the Summit and query its success; the will of the Six must not be watered down.

Let us skip the mass of problems discussed in The Hague and reiterated by Mr Thorn. All of them — or at least the majority of them — were referred to more or less clearly in the Final Communiqué. What seems important to us is that the firm belief in the Community's political objectives (Final Communiqué, § 4) has once more been emphasised and confirmed. This was of fundamental importance, not only because some neutral countries, such as Sweden, Switzerland and Austria, had, of late, expressed doubts about this subject, but also because it is imperative for Europe, given the global situation, to come to an agreement. And it does not even have much time left to achieve this.

There was, of course, also a dangerous crisis during this Summit Meeting might well have ended in failure. It was overcome because, as we reported yesterday, everyone was aware that a failure for the Community would have also proven to be a failure for every single Member State. It is also true that the geographically smaller countries, and principally Luxembourg, revealed themselves to be clever and successful mediators on this dangerous cliff. It was surprising, for example, how easily France could be satisfied on the question of agricultural financing. It is also certain that the European clocks in Brussels will have to be stopped at the year-end.

The Foreign Ministers as well as the European Commission will certainly have no reason to complain about a lack of work over the next six months. There is no danger of any of them being unemployed. The problems that have built up during a stagnation period of nearly eight years can no longer be ignored; nor will it be acceptable any longer to evade problems by simply hiding behind the pretext of disagreement and by eloquently cloaking or even denying them. If the preparations are to be completed by the end of July, the Council of Ministers will be forced to convene almost on a weekly basis, making sure that it does not lose any time at all.

The Six are in favour of the accession of Great Britain and the other applicant countries to the Community. Whoever believes that France was being honest when she said 'no' under de Gaulle will also have to believe in her honesty now that she is saying 'yes' under Pompidou. The applicant countries, for their part, are keen to accede. However, that means everything and nothing. What will eventually matter is what the minimal requirements will look like and whether they will be acceptable to the applicant countries. There is no doubt that there will be some hard bargaining over the next few months and even more so once negotiations have started. This should be no deterrent, however, because, even in 1963, despite protestations to the contrary, we were also very far from reaching agreement. What The Hague has certainly achieved, though, is that the

talks are no longer overshadowed by a political veto. The joy about what has been achieved must, however, not hide the fact that the acid test, not just for the EEC, but for the free Europe as a whole, is still to come. Whether it will eventually be passed will depend as much on London as on Paris and her partners. It all depends on whether the oft-quoted will for integration will be able to dominate the problems in the spirit of the current as well as the enlarged Community. This is what we expect and hope for.