

Memorandum from Pierre Pescatore on Luxembourg’s attitude to the empty chair crisis (Luxembourg, 6 July 1965)


Caption: On 6 July 1965, Pierre Pescatore, Secretary-General of the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sends a note to the Luxembourg diplomatic missions in Europe in which he sets out the position adopted by Pierre Werner, Luxembourg Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, in relation to the empty chair crisis and the political means by which it may be overcome.

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Memorandum from Pierre Pescatore on Luxembourg's attitude to the 'empty chair' crisis

Luxembourg, 6 July 1965

Note for the files

Subject: Common Market crisis

Copies for information to:

1. the Minister and the State Secretary for Agriculture
2. the Permanent Representative to the European Communities
3. the Ambassadors of Luxembourg in the capital cities of the EEC Member States and in London

The Minister for Foreign Affairs today discussed with Mr Borschette the attitude to be taken to the crisis that France has caused in the Common Market. Following the conversation, Mr Werner set out the following position.

1. He advised Mr Borschette to be very cautious with regard to meetings of the Permanent Representatives attended by only five of them: the unofficial nature of such meetings would have to be clearly indicated.
2. As to the substance of the problem, Mr Werner thinks that France can be brought back to the negotiating table only if the problem is defined in terms of implementation of the treaty and the undertakings given on that basis. Complicating implementation of the treaty by introducing a whole range of new political demands must be avoided.
3. When the question of applying Article 201 arises – in other words, when the time comes to equip the Community with its own resources – a problem of financial control will inevitably be raised. That problem will have to be resolved at the appropriate time in accordance with and by means of procedures that have yet to be defined. For the time being, instead of attempting to pre-empt that by making demands which lie beyond the scope of the treaty system as it stands, we should focus on resolving the agriculture problem.
4. It has been asked in various quarters, notably in the press, whether Mr Werner would envisage acting as a mediator in the current situation. As things stand, the position of Luxembourg's Foreign Minister is, indeed, relatively neutral: most of our partner states – France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands – are parties to the dispute, and the Commission, through its extreme and unrealistic proposals, has left itself unable to play its linking role. It is not, however, Mr Werner's intention to take any initiative here. He will await events, while remaining open to approaches from either side that might clear the way for a successful compromise formula.

Pierre Pescatore