

Ratification of the ECSC Treaty

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URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/ratification_of_the_ecsc_treaty-en-fof68935-5ee7-49a2-8dac-418932a47545.html

Last updated: 08/07/2016



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The ratification of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was completed without any major problems in most of the six signatory states. On the whole, only the Communist MPs were fiercely opposed to the Schuman Plan, which they denounced as being an American imperialist, warmongering instrument directed against both the social interests of the workers and the Eastern Bloc countries.

In Belgium, the text was ratified in the Senate on 5 February 1952 by 102 votes to 4, with 58 abstentions. The abstentions included the entire Socialist Group who were concerned about the repercussions that the ECSC would have on the country's mining industry. On 12 June 1952, the Chamber of Deputies in turn adopted the agreements creating the ECSC by 191 votes to 13, with 13 abstentions. In Germany, the *Bundestag* adopted the bill ratifying the Treaty on 11 January 1952 by 378 to 143. The opposing forces included the Communists and Social Democrats. The *Bundesrat* followed suit on 1 February 1952 and adopted a supplementary resolution on 1 July 1952 which called on the Federal Government to ensure that the Allied High Commission abolished all the restraints on iron and steel production in Germany and that West Berlin was expressly included in the territory covered by the ECSC. In Italy, on 15 March 1952, the Senate adopted the bill by a sitting and standing vote, while the Chamber of Deputies adopted the bill by 265 to 98 on 16 June 1952. In Luxembourg, the Chamber of Deputies adopted the bill approving the Schuman Plan on 13 May 1952 by 47 votes to 4, the four being cast by the Communist Group. In the Netherlands, the Second Chamber of the States-General adopted the bill on 31 October 1951 by 62 votes to 6, the six cast by the Communist Group, while on 19 February 1952, the First Chamber of the States-General adopted the bill by 36 votes to 2.

In France, however, ratification proved to be a far more delicate issue. The Communist MPs were opposed to any idea of a European Community, which they deemed to be hostile to the Soviet Union, while the Gaullists had many reservations about the supranational character of the High Authority. In the National Assembly on 13 December 1951, 377 MPs voted for the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community and 233 against. The government was even forced to move a vote of confidence twice during the public debates. The MPs also adopted two amendments to the original text of the bill authorising the President of the Republic to ratify the Treaty establishing the ECSC. The amendments principally sought continued investment to support the French coal mining and iron and steel industries as well as to canalise the River Moselle. In the Council of the Republic, the plan was threatened with failure when MPs from the conservative right wing joined forces with the Gaullists and Communists. Accordingly, the French Government had to make a number of promises to the Councillors as regards the supply of coke to the French iron and steel industry before it secured ratification, on 1 April 1952, by 182 votes to 32.