

Letter from Albert Borschette to Eugène Schaus (8 November 1961)

Caption: On 8 November 1961, Albert Borschette, Luxembourg Permanent Representative to the European Communities, sends his Foreign Minister a letter in which he considers the positions taken by Italy, Belgium and the Federal Republic of Germany regarding the French draft of the Treaty on European Political Union (Fouchet Plan II).

Source: Archives Nationales du Luxembourg, Luxembourg. Ministère des Affaires étrangères. Instituts internationaux - Institutions spécialisées - Organisations internationales. Coopération politique européenne - Question fondamentales. 2ème conférence des Chefs de Gouvernement - 1961, AE 13079.

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Brussels, 8 November 1961

Confidential

Permanent Representative to the European Communities
to
His Excellency Mr Eugène Schaus
Minister for Foreign Affairs in Luxembourg.

Re: Political cooperation — Draft Treaty establishing a Union of States.

As you requested, I have informed Ambassador Cattani, Secretary-General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome, in a discreet and confidential manner, of the shift in Belgium's position on the French draft Treaty establishing a Union of States.

Ambassador Cattani did not appear particularly surprised as to how Mr Spaak's thinking has evolved.

In addition to the personal reasons which we assume to be behind Mr Spaak's recent position, Ambassador Cattani stated that in Rome the Socialist International had decided to defeat General de Gaulle's plans for political cooperation by all available means. Therefore, Mr Spaak's about-turn appears to be a logical consequence of this decision which comes in addition to his emotional reactions.

Ambassador Cattani pointed out that he had had great difficulty in dissuading President Fanfani from adopting a negative position, although based on different reasons.

Ambassador Cattani told me that the Italian Government was in the process of drawing up a pragmatic scheme to overcome the hesitancy on the part of the Belgian and Netherlands Governments, which do not wish to discuss the French plan without the active and complete involvement of Britain. That scheme could be as follows: through a confidential procedure, the British would be kept permanently informed of the discussions on the French plan and its future development before the Conference of Heads of State or Government next January. The Conference would be limited to assenting to the French plan amended in the course of the discussions which still have to be held in the Fouchet Committee. The six Governments would then agree that this plan would not yet be submitted for parliamentary ratification. Instead, that would be done at the same time as the Act of Accession of Britain to the European Communities.

Ambassador Cattani explained to me that, as far as the Italian Parliament, amongst others, was concerned, this parallel ratification would be the only way of pushing through the draft Treaty establishing a Union of States, which, if presented separately, would have no chance of being accepted by the integrationist members of the Italian Parliament. The same situation might well also arise in several other national parliaments.

The main proposed amendments which the Italian Government intends to make to the French draft are as follows: to provide for much wider powers for the European Parliament by granting it, in particular, budgetary authority over defence expenditure, and to set a precise date for direct elections to the European Parliament.

In a discussion that I had with Mr Jansens, Director-General of Policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bonn, he told me that the French draft certainly constituted a basis for discussion as far as the Federal Government was concerned but that it was too vague to be accepted as such and would therefore have to undergo rather profound changes in order to secure approval. In particular, Mr Jansens said that the clause relating to revision after a period of three years would have to be clarified to the effect that it could be changed only in the direction of integration and a federation of States.