

Press release issued by the Paris Summit (10 and 11 February 1961)

Caption: Meeting in Paris on 10 and 11 February 1961, the Heads of State or Government of the Six decide to establish an Intergovernmental Committee, to be chaired by the French diplomat, Christian Fouchet, with the task of submitting proposals on European political cooperation (EPC).

Source: Selection of texts concerning institutional matters of the Community from 1950 to 1982. Luxembourg: European Parliament - Committee on Institutional Affairs, 1982. 561 p.

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“The heads of State or of Government and the Foreign Ministers of the Federal Republic of Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands met in Paris on 10 and 11 February 1961.

Special links already unite the six countries on the economic plane and they will become even stronger as the Treaties of Paris and Rome are implemented. The six Governments are anxious to seek, in a spirit of good will and friendship, all agreements likely to maintain and develop trade with other European countries, in particular with Great Britain, and with the other countries of the world. They will attempt, in the same spirit, to find solutions to the problems stemming from the existence of two economic groupings in Europe.

It was the purpose of the Conference to seek the methods by which closer political co-operation could be organized. In establishing links in other fields, the intention is to lay the foundation of a union which would develop progressively. It will be possible for this union, limited for the moment to the Member States of the European Economic Community, to be extended later.

The establishment in Europe of a new type of relationship, based on the development of a Common Market through the abolition of all customs protection and harmonization of the economics and also on political co-operation in a spirit of friendship, confidence and equality, constitutes one of the major events of the present time. Amidst the crises and upheavals which beset the world, Western Europe, so recently ravaged by national rivalries and conflicts, is to become an area of understanding, liberty and progress. In this way, what Europe does will carry more weight in the world, which will be to the advantage of all free countries and will, in particular, lead to closer co-operation with the United States.

It was decided that a Committee of representatives from the six Governments should submit for the next session concrete proposals on the meetings to be held by the heads of State or Government and the Foreign Ministers, and on any other meeting considered desirable. This Committee will also study other problems concerning European co-operation, especially those relating to the development of the Communities.

It was decided to hold the second meeting on 19 May 1961 in Bonn.”