


Interview with André Dubois: the Secretariat of the IGC on the Common Market and Euratom (Brussels, 8 December 2006)

Source: Interview d'André Dubois / ANDRÉ DUBOIS, Étienne Deschamps.- Bruxelles: CVCE [Prod.], 08.12.2006. CVCE, Sanem. - VIDEO (00:06:05, Couleur, Son original).

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URL:
http://www.cvce.eu/obj/interview_with_andre_dubois_the_secretariat_of_the_igc_on_the_common_market_and_euratom_brussels_8_december_2006-en-92b99da1-39bc-4d8d-8d80-a13b270090f9.html

Last updated: 05/07/2016



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[Étienne Deschamps] As from 1956, i.e. shortly afterwards, you took part personally, directly, at Val Duchesse, in the activities of the Intergovernmental Conference on the Common Market and Euratom. Here again, what were the specific responsibilities of the Secretariat of the Special Council of Ministers that was made available to the Conference as its secretariat, and once again, how did things go, in practical terms, during the months of negotiation in Brussels?

[André Dubois] Well, you know that in Messina the Foreign Ministers instructed Mr Spaak to chair the Conference negotiations and, at the same time, they quite naturally asked Mr Calmes to take charge of the Secretariat of that Conference, more, if I may say so, on a personal basis than as an ECSC official. So how did Mr Calmes proceed? At first he was supported by some of the Luxembourg staff, and next he also called in national officials from Paris, from Bonn, from various Member States, and then, for the more clerical duties, he recruited temporary staff, under contract, such as translators, typists and ushers. There was also a permanent team in Brussels, which followed the negotiations under the supervision of an Italian director, Mr Guazzugli, while Mr Calmes retained overall responsibility and came chiefly for the ministerial meetings and meetings of heads of delegation.

The Conference was also organised in the usual way. You had a Committee of Heads of Delegation, which met practically every week, and which Mr Spaak very often chaired in person. Basically, you had three big negotiating groups: the Common Market Group, chaired by Mr von der Groeben, who later became the second German Commissioner in the Commission; the Euratom Group, which was chaired for a while by Mr Guillaumat and then by Mr Armand, who also became the first President of the Euratom Commission and had an extraordinarily brilliant mind; and then there was a Drafting Committee, chaired by the Italian Ambassador, Mr Ducci, which, shall we say, was more specifically concerned with legal and drafting questions and the definitive text of the treaties. Then there were a few groups, not very many, set up as and when required — apart from one permanent group, the customs union group, which was responsible for drafting the common customs tariff, about which I believe we will be saying a few words later.

So there you are, we performed our duties as they were usually performed, at the level of the Committee of Heads of Delegation. I myself started out in the Euratom Group, though not for long, and then became an assistant to Mr Guazzugli and Mr Calmes, and we were more specifically responsible for following the Committee of Heads of Delegation and the ministerial meetings. There were four or five during the Conference, mainly towards the end. In the Common Market Group, we had two colleagues who were there to assist the President; they were Mr Albrecht, whom I believe you will also be interviewing later on, and Mr Bourguignon, who has since died. As I said, I began in the Euratom Group and I do not really remember who took over from me, but Mr Guazzugli was also keeping a very close eye on that group, since he later became the first Secretary-General of the Euratom Commission. The Legal Group was obviously assisted by our jurists. Now, Mr Spaak himself was surrounded by a team of colleagues: Mr Pierre Uri, who had an extraordinarily sharp mind and played a major part in drafting the Spaak Report; Mr von der Groeben, who was also his personal adviser; and then two Belgian officials, whose names deserve to be mentioned, Ambassador Rothschild and Mr Hupperts. Lastly, of course, we teamed up with Baron Snoy, who chaired the Committee of Heads of Delegation in the absence of Mr Spaak and who also teamed up very, very well with Mr Spaak and was an extremely competent and experienced man. He was Secretary-General at the Ministry of Economic Affairs at the time, but had been involved in all the negotiations on the OEEC, the Marshall Plan and so on. So that gives you some idea of how things went.

[Étienne Deschamps] So the Secretariat's role was administrative?

[André Dubois] Firstly it provided the logistic support and then of course it had to draft the memorandums and reports. In fact, there were very few minutes or things of that kind. It was mainly reports for the heads of delegation and then, at group level, a question of assisting with the drafting ... It was, of course, mainly a question of drafting and re-drafting items. Actually, all in all there were relatively few people involved in that negotiation, if you add up the delegates and the staff.