

Report by the German Foreign Office on the continuation of European integration (Bonn, 19 October 1956)

Caption: On 19 October 1956, with a view to the meeting of the six Member States of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), to be held on 20 and 21 October 1956 in Paris, the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) sets out its position on the progress made in the work of the Intergovernmental Conference on the Common Market and Euratom.

Source: PA AA, [s.l.]. B10 Abteilung II, Politische Abteilung. Bd. 907, Aussenministerkonferenzen-Paris.

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Last updated: 06/07/2016

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Subject: Conference of Foreign Ministers on the continuation of European integration, 20 and 21 October 1956.

The views of the Cabinet on the individual points discussed in the Memorandum from the Chairman of the Intergovernmental Conference dated 12 October 1956, following the Cabinet meeting held on 5 October 1956, may be summarised as follows:

A. Common Market

I. Transition from the first to the second stage

The unanimous decision by the Council of Ministers demanded by the French delegation for the transition to the second stage should be rejected. Instead, we should aim for a decision taken by qualified majority.

Added comment: Consideration might be given to proposing that the matter be referred to the Court of Justice as well in order to make it easier for France to agree to the proposal. The Cabinet has not taken a position on this suggestion.

II. Harmonisation of social costs

(a) With regard to the approximation of wages for men and women and the approximation of holiday arrangements, we can make concessions. As far as the latter point is concerned, it must be ensured that unilateral measures taken by one country do not oblige the other countries to follow suit.

(b) The French demands regarding uniform rules on weekly working hours and a uniform determination of overtime allowances must be rejected (unanimous view of the Cabinet).

(c) The general French demand for approximation of wages and social insurance schemes must also be categorically rejected.

III. The French wishes regarding maintenance of French import duties and export subsidies are acceptable to us on the following conditions:

(a) They must be phased out over a maximum period of around four or five years, to be determined, under the supervision of the European Commission.

(b) They must be phased out earlier if the French balance of payments is squared. The French demand that a considerable balance of payments surplus must first be achieved is unjustified.

(c) The French must make progress on liberalisation.

(d) They must treat all States within and outside the Common Market equally.

(e) The current rates may not be increased.

IV. Safeguard clauses

The French proposals should be amended to the effect that a State must apply to the Council of Ministers before it has recourse to the safeguard clauses.

V. Later entry into force of parts of the Treaty in France

It should be made clear to the French that their proposal is not in their own rightly understood interest. It does not make the decision on accession easier for them if they are allowed complete freedom of decision. In addition, the special arrangements to be granted to France (III) and the safeguard clauses (IV) give France every safeguard that they might wish. Where necessary, it can be provided that France may defer the entry into force of parts of the Treaty for a clearly defined period of one or two years.

VI. The Federal Cabinet has also taken a decision on the following issues:

(a) Each country should have the option unilaterally to phase out its customs duties more rapidly and earlier than is provided for in the Treaty.

(b) The question whether the level of external tariffs is to be fixed from the outset in the Treaty or whether it should be left to a Community institution to take a decision on this question was not resolved in the discussions in the Cabinet.

The Federal Minister for Economic Affairs wanted the liberal tendency of the Treaty to be laid down in some form (perhaps in an exchange of letters).

(c) The provisions on the free movement of capital within the Community should not prevent transfers of capital to third countries.

B. Euratom

I. Supply

The principle of central supply, i.e. the obligation on consumers to purchase their supplies from Euratom, can be accepted subject to the following reservations:

(a) Euratom's prices may not be significantly higher than bilateral reference prices.

(b) If Euratom is unable to supply, demand may be met on the free market.

(c) After the expiry of the first four-year period, provisions on central supply are to remain in force only if the Council of Ministers so decides by a qualified majority.

II. The question of the ownership of nuclear fuels should, where possible, be excluded. The Treaty should not, where possible, expressly stipulate who owns the raw materials; it should restrict itself to laying down provisions for non-contentious questions (Euratom's obligation to supply consumers, Euratom's supervisory rights, including rights to remove improperly used materials, adequate legal protection for undertakings).

III. Euratom's supervisory rights must be defined precisely in the Treaty itself (demand made by the Federal Minister for the Interior, which we should endorse).

IV. Disassociation from any military use

[...]

C. Common Market and Euratom package deal

We should persevere with the 'package deal' for the time being. Everything should be done to ensure that, as far as possible, both Treaties are ready to be signed by the end of the year.

In discussions with other delegations, it should be repeatedly stressed that this is a fundamental position for the Federal Government.