

## Statement by Anthony Eden (19 March 1952)

**Caption:** On 19 March 1952, Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, submits to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe a plan which provides for the Council of Europe to be given political authority over the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Defence Community (EDC).

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## Statement by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom at the Tenth Meeting of the Committee of Ministers (Paris, 19 March 1952)

### Future of the Council of Europe: Her Majesty's Government's proposals

It may be helpful if I explain the thought which lies behind the proposals of Her Majesty's Government of which my colleagues have already been informed.

We have been actuated in the first place by our desire to promote the idea of European unity — an idea which also lay behind the foundation of the Council of Europe.

It seems to us that there is every reason for encouragement.

The idea of European unity is taking shape.

It is taking shape in the form of unions for certain purposes between some European states.

I am thinking, of course, of the European Defence Community and the Schuman Pool.

Her Majesty's Government have made it plain on several occasions that they intend to associate themselves as closely as possible with these European organisations at all stages of their development, whether political or military.

While this development is taking place in the relationship between European states, another line of development is taking place in the shape of the Atlantic association of States, who are achieving increasing unity of purpose and action through the machinery of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.

We have been asking ourselves how the Council of Europe can best fulfil the useful and vital role which it has to play in these developments inside and outside Europe.

It would clearly be the greatest possible mistake if the Council of Europe were to develop, as it were a rivalry to the European Defence Community or to the Schuman Pool, or to any future European bodies of that kind.

On the contrary, the Council of Europe should develop along lines complementary to these organisations.

I cannot help feeling some doubt whether the Council of Europe will be taking the right road if it develops along the lines of the new draft Statute, which the Consultative Assembly adopted at its last session.

I need not enter into a detailed discussion of this draft now. But it appears to have as its aim the eventual transformation of what is now a purely consultative body into a quasi-federal institution with legislative and executive powers and the right to be consulted by Member Governments on certain matters within its competence.

Would not a more promising future for the Council of Europe lie in a certain remodelling of the organisation so that its organs could serve as the institutions of the Schuman Plan, of the European Defence Community and of any future organisations of the same structure and membership.

Of course, the Council of Europe would also continue to serve as an organisation for intergovernmental cooperation in Western Europe.

It will, therefore, be necessary to study the relationship which ought to be established between the Council of Europe when it meets with representatives of its fifteen Members, and the Council of Europe acting with its more limited membership in connection with the European Defence Community and the Schuman Plan.

I should like to make it clear from the outset that, in our view, the Council of Europe would continue as at present, to fulfil the purposes set out in Article 1 of the Statute.

In particular, we think it valuable that the Council of Europe should continue to receive and discuss periodic reports from the O.E.E.C.

It would also discuss questions relating to the European Community which are of general interest, to the other countries of Western Europe.

A remodelling of the Council of Europe on these lines would, we feel, have the following advantages:

- (a) the Council of Europe would become an integral part of the European Community;
- (b) it would be given valuable work to do;
- (c) reduplication of European bodies would be avoided;
- (d) the Schuman Plan and the European Defence Community would be provided with ready-made machinery;
- (e) it might be possible to arrange for countries, like the United Kingdom, whose aim is to establish a close link with the European Community, to be associated in an appropriate way, with the parliamentary and ministerial institutions of the Community, as well as with the executive organs.

I suggest that, if my proposals meet with commendation from my colleagues, they might be examined in more detail by officials.

We could then look into this question again at our meeting in May in the light of the officials' discussions.

In this way, it might be possible to inform the Assembly when it meets of the lines on which we consider that the Council of Europe should now develop.