

Letter from Joseph Bech to Harold Macmillan (Luxembourg, 7 June 1955)

Caption: On 7 June 1955, Joseph Bech, Luxembourg Foreign Minister, forwards to his British counterpart, Harold Macmillan, a letter in which he asks him to consider the possibility that a British representative might participate in the future work of the Intergovernmental Committee established by the Messina Conference.

Source: Correspondence arising out of the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Governments of Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands held at Messina on June 1-2, 1955, Luxembourg, June 7. London, June 15, The Hague, June 30. London, July 1, 1955. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1955. 10 p. (Parliamentary Papers. Cmd. 9525). p. 3; 6.

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Monsieur le Ministre,

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Federal German Republic, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, at their meeting at Messina on the 1st and 2nd June, 1955, adopted a Resolution of which I have the honour to communicate to you the attached copy. They decided, in particular, to establish a Committee of Governmental representatives which, under the chairmanship of a political personality and assisted by experts, will have the task of preparing for a conference or conferences called for the purpose of working out treaties or other arrangements concerning the questions dealt with in the Resolution.

As Chairman of the Messina Conference, I have been invited by my colleagues to draw your attention particularly to paragraph 6 of part II of the Resolution, in accordance with which an invitation to take part in the Committee's work will be addressed to the Government of the United Kingdom, as a power which is a member of Western European Union and is also associated with the European Coal and Steel Community.

In view of the fact that the Committee's report will have to be submitted to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs by not later than the 1st of October, and that it is consequently important that the work should be undertaken as soon as possible, it seems appropriate that Her Majesty's Government should at once start to consider how they would respond to the invitation which will be addressed to them. I would wish to emphasise that my colleagues and I were unanimous in our hope that the British Government would participate in this work in the closest possible manner.

For a period of three months from the 8th of June, 1955, the Chairmanship of the six Ministers for Foreign Affairs will be held by Monsieur J. W. Beyen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. I should be grateful if you would transmit to him any communication that you may have occasion to address to the six Governments in reply to the present letter.

I beg, etc.,

Bech.