

Letter from Émile Noël to Walter Hallstein on Council meetings in Luxembourg (Paris, 17 January 1965)

Caption: In a letter dated 17 January 1965, Émile Noël, Executive Secretary of the Commission of the European Economic Community (CEE), suggests to Walter Hallstein, President of the EEC Commission, that, in the Commission proposal on the number of Council meetings to be held in Luxembourg, no more than 12 meetings per year be held.

Source: Le Secrétaire exécutif. Note pour Monsieur le Président Hallstein. Bruxelles: Commission de la Communauté économique européenne, 1965. 2 p.
Archives historiques de l'Union européenne, Florence, Villa II Poggiolo. Dépôts, DEP. Emile Noël, EN. De la négociation des traités de Rome à la fusion des exécutifs 1955-67, EN.05. Fusion des exécutifs 1964-68, EN.05-05. Implantation des Institutions, EN-306.

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Note for President Hallstein (Paris, 17 January 1965)

A sudden bereavement has prevented me from presenting to you in Strasbourg, as I had intended, the study which you asked me to draw up on the 'location' problems arising from the merger of the Executive bodies. I am sending my manuscript to Brussels so that it may be transcribed as soon as possible and forwarded to you immediately. I hope that you will excuse this unfortunate delay, which is entirely beyond my control.

The analysis of the technical requirements for Council meetings which I ordered (its results are set out in an annex to the note) has led me to the conclusion that an excessive increase in the number of meetings to be held in Luxembourg would be unwise. I therefore suggest to you that 12 meetings per year be held. The French delegation, in the Council on 1 December and at a recent meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (internal) on 14 January last, vigorously urged that there should be no more than 10 meetings. As this figure aroused some indignation in the Luxembourg delegation, 12 represents a (modest) effort to improve the presentation.

There seems to be little scope for an increase in the number 'offered' to Luxembourg — I have searched for ways of making the offer more appealing. The draft note that I am presenting to you is based on a somewhat novel approach. The 'compensations' determined today are only temporary measures pending the establishment in Luxembourg of a large decentralised Office, a *Behörde*. In this way, the artificial nature of these 'compensations' is justified by their temporary status; indeed, they represent an additional guarantee that the location of the Office will become a reality.

The document that I am forwarding to you is presented as a draft note for the Commission. However, I am not sure whether it is necessary to issue a communication — particularly a written communication — to the Commission several days in advance. Given the nature of the subject, the possibility of some dissemination outside the institution cannot be excluded, and that would not necessarily help the subsequent discussion. I think that, on 2 February, the Council will be able to judge whether, given the atmosphere, an immediate proposal is appropriate or whether it is sufficient officially to announce a Commission proposal which would be presented in the next few days and would be discussed at the next Council meeting. Depending on the circumstances, you could call for a meeting of the Commission immediately or follow the traditional procedures after the Council meeting.

In a matter as delicate as this, I would crave your indulgence for this attempt to disentangle a knot so inextricably entwined. The European Institutions, dedicated as they are to keeping costs down, do not have a sword to sever knots of this kind.

Please accept the assurance of my respectful and devoted consideration,

(sgd) É. Noël