

## 'The same path' from the Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung (17 January 1952)

**Caption:** On 17 January 1952, the Bulletin of the Press and Information Office of the German Federal Government welcomes the adoption by the Bundestag of the bill ratifying the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).

**Source:** Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung. 17.01.1952, Nr. 7. Bonn: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung. "Der gemeinsame Weg", p. 69.

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## Going forward together

Ratification of the Schuman Plan by the Bundestag, which can only have gained in significance as a result of its passage by the astonishingly large majority of 89 votes, has had a positively liberating effect worldwide, except in that part under Soviet dominance. As Anne O'Hare McCormick wrote in the *New York Times*, 'There are few events in history that can be described as unique. This is one of them.' This verdict may be seen as representative of the prevailing view abroad of the importance of the Bundestag's vote. The *New York Times* goes on to remark that 'If this decision had been motivated solely by economic considerations, the Schuman Plan would never have had a chance', and this confirms the conclusive, fundamentally political significance of the German decision. And it was this fact, that the Schuman Plan is an expression of the desire for international understanding and peace, which Federal Chancellor Dr Adenauer specifically emphasised in his speech during the debate.

It seems to us that one cannot overstate this side of the Plan where German public opinion is concerned, compared with the individual objections doggedly raised by the opposition. Our young people have spontaneously grasped that the Schuman Plan represents a major step forward towards a new European future, of the kind which the best and most enlightened circles and forces in Germany wish to see. Their demonstration applauding the Chancellor after the vote in the Bundestag can thus be seen as firm proof that the deeper significance of the Schuman Plan and the fundamental idea behind it have been understood by those who experienced the last war as the product of a world whose time had passed.

The Chancellor's speech to the Bundestag also made it clear that continuing foreign hostility towards Germany can on no account be shrugged off. German statesmen continue to be hampered by suspicion, which makes their efforts to achieve peace and rapprochement more difficult. For that very reason, as the Chancellor said, our commitment to the Schuman Plan gives Germany's erstwhile foes a chance to look at Germany and the question of German unity with fresh eyes. The importance of this cannot be valued too highly. It should also give pause for thought to those who, doubtless misreading the true nature of our situation, saw fit to vote against the Schuman Plan.

The Chancellor's way has shown itself to be the only way to return Germany to the community of the major civilised nations as a respected and equal partner in the joint peace moves, and thus have its own vital concerns and issues, principally German unity, included on the agenda of that community. So we need to realise that all forces which truly feel a responsibility for the destiny of the German people as such must pull together to achieve this.

It made perfect sense for Dr Adenauer to urge the opposition to try to cooperate in the rebuilding of Germany. The aim was that an awareness of the imperatives, possibilities and needs of a new German policy, working alongside all free and peace-loving nations and serving the interest of national consolidation too, should gradually bring Germans to the realisation that they need to be of one mind on basic issues of foreign policy. The traditions of the socialist parties allow them to act in solidarity at an international level, and to further the ideas of freedom and peace on which our national policy too is based. The example of the socialist brother parties in their stance on the Schuman Plan should illuminate and inspire.

The Schuman Plan is just a first, decisive move towards international cooperation observing equal rights and equal obligations. Further steps will follow. And success for Germany, in terms of her legitimate right to existence, will be all the more certain and more rewarding if the German people are united in their desire and endeavours. There are in the free democracies of the world no major, and thus divisive, disagreements on the main foreign policy issues. Here too, we should be ready to take our lead from them.