

'The Schuman Plan' from the Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung (20 December 1951)

Caption: On 20 December 1951, as the debates for the ratification of the ECSC Treaty take place in the Bundestag, the Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung analyses the discussions on the Schuman Plan in West Germany.

Source: Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung. Hrsg. Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung. 20.12.1951, Nr. 23. Bonn: Deutscher Verlag. "Der Schuman-Plan", p. 177.

Copyright: (c) Translation CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL:

http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_schuman_plan_from_the_bulletin_des_presse_und_informationsamtes_der_bundesregierung_20_december_1951-en-21d3b1d5-6378-4c52-804b-1cc7d16d2a3d.html



Last updated: 05/07/2016

The Schuman Plan

The Bundestag's Economic Policy and Foreign Affairs Committees have voted by clear majorities in favour of ratifying the Schuman Plan. This decision leaves little doubt that the final approval of the Bundestag will be forthcoming. For the Chancellor, who will after Christmas be attending the conference in Paris on the European Defence Community, this represents a significant foreign policy asset; but for the Paris conference itself, too, it will be of particular importance that the great economic union of Western European nations is beginning to materialise, especially now that the French Parliament has ratified the Plan. This augurs well for the second major step towards European unity, namely the European Defence Community.

It is only natural that in the course of the parliamentary proceedings the pros and cons of the Schuman Plan should once again be carefully weighed. There was already a debate on the principles at the time when the Treaty was drafted and then signed. In the meantime, the arguments in favour of the Schuman Plan have been substantially reinforced. The idea of European unity and cooperation has gained ground and has taken on real form. The idea is no longer utopian, nor is it a mere possibility; it is already an incipient reality. And people's willingness to embrace the idea grows as that reality expands.

By the same token, the reservations voiced at the time now carry less weight. The assignment of equal rights to Germany, which occurred for the first time in the negotiations on the founding of the Coal and Steel Community, will now, with the replacement of the Occupation Statute, be extended to the entire political status of the Federal Republic. The objections are thus being narrowed down to individual special issues. In parliamentary circles there is a wish for a firm assurance from the Allies that the German economy, insofar as it is now subject to the ECSC Treaty, will indeed enjoy equal standing and will not have further limitations imposed upon it.

It can be assumed that the Federal Government, before the House, will be in a position to provide comprehensive and satisfactory answers to these questions. Once again, in this connection, reference must be made to the letter of 18 April last from the French Foreign Minister. Schuman explained in that letter that the special obligations imposed on Germany in respect of coal and steel were no longer consistent with the common rules to which all the States which had signed the Treaty were equally subject. The Ruhr Authority would consequently be wound up, and the restrictions on German steel production would be lifted. The exchange of letters between the German and French Governments concerning the Saar, which is attached to the Treaty, is of similar importance.

It seems essential, at this stage, to look back once again to the time when the German economy was not only laid low in material terms but was also entirely subject to Allied jurisdiction. That situation has now been overcome. Only by viewing past and future together is it possible to arrive at a fair evaluation of the significance of the Schuman Plan. That Plan serves the unity of Europe, the restoration of equal rights for Germany and the liquidation of the consequences of the lost war. It is in this sense a core element of German foreign policy and a particular success for the Federal Government, which has trodden this path single-mindedly, regardless of the hostility encountered, and will continue to do so.