

## 'After the Conference of the Six on Euratom' from L'information (14 February 1956)

**Caption:** On 14 February 1956, the French daily newspaper L'Information reports on the conference, held in Brussels on 12 and 13 February 1956 and attended by the Foreign Ministers of the six Member States of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), on the future European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom).

**Source:** L'information. 14.02.1956. Paris. "Après la conférence des six sur l'Euratom", auteur:M., J. , p. 1;3.

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## After the Conference of the Six on Euratom

### — Agreement on general principles

### — Total disagreement on implementing procedures

*interested Belgian circles note*

Brussels, 13 February (by phone from our special correspondent)

*The Conference involving the six Foreign Affairs Ministers of the European Community officially ended on Sunday at 1 p.m., when the press attachés of Mr Spaak's Private Office gave journalists the official text of the joint press release.*

*The general impression that emerged from the meetings on Saturday and Sunday was summed up by Mr Spaak himself during a press conference: 'Agreement has been reached,' he said, 'more so on the principles of "Euratom" than on the organisation of the Common Market.'*

This came as some surprise, because the discussions about 'Euratom' had been followed, for months, with a more sustained interest than that aroused by the Common Market issue: the criticisms levelled at Mr Spaak and the atomic projects of the Committee for European Revival by almost every country in the Community had led to the assumption that the six Ministers were first and foremost interested in the establishment of a common market. The proximity of the OEEC Council's meeting, scheduled to be held at the end of this month in Paris, contributed largely to the preference for giving consideration to the Euratom project.

As we recently let it be understood, the objective pursued by Mr Spaak in convening a meeting of his European colleagues was to persuade them to take a common position on the project of the three OEEC 'experts'. This is in fact the same result that was reached at the Brussels Conference, but it should be pointed out that the Ministers — in particular Mr Pineau, who returned to Paris on Saturday night — are fully aware of the difficulties.

Mr Spaak also said that 'the report that will be drawn up by the Committee on European Revival on the plan to pool atomic resources following the Ministers' meeting in Brussels will be moderate, reasonable and cautious.'

His statement allows us to make a few observations, which are also confirmed by the information that we secured from the Belgian Minister's staff.

The first observation is that the Conference of Ministers was, above all, held to answer the often biting criticisms published in the Belgian and French press and according to which the creation of a European atomic resources pool would entail new concessions to the supranational lobby. The second is that Mr Spaak, in the presence of his colleagues, took a much more moderate position than that suggested by the 'internationalists' of the Belgian Socialist Party. The third is that the Belgian Minister seems to have, in part, endorsed the considerations of economic circles regarding the sharing of Congolese uranium. It follows from that that the Spaak 'Euratom' project increasingly resembles the OEEC project, while at the same time, distancing itself from the Monnet project.

On the specific points that the Ministers dealt with: ownership of nuclear materials, internationalisation of atomic undertakings, etc., the Conference arrived at no decision. This fact is important.

Mr Spaak admitted that 'the discussions were long and arduous and came to no conclusion.'

### **Caution**

However, still according to Mr Spaak's statements, the Six have decided, with regard to cooperation in

atomic issues, 'to go beyond the objectives proposed by the OEEC.' However, the exact position of the six governments will not in fact be known until 15 March when the report of the Committee for the European Revival has finished its work, i.e. almost a month after the OEEC meeting. However, it should be noted that the final report of the Committee for European Revival will be, as Mr Spaak put it, more 'modest'. In these circumstances, the decision to remove from the texts the word 'supranational' seems therefore to have been taken with the general public in mind so as not to frighten them in advance.

As for the Common Market project, which seems to only have been broached obliquely, Mr Spaak's statements, just like the impression that prevails in Belgian diplomatic circles, denote a certain pessimism.

In conclusion, at the very most, the Conference enabled 'the temperature to be taken' of the different countries in the current Community. In Belgian diplomatic circles, for example, it is thought that Mr Spaak showed great skill, but it is acknowledged that nothing has been accomplished, save in principle, and that the meeting scheduled for the days following 15 March will be infinitely more important because, on that date, the Ministers will receive the final report, drawn up by the Committee for European Revival both on the Common Market and the nuclear issues.

J. M.