

## 'France will propose to its partners in the EEC a union to overturn the Alliance's structures' from Combat (3 November 1961)

**Caption:** On 3 November 1961, the French daily newspaper Combat presents the main thrust of the Fouchet Plan for a draft Treaty on European Political Union.

**Source:** Combat. de la Résistance à la Révolution. dir. de publ. Smadja, Henri. 03.11.1961. Paris: Combat. "La France proposera à ses partenaires de la CEE une union qui bouleversera les structures de l'Alliance".

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## France is going to propose to its EEC partners a union that will radically alter the alliance's structures

The Committee headed by the French Ambassador in Copenhagen, Christian Fouchet, will meet in Paris on 10 November, one day after the opening of talks in Brussels on the possible accession of the United Kingdom to the Common Market. At the most recent meeting of Heads of State or Government on 18 July in Bonn, the Committee was asked to 'submit [to them] proposals on the means which will as soon as possible enable a statutory character to be given to the union of their peoples.'

The French Delegation has drawn up a plan for a 'European Union' that *Combat* can now reveal to its readers. They will be able to assess the revolutionary nature of the plan that the French are going to submit for consideration by their colleagues on the Committee next week. It shows a marked and major change in General Charles de Gaulle's views about a political Europe. It opens the way for the revival of Europe as a political entity, and it comes at a time when Great Britain is being asked to bind its fate to that of continental Europe.

Entirely new prospects are opening up which totally transform the existing order. We are pleased to offer our readers an exclusive analysis of this major document.

The plan drawn up by the French Delegation to the Fouchet Committee consists of 18 articles divided into three parts:

(a) *a Preamble*, which recalls the objectives established by the six Member States: cooperation in foreign policy and defence, and economic growth. The plan proposes the establishment of a union of states whose official name would be the 'Union';

(b) *an Overview* of the Union's constituent bodies.

A Council will be established along the lines of the existing Common Market Council of Ministers. Meeting every four months, this Council will not be supranational. Decisions will be taken unanimously, with countries that oppose a decision of course being able to abstain, in which case the decision would not apply to them. A **policy-making Commission**, or a sort of permanent secretariat made up of senior civil servants, would have its offices in Paris and would draft decisions for the Council and monitor their implementation.

Lastly, the plan provides for the creation of an ASSEMBLY. This represents a major concession on the part of General de Gaulle, since he was originally hostile to the establishment of the European Consultative Assembly in Strasbourg. At an earlier stage, the Head of State even wanted to end the Brussels Commission's accountability to the Assembly. This time, General de Gaulle is himself proposing that an Assembly be established.

### Automatic review

(c) *The third part covers general provisions* and is by far the most important part of the document, particularly Articles 16 and 17. *Article 16 provides for the automatic review of the Treaty three years after its entry into force*, in order to make cooperation between the states more effective and relevant to current issues. Again, this goes beyond the ideas held in the past by General de Gaulle and Michel Debré.

Article 17 provides for membership of the Union to be open to all members of the Communities, which means that Britain could join the Union, once it had become a member of the 'Six'.

Some comments on the plan:

1. **General de Gaulle has made some major concessions.** The plans submitted by the Head of State in the past were rejected by France's partners because they represented 'a step backward'. This time, General

de Gaulle has taken 'two steps forward', both by proposing the establishment of an Assembly and by the tenor of Article 16.

2. **Other countries have only submitted notes.** No other government has submitted such a structured and well drafted plan as this.

3. **Britain is very interested.** It has shown considerable interest in the French plan, and, we have reason to believe, it has asked the Quai d'Orsay for a copy.

4. **This plan commits the French Government.** The Quai d'Orsay has been instructed to play down the significance of the plan, which has not yet been discussed in the Council of Ministers. Christian Fouchet was received by the Head of State and gave him a detailed analysis of the document.

Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims that it is only a working document, one which commits only the French Delegation and not the Government, the fact that the Head of State told Mr Fouchet that he agreed with it, that Mr Debré has read and approved the text and that Mr Couve de Murville has defended it provides ample proof to the contrary.

How are our partners reacting? The French Delegation can count on the full support of the Germans, with particular regard to the second part of the plan. The Germans even support the idea that Paris should be the headquarters of the policy-making Commission.