

'Schuman Plan adopted' from Het Parool (1 November 1951)

Caption: On 1 November 1951, the Dutch daily newspaper Het Parool comments on the ratification of the Treaty establishing the Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) by the Lower House of the States-General in the Netherlands.

Source: Het Parool. Vrij Onverveerd. dir. de publ. Van Norden, W ; Réd. Chef Van Heuven Goedhart, G.J. 01.11.1951, n° 2.091; 11. Jg. Amsterdam: Het Parool. "Plan Schuman is aanvaard", p. 1.

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/schuman_plan_adopted_from_het_parool_1_november_1951-en-a500620e-e5f9-4a14-b7bd-1a556b2ded9d.html



Last updated: 05/07/2016

Schuman Plan adopted

As was to be expected from the debates, the Lower House has given its approval by an overwhelming majority to the 'Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community'. Only the Communists, understandably, voted against it because any step in the direction of Western European integration increases the chances of success in resisting the threat from the East. On 9 May last year, Mr Schuman launched his now famous plan: now, almost a year and a half later, the Lower House is the first of the legislative assemblies involved to adopt it. There is no doubt that the Upper House will follow suit, and presumably the Netherlands will be the first of the six participating countries to ratify the Treaty.

There will be an opportunity, when the time comes, to devote more detailed discussion to this event which, without exaggeration, must stand as a fact of historic significance. For the moment we will limit ourselves to a couple of observations.

Our country has participated in the discussions on the Schuman Plan from the start with a full-strength delegation, and it is common knowledge that the Dutch mission played an active and important role during the entire course of the negotiations. If the Plan in its final form departs radically from the original concept on particular points, if it found an acceptable solution to the difficult question of relinquishing national sovereignty in an acceptable and responsible manner, that is due in no small measure to the competent manner in which the Dutch delegation argued its case.

We would have liked the Netherlands Government to have pursued a similar course with regard to another project which was the fruit of French imagination: the Pleven Plan. There is of course no disputing the fact that the two plans cannot be placed on the same footing, if only because there is not a single international organisation in the field of coal and steel, whereas in that of defence we have the system of cooperation under NATO auspices. We are not blind to this and other differences. Yet it is disappointing that, as regards the formation of a Western European defence community, the Netherlands did not also acquire in Paris the reputation of a constructive, albeit critical, participant in the formulation of the original plans. We ourselves have the impression that the Government initially had too much of the attitude of a somewhat resentful onlooker and even now, when the Netherlands is no longer an observer but a participant, it draws its main strength from the examination in breadth of all conceivable and by no means imaginary or insignificant objections. Of course it is not too late to change tack! Now too our country has a delegation in Paris which, although it lacks nothing in terms of competence, can act only within the limits of the instructions entrusted to it.

And there is another observation which we cannot help voicing. Foreign Minister Dirk Stikker has repeatedly stated, in response to the urging of Parliament, that he did not feel the need for a colleague or a second state secretary to share some of the burden of his considerable task. We wonder whether the House has to admit defeat yet again in the face of this attitude. It is perhaps not necessary to protect the Minister of Foreign Affairs from himself. That would be too paternalistic. But it is surely another matter when he cannot be present because of commitments elsewhere during debates in the House on a matter of such importance as the creation of the first supranational authority in Western Europe! Now this body will indeed be concerned in the first instance with economic questions. It was obvious that the Minister for Economic Affairs should also defend the proposal on behalf of the Government. However, no one would wish to deny that the Schuman Plan also opens up prospects in the political field — and poses risks as well. Minister Jan van den Brink has acquitted himself of the task incumbent upon him with great skill in dealing with the whole complex of questions. And perhaps it can indeed be said in hindsight that there was no need for Minister Stikker to be present. In our opinion, however, the Minister for Foreign Affairs should not have been absent on an occasion such as this. Minister Stikker had to be in Paris, it has to be conceded. This prompts the obvious conclusion that present staffing in Foreign Affairs is insufficient. We should be very surprised if this point did not come up for discussion again in the debate on the budget.