

## Note from the European Commission concerning the Luxembourg Extraordinary Council (Brussels, 28 January 1966)

**Caption:** On 28 January 1966, Émile Noël, Executive Secretary of the Commission of the European Economic Community (EEC), informs the Members of the Commission of the substance of the debates between the Foreign Ministers of the Six during the second meeting of the Luxembourg Extraordinary Council, held on 28 and 29 January in order to resolve the empty chair crisis.

**Source:** Archives historiques de l'Union européenne, Florence, Villa Il Poggiolo. Dépôts, DEP. Émile Noël, EN. 343.

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European Economic Community  
Commission  
Executive Secretariat  
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Brussels 28 January 1966  
SECRET

## Note to the Members of the Commission

Subject: Council meeting of 28 January 1966

The meeting of the Council did not begin until 5.30 p.m., instead of the scheduled time of 4 p.m., because of the absence of Mr Colombo, whose flight had been diverted as a result of fog. Mr Colombo's aircraft had finally had to land in Geneva, and the meeting began without him. Ambassador Venturini headed the Italian Delegation.

The discussions focused on the issue of qualified majority voting. Mr Couve de Murville presented a new proposal on behalf of the French Delegation. Under the terms of this proposal, the Member States were to adopt a joint declaration in the Council to the effect that, whenever a matter under discussion related to a vital interest of a Member State, their common aim would be to seek a unanimous decision. If a problem arose in a specific case, Mr Couve de Murville apparently said, it would be considered there and then.

Several Ministers, notably Mr Luns and Mr Spaak, asked what the French attitude would be in such an eventuality. Mr Couve de Murville replied that the French Delegation, for its part, stood by its position, namely that, in such a case, unanimity appeared to be the only conceivable solution.

Mr Couve de Murville's new approach seemed to have been received with interest by the Council. The new line appeared perceptibly more conciliatory than previous pronouncements. This evidently had a favourable effect on the atmosphere in which the entire Council meeting was conducted.

It seems that the German Delegation has not yet tried to push for acceptance of the proposal that it had presented to the Committee of Permanent Representatives (see Doc G(66)53, Annex 3).

There was no attempt to force the discussion to a conclusion, particularly in view of the absence of the Italian Minister, Mr Colombo. The meeting closed at 7.40 p.m. The Ministers and the senior members of the Delegations are to assemble again from 8.15 p.m. onwards for a dinner hosted by Mr Werner.

E. Noël