

Letter from E. Star Busmann to Jacques Camille Paris (London, 15 November 1951)

Caption: Considering it necessary to maintain the social and cultural bodies of the Brussels Treaty, the Consultative Council of the Brussels Treaty Organisation (Western Union) decides to propose to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe a procedure for cooperation in this field. On 15 November 1951, the Secretary-General of Western Union, instructed by the Consultative Council to pass on these proposals, sends a letter to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

Source: Accord entre le Secrétariat Général du Conseil de l'Europe et le Secrétariat Général de l'Organisation du Traité de Bruxelles=Agreement between the Secretariat-General of the Council of Europe and the Secretariat-General of the Brussels Treaty Organisation. Strasbourg: Conseil de l'Europe, [s.d.]. 11 p.

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Letter from the Secretary-General of the Brussels Treaty Organisation to the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe (London, 15 November 1951)

2, Eaton Place
London, S.W.1

15th November, 1951

Sir,

By a letter dated 18th May, 1951, in accordance with a decision of the Committee of Ministers, you communicated to the Foreign Ministers of the Brussels Treaty countries Recommendation No. 19 of the Consultative Assembly concerning the relationship between the Council of Europe and the Brussels Treaty Organisation.

In reply I am writing to inform you that this question has been examined by the Consultative Council, who made the following observations, which I have been instructed to forward to you.

You will be aware, from the reports transmitted to you, of the programme of work adopted by the Social, Cultural and Public Health Committees of the Brussels Treaty. Briefly, this consisted, in the first stage, of the preparation of various multilateral conventions (student employees, frontier workers, social and medical assistance, social security, cultural free trade) ; and, in the second, of work which although not intended to take the form of international agreements immediately, is nevertheless essential in that it brings administrative departments of the five countries into closer contact and enables them to work together more harmoniously.

The value of the results obtained is due to the methods of work adopted. The committees, sub-committees and groups of experts, twenty in all, do in fact bring together periodically at various levels the heads of the Governments departments concerned, and the officials directly responsible for the settlement of the problems raised. These problems can be divided into three categories:

- those relating to the application of conventions and to the search for solutions to all new problems ;
- others consisting more of studies and exchanges of information on difficulties met in this or that country with regard to some particular question and on experience gained (rehabilitation of the disabled safety devices on dangerous machinery – methods of ensuring representation of workers in industry – exchange of doctors, etc. – laboratory research – methods in order to ensure a better understanding of Western civilisation – cultural identity card – etc;
- others, finally, concerning the preparation of the various cultural and social aspects of international conferences (O.E.E.C., Council of Europe, International Labour Office), at which the Brussels Treaty delegations can extend the benefits of their experience to a wider group of countries.

These frequent contacts of officials, these joint studies, leading generally to the drawing up of a collective report of great value, are largely instrumental in creating not only a spirit of co-operation, which in itself would not be sufficient, but in forming gradually within the administrative departments a certain unity of doctrine and of conception. The national legislations are noticeably influenced, as is shown by an increasing similarity of laws and regulations, thus making the way open for the conclusion of new conventions. In this connection might be mentioned the agreement on the creation of a unified system of health control over sea and air traffic, and also the recent agreement providing for exchanges of labour, which, however limited in scope at first, indicates an interesting development as between the various Ministries of Labour.

Incorporation would inevitably mean, in the situation existing at present, the suppression of the social and cultural bodies set up under the Brussels Treaty.

In examining this problem it is important to take due account of the difference in the nature, and in particular in the composition, of the two Organisations. The limited number of partners and the similarity of their geographical, economic and institutional structure enable the Brussels Treaty committees to arrive at common solutions, which would take far longer and be more difficult to achieve if these problems were dealt with in a wider framework not presenting similar conditions. In other words, the Five, in incorporating themselves in such a framework, would give up the advantage which their limited number, affinity and long period of work together gives them for the development of their relations.

The activities of the Five are not carried on exclusively in the interest of the signatories to the Brussels Treaty ; they also serve the cause of European unity. From the beginning the Five have been able to assist and speed up the work of the expert committees of the Committee of Ministers by virtue of their experience in the subject under discussion. The Consultative Council noticed in this connection that a working document of the Social Committee of the Assembly, dated 17th July, 1951, contains a draft programme of work for a common policy in social matters which, although for the most part based on the experience of the Brussels Treaty Organisation and of the Scandinavian Social Committees, does not propose any incorporation of these bodies. The report refers in particular to the “special and very close nature” of the co-operation between the Five, and acknowledges the valuable part played by them in this field. They could, obviously, not continue to play this part if it were decided to suppress these bodies.

In these circumstances, there is no doubt that the co-operation between the relevant government departments, now existing in the Five-Power committees, can most usefully develop in maintaining the Brussels Treaty framework. In the present state of affairs it would in fact not appear possible for the Council of Europe to carry out these tasks, and a transfer would not seem to supply it with the means of doing so.

Whilst at present considering it necessary to maintain the social and cultural committees of the Brussels Treaty, the Council is however especially anxious that close and harmonious co-operation should be established between the two Organisations. The Brussels Treaty Organisation could thus, in the best conditions possible, play its proper role of making a contribution to the cause of a more united Europe.

To this end the Council has already instructed the Committees concerned to press on with their work, seeking any common solutions likely to strengthen European unity.

In addition, the Council proposes that relations between the two Organisations should be regularised according to the following procedure :

- a) all correspondence between the two Organisations shall be via the two Secretariats-General ;
- b) the two Secretariats-General will be responsible for the exchange of information between the two Organisations. The Brussels Treaty Secretariat-General shall, in particular, communicate at regular intervals all social and cultural documents likely to be of interest to the Council of Europe ;
- c) any necessary consultations shall take place between the two Secretaries-General or their representatives ;
- d) an annual report on the social and cultural work of the Five shall be sent to the Council of Europe. The Chairman of the Consultative Council might be asked to present this report to the Assembly and to reply to any Questions. He would thus be able to receive any suggestions which might be made during the discussions ;

e) The Council of Europe bodies should be free to forward to the Brussels Treaty Organisation any suggestions on Brussels Treaty social and cultural activities.

Requesting you to be so good as to forward the above to the Committee of Ministers, and to inform me of their views concerning these proposals,

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

E. STAR BUSMANN
Minister Plenipotentiary,
Secretary-General of the Brussels Treaty Organisation.

Monsieur J.C. Paris
Secretary-General of the
Council of Europe,
Strasbourg