

Resolution by the Federation of British Industries on the European Free Trade Area (13 November 1957)

Caption: On 13 November 1957, the Federation of British Industries adopts a resolution in which it expresses its views on the proposal to establish a European Free Trade Area.

Source: Commonwealth survey - A record of United Kingdom and Commonwealth Affairs. 26.11.1957, n° 24; Vol. 3. London: Central Office of Information. "The European Free Trade Area - Federation of British Industries Resolution ", p. 1059.

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The European Free Trade Area - Federation of British Industries Resolution

The Federation of British Industries (FBI) ¹ has expressed its views on the European free trade area in the following resolution, which was carried, by a large majority, at a meeting of the Grand Council of the Federation on 13th November. The Federation

(1) considers that the safeguards and conditions set out in the joint report, ² published in September 1957, are essential to the interest of United Kingdom industry in a European free trade area;

(2) considers it essential that the clauses in the free trade area convention dealing with the definition of origin of manufactured goods must provide for either or both the percentage content and the process method to be available at the choice of the industries concerned;

(3) considers it essential that existing anti-dumping legislation in the United Kingdom should be strengthened, and requests that HM Government should use its influence to ensure that the other contracting Governments equally provide adequate measures to prevent dumping in their own territories;

(4) welcomes the undertaking from the President of the Board of Trade that he will consult the Federation in the course of negotiations in the event of any material change developing in the safeguards or conditions set out in the report already referred to;

and, with the above provisions, records its opinion as being, on balance, in favour of HM Government's policy.

1. The Federation of British Industries is the national body recognised as the spokesman for British industry on economic, commercial and production questions.

2. The joint report mentioned in the resolution was drawn up by the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, the FBI and the UK National Union of Manufacturers, and defined the safeguards without which a European free trade area would be unacceptable to industry and commerce in the United Kingdom [see 15.10.57 p. 932] . The 'safeguards and conditions' alluded to include the retention of the existing structure of Imperial Preference, the exclusion of agricultural products from the free trade area arrangements, and the maintenance of tariff autonomy towards the rest of the world.