

## Memorandum from the British Foreign Office on the appointment of a delegation to enter into relations with the ECSC (July 1952)

**Caption:** In July 1952, with a view to the future relations between the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the United Kingdom, the British Foreign Secretary drafts a memorandum advocating the establishment of a British delegation to the ECSC High Authority.

**Source:** The National Archives of the United Kingdom, [s.l.], Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>, Records of the Cabinet Office, CAB. Anglo-French discussions regarding French proposals for the western European coal, iron and steel industries; Schuman plan, CAB 21/3235.

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[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/memorandum\\_from\\_the\\_british\\_foreign\\_office\\_on\\_the\\_appointment\\_of\\_a\\_delegation\\_to\\_enter\\_into\\_relations\\_with\\_the\\_ecsc\\_july\\_1952-en-16477c35-30e2-470d-9038-b36603a2c087.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/memorandum_from_the_british_foreign_office_on_the_appointment_of_a_delegation_to_enter_into_relations_with_the_ecsc_july_1952-en-16477c35-30e2-470d-9038-b36603a2c087.html)

**Publication date:** 18/12/2013

JULY 1952

## SCHUMAN PLAN

### Appointment of U.K. delegation

#### Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

In accordance with the Cabinet Conclusions of 22nd November, 1951 (10th conclusions, minute 4) the Home Secretary announced at Strasbourg on 28th November 1951 that that if the Schuman Plan was ratified, Her Majesty's Government would set up a permanent delegation at the seat of the High Authority to enter into relations and to transact business with it.

2. The Plan has now been approved by the legislatures of the six member countries. Ratifications are expected to be deposited, the treaty to enter into force, and the High Authority to be set up in the latter half of August. The formal appointment of our delegation must await the conclusion of these processes, but if we are to be ready in time, preliminary decisions must be taken without delay.

3. Commercial considerations also underline the need for quick action. I am informed that industrial interests on the Continent may already be concerting arrangements for the organization of coal and steel markets after the treaty comes into force. These preliminary exchanges may closely affect our own interests, but Her Majesty's Government and the industries concerned cannot at present effectively make their influence felt, for lack of recognized representation with authority to speak on their behalf.

4. The High Authority will act for the six member states in their external relations within its field. Moreover, though the matters with which it deals are themselves commercial and industrial, the underlying purposes of the Community are political and form part of the complex of federalist developments with which I have to deal in the European Defence Community, in the Pfimlin Plan and in recent proposals for a European Political Authority. On these grounds I consider that responsibility for our delegation, and for the conduct of our relations with the Schuman Community, should rest with the Foreign Secretary.

5. I should require continuous advice upon the varied departmental interests involved, and I propose that this should be provided by a small official committee to be established with membership drawn from the Ministries of Fuel and Power and Supply, the Treasury, the Central Economic Planning Staff, the Board of Trade and the Ministry of Labour, under Foreign Office chairmanship. Instructions to the delegation would be prepared by this committee and issued by me.

6. In planning out our delegation the first step must be the choice of a leader. Our relations with the Community will be under continuous discussion between now and the time when the High Authority is set up, and the leader of our delegation should be appointed without delay so that his advice may be available. For this post I consider that we should select a man whose background is commercial or industrial, though not connected with either coal or steel. The High Authority itself is likely to consist of a mixture of businessmen, politicians, officials and trade unionists, but our day to day dealings with it will be on industrial and commercial matters, and we should mark this fact in the selection of our representative. But a business background is not in itself enough. If mistakes are to be avoided, it should be combined with some experience of international negotiation. Day-to-day political advice would be provided by the appointment of a Foreign Service officer to the delegation; but, in view of the importance of the work for our future relations with Western Europe, political sense must rank with industrial experience as an indispensable qualification. I propose that I should be authorised, in consultation with the other ministers directly concerned, to select and appoint a candidate answering to this specification.

7. Initially at least, the permanent staff of the Delegation should be kept small. Technical representatives from the Ministries of Supply and Fuel and Power will be indispensable. Other Departments have obvious interests: these might, I suggest, be covered as far as possible by visits from officials based in this country. Similarly, the need for advice from both management and labour in the two industries could be met by the appointment of assessors who would visit the delegation as required.

8. I understand that consultations are proceeding, in accordance with E.A.(52)36, with management and labour in the two industries, and with other joint advisory bodies. I trust that those consultations will be pursued in such a way as to permit the programme of action proposed above to proceed with due expedition.

#### 9. Summary of conclusions

I accordingly invite my colleagues to endorse the following conclusions:-

- (a) that ministerial responsibility for the U.K. Delegation should rest with the Foreign Secretary (para. 4);
- (b) that the Foreign Secretary should be advised by, and instruct the delegation through, an interdepartmental committee to be established under Foreign Office chairmanship (para. 5);
- (c) that the qualities required in the leader of the delegation are industrial experience combined with political sense, and that I should be authorised, in consultation with the Ministers principally concerned, to select the best man available (para.6);
- (d) that the permanent staff of the delegation should be selected from the departments directly concerned, and should be reinforced as necessary by representatives of other departments and by assessors from both sides of the two industries (para. 7).