

'Plan for the unification of Europe' from the Deutsche Zeitung (17 February 1962)

Caption: On 17 February 1962, the German daily newspaper Deutsche Zeitung outlines the progress of the intergovernmental negotiations devoted to a consideration of the Fouchet Plan.

Source: Deutsche Zeitung. mit Wirtschaftszeitung. 17.02.1962, n° 41; 17. Jg. Köln: Schwab GmbH. "Plan für Europas Einigung", p. 4.

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Plan for the unification of Europe

The Fouchet Committee, meeting in Paris, will on Monday resume its deliberations on the statute for a European Union. At their meeting in Baden-Baden, General de Gaulle and Federal Chancellor Adenauer also discussed options that would allow the Committee to complete its work in Paris by, if possible, the middle of March. The talks in Baden-Baden between the two leaders have thus pushed the Committee even further into the political limelight. Which projects has it dealt with so far? The Fouchet Committee, named after Christian Fouchet, French Ambassador and the Committee's leader, came into being on 18 July 1961 at the Conference of the six EEC Heads of State or Government in Bad Godesberg. In their final communiqué, they instructed a 'committee to submit to them proposals on the means which will enable a statutory character to be given to the union of their peoples as soon as possible.'

Following the constituent assembly of the Committee, the Federal German delegate to which is the Foreign Ministry Departmental Head, Josef Jansen, and following a general stocktaking of institutional action already taken in preparation for the political unification of Europe, the French Government presented the Committee with a plan for an 'indissoluble European Union' at the beginning of October 1961. Its aim was to achieve a common foreign policy, a common defence policy and close cultural cooperation among Union Member States.

Under the first Fouchet Plan, the European Union was to have three institutions: a Council, a Parliament and a Commission.

Made up of either the Heads of Government or the Foreign Ministers of the Member States, the Council was to convene regularly every four months to discuss all the political and economic issues submitted to it. At the request of any Member State, it would be obliged to rule with binding force on any political question and to take, by unanimous vote, political and military decisions binding on all Member States. The Plan focused primarily on getting the European Parliament actively involved through joint discussions with the governments and on the requirement, established by treaty, to revise the Union's Statute after three years. All members of the European Economic Community would be entitled to join the European Union.

The Federal Government, in close consultation with its EEC partner states, put forward in the Fouchet Committee a number of amendments to the first draft; these were discussed in November and December 1961. They introduced proposals for practical guidelines for the administrative implementation of a common foreign policy. It was expressly stated that the defence policy would have to be pursued within NATO. The political Commission was conceived of as no more than a steering committee. Greater authority was, however, to be granted to the European Parliament in the form of budgetary powers. Other proposals covered direct elections to the European Parliament and an annual colloquium between Parliament and the Council.

The name 'European Union' was to become 'Union of the European Peoples'. Most significant, however, was the proposal already to provide for majority voting in certain cases during the Union's first three-year period. The revision clause was to be tightened up. The development of the existing European Communities — the EEC, Euratom and the European Coal and Steel Community, whose merger was considered necessary — was not to be impaired. The European Court of Justice, which is already in operation, was to extend its jurisdiction to European Union matters.

The Fouchet Committee's work came to a halt in January when the French Government dissociated itself from Fouchet's initial proposals and introduced a number of new points, which France's partners in the Fouchet Committee regarded as retrograde and a threat to the progress already made towards European integration.

France's earlier proposal that economic management become part of the Union's remit, a proposal it had withdrawn on 10 February 1961 at the Conference of Heads of State or Government in Paris, was now

reintroduced. NATO's competence in defence matters, even in the case of a common European defence policy, was no longer mentioned. The French Government had acknowledged this competence in Bad Godesberg as recently as 18 July 1961. In contradiction to the Bonn Declaration (18 July 1961), the European Parliament was no longer to deliberate on questions that went beyond its rights as set out in the Rome Treaties and the ECSC Treaty. If this happened all the same, the Union Council must first declare its consent.

There was no longer any mention either of the Union's indissolubility, the creation of a political secretariat, the revision clause for strengthening the Union and reform of the existing Communities, all of which featured in the initial Fouchet draft. Membership of the European Union was no longer to be obligatory for EEC Member States. This is the basic situation that will be facing the Committee when it reconvenes on 19 February.

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