

## 'A single seat for all the European institutions' from La Libre Belgique (5 January 1964)

**Caption:** On 5 January 1964, the daily newspaper La Libre Belgique ponders on the location of the future executives of the European Communities.

**Source:** La Libre Belgique. 05.01.1964. Bruxelles. "Le siège unique des institutions européennes".

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## A single seat for all the European institutions

[...]

The Committee of Permanent Representatives of the Europe of the Six has just submitted a report to the Member States' Foreign Ministers on the merger of the executives of the Common Market, Euratom and the ECSC, the strengthening of the powers of the European Parliament, and the location of the Community institutions.

The report highlights the need for a single executive, i.e. one Commission and one Council of Ministers. The Permanent Representatives have studied the problem at length. In their view, the single Commission could have either nine or fourteen members, but the latter number is more likely to be accepted.

The Permanent Representatives reached no definite conclusions on the location of the Community institutions. It is abundantly clear, however, that a single executive should have a single seat and that the High Authority of the ECSC will therefore have to leave Luxembourg.

### *Compensation*

In exchange, the Permanent Representatives are proposing that certain institutions should remain in the capital of the Grand Duchy.

One of their proposals seems certain to be accepted: Luxembourg should keep the Court of Justice of the Six and the Secretariat of the European Parliament.

Five further options are proposed, all in favour of Luxembourg. The European Parliament could be located there, or hold some of its sessions in the city. Some meetings of the single Council could take place in Luxembourg. The European Investment Bank could be moved there. The Economic and Social Committee could be located there. Finally, certain technical departments of the single executive, such as the statistical office, could be located in the city.

### *A possible solution?*

What will the Foreign Ministers of the Six decide on the basis of this report? The merger and rationalisation of the executives of the European Communities is a necessity but the political obstacles to a reasonable solution are far from negligible.

The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg can always use its veto to prevent any arrangement that would deprive it of the ECSC (European Coal and Steel Community). This appears to be its intention.

However, if they were offered enough in exchange, such as two or three of the options proposed by the Permanent Representatives, might the Luxembourgers be tempted? The ensuing dispersal of Community institutions would certainly not be ideal and would be at odds with the stated aim of rationalisation.

And what about Strasbourg, the present site of the European Parliament? Is France prepared to sacrifice the city? Perhaps if the institutions of a future European political organisation were to be in Paris ... but such an arrangement is unthinkable. How could Europe's political institutions be separate from a unified executive in Brussels?

The situation is highly complex, and it is far from certain that the Foreign Ministers of the Six will be able to draw any conclusions from the report of the Permanent Representatives, who have themselves avoided making any definite recommendations.