

‘Outlook for Europe’ from the Süddeutsche Zeitung (2 January 1962)


Caption: On 2 January 1962, the German daily newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung indicates the difficulties in store for the European Economic Community (EEC) and outlines the next stages of European integration.

Source: Süddeutsche Zeitung. Münchner Neueste Nachrichten aus Politik, Kultur, Wirtschaft und Sport. Hrsg. Dürrmeier, Hans ; Herausgeber Proebst, Hermann. 02.01.1962, Nr. 1/2. München: Süddeutscher Verlag GmbH. "Europäische Ausblicke", auteur:Fackler, Maxim , p. 1.

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Outlook for Europe

by Maxim Fackler

For the European Economic Community, the New Year did not start on time after all, despite the assiduous consultation and the many meetings. It does seem, however, that the EEC will not have to repeat the whole year like a schoolboy who's been kept down. For that would be to repeat the year even though this pupil did actually get through the curriculum, successfully completing the first stage. To stay with the image: this is about the entry exam to move onto the higher stage and is thus about a particular level of achievement.

The first steps towards a common agricultural market call for a strong awareness of European responsibility. While the political will is there, national farming interests in the six Member States are at odds with one another. The process of mutual adaptation demands adjustments, renunciation and even some sacrifices. We in the Federal Republic were interested to hear in Heinrich Lübke's New Year's speech his encouragement to 'our farmers' to respond to the new developments with greater courage and self-confidence. And the President certainly does know quite a bit about agriculture. Yet only the day before, Edmund Rehwinkel, President of the Farmers' Union, had spoken in dramatic terms of the dire consequences of any further concessions.

The Ministers, who very nearly ruined their New Year's Eve to save the EEC from a setback, can only be praised for their efforts. The details are, however, so complex, if every possible consequence is to be worked out in advance, that the job was not completed on time. Hence the resort to a device similar to the one used by the French Parliament on more than one occasion to sidestep a looming deadline: the Ministers stopped the clock. The negotiations will resume in two days' time, as though it were still 1961. The idea is to keep to the letter of the Treaties. Let us hope that this is the only sleight of hand the European Economic Community will be needing.

It is so difficult to see through the dense undergrowth of the particularities of the agricultural market that it is now barely possible to make out where the fronts currently lie. First it was France against the other five, demanding the settlement of all details before the solemn entry into the second stage. France's viewpoint having prevailed, the discussions are now partly about French cereal, partly about Dutch vegetables and partly about Italian fruit, and in these and other areas German farmers believe that they have to be on their guard. Franco-German differences also play a role but are not enough to undermine the basic understanding.

Relations between Bonn and Paris will always be relatively tense where European policies and common European economic management are concerned, as long as de Gaulle continues to glorify the sovereignty of his state as a sacred principle. He did this once again during his end-of-year address. He wants to promote the Union of the six Member States but 'France's sovereignty must remain intact'. If his stance were to be taken literally, tensions might be feared as early as the second EEC phase, which sees the start of majority voting. Any Member State can now be outvoted which could, arguably, be taken as an encroachment on sovereignty.

This rule having been foreseen in the Treaties from the outset, the EEC is, however, relying on de Gaulle's reputation for standing by treaties. The latent yet fruitful tension between Bonn and Paris lies rather in the fact that the Federal Republic will fight tirelessly for integration and to keep the concept of sovereignty in check.

This, as it seems to us, has nothing to do with the struggle for European 'supremacy'. De Gaulle did speak in his New Year speech of *equilibrium* in Europe, but this was in a completely new sense, i.e. in relation to the East-West conflict and to Berlin. A return to equilibrium, as he demands, for him means getting back to the situation that prevailed at the outset, before being able to negotiate with the Soviet Union. And this amounts indirectly to a rejection of the old conception of European equality, the conviction that no one power should be stronger than any other on the Continent. Although de Gaulle's idea of Europe's political union is still an incomplete one, it can fairly be described as a modern-day break with the hegemonic way of thinking.

The six States will have plenty of opportunity to talk more about this Union, once they have sorted things out regarding the EEC. The Nutrition Minister, Werner Schwarz, has already come up with a catchphrase for the forthcoming important special meeting of the Federal Cabinet: the German farming industry must be given time to come through the 'positively revolutionary transformation process' currently in progress. Conversely, could not the common agricultural market promote this transformation? After all, the trick with the clocks suggests that all parties wish to reach agreement. The alternative scenario would not look too promising for the enlargement of the EEC, UK accession for example, on which the none too easy negotiations are due to resume in January.