

Circular letter from Antoine Pinay to French diplomatic representatives abroad (Paris, 10 June 1955)

Caption: On 10 June 1955, Antoine Pinay, the French Foreign Minister, sends a circular to French diplomatic representatives abroad in which he gives a positive account of the Messina Conference with regard to a revival of European integration.

Source: Ministère des Affaires étrangères; Commission de publication des DDF (sous la dir.). Documents diplomatiques français. Volume I: 1955, 1er janvier-30 juin. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1987. 849 p. p. 757-758.

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Paris, 10 June 1955, 11.30 p.m.

[...]

4. The Messina Conference was the first step since 30 August 1954 towards further progress in European integration. A genuine and productive effort was made to establish the foundations on which European integration can be built. Integration must take place gradually and realistically. To this extent, the outcome of Messina is satisfactory, although difficulties and divergences continue to exist.

It should be said that while, generally speaking, the memorandum submitted by Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg provided the starting point for the drafting of the final conference resolution, the procedure that was adopted to attain the stated objectives differs considerably from the one originally envisaged by those three countries. It should also be pointed out that the Benelux countries, which, in principle, want integration speeded up in all areas, were determined to benefit from the advantages that their economies and natural resources currently enjoy.

Italy is displaying moderation by asking only for the issue of movements of manpower between countries to be included in the list of issues to be considered before the Common Market comes into effect. It has indicated its preference for wide-ranging integration and insisted that the United Kingdom be involved in any new endeavour in this area. This represents a change in the Italian Government's previous attitude towards European unification.

The German delegation, under Mr Hallstein, demonstrated a degree of inflexibility and was not much inclined to support the creation of new bodies except with regard to nuclear issues. The positions it took on the Common Market reflected the concerns of Mr Erhard, who, as we know, sees Germany's economic future much more in terms of free trade and growth in world trade than in a future central planning organisation restricted to six countries.