

Extract from minutes of the 465th meeting of the WEU Council held on 24 October 1973

Caption: On 24 October 1973, the Council of Western European Union (WEU) discusses the reply that should be given to the Assembly's Recommendation concerning the urgent convening of a ministerial meeting on the ongoing conflict in the Near East. Even though the Council shares the concerns which led to the adoption of this Recommendation, the WEU Member States are already involved in discussions on this matter in a number of international bodies and the Council therefore has reservations about the appropriateness of such a meeting in the current circumstances.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Extract from minutes of 456th meeting of WEU Council held on 24th 1973. I. Letter dated 18th October 1973 from the President of the Assembly to the Chairman in Office of the Council. CR(73) 15. 3 p. Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux).<http://www.anlux.lu>. Western European Union Archives. Secretariat-General/Council's Archives. 1954-1987. Organs of the Western European Union. Year: 1973, 01/10/1973-04/06/1974. File 202.413.999.08. Volume 1/1 .

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http://www.cvce.eu/obj/extract_from_minutes_of_the_465th_meeting_of_the_weu_council_held_on_24_october_1973-en-76e6eca3-e885-40d9-a2e9-deaa6e9e7c40.html



Last updated: 07/11/2016

The Secretary-General, M. Georges HEISBOURG, was in the Chair.

I. LETTER DATED 18TH OCTOBER, 1973 FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY TO THE CHAIRMAN IN OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL

(C (73) 141)

The CHAIRMAN declared that the present meeting was the result of the contacts he had had with the members of the Permanent Council following an interview with Baron Gevers on Monday, 22nd October. It had to deal with the letter dated 18th October from the President of the Assembly to the Chairman in Office of the Council, which had been circulated to delegations under cover of document C (73) 141 of 20th October.

Baron GEVERS confirmed that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Council's approach to the Assembly's Recommendation in order to enable the Chairman in Office to reply to Sir John's letter.

After observing that it would be up to the Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs, as Chairman in Office of the Council, to take the necessary steps with a view to convening such a meeting, the Ambassador stated that he had been instructed to inform the Council that, much as his Minister appreciated the motives of the Assembly's Recommendation, he personally was not anxious to convene a ministerial meeting as he considered this to be rather less desirable for a number of reasons, among which he would like to mention the following:

Firstly, the various aspects of the Near-East conflict were already being discussed in several international organisations; secondly, from a purely practical point of view, it seemed extremely difficult for Ministers of the W.E.U. member states to free themselves from their heavy commitments and make themselves available for a special meeting at short notice; and thirdly, a W.E.U. ministerial meeting would lead unavoidably to some publicity which, in case of no ostensible results, could quite possibly have an adverse effect, both in the countries of the Seven and outside, which should be avoided.

These were some of his Minister's initial considerations when he was first informed of the contents of the Recommendation.

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Subsequent events had further borne out that the need for a special W.E.U. ministerial meeting seemed less urgent; the Security Council was now acting unanimously in its efforts to secure a cease-fire and an ultimate peace settlement.

Baron Gevers thought that, before proceeding further, it would be useful to establish whether there was general agreement about the non-advisability of holding an urgent Council meeting at ministerial level.

M. de BEAUMARCHAIS stated that his Government considered the Netherlands arguments to be quite reasonable and that they were in agreement with the point of view put forward by the Netherlands Ambassador.

Mr. von HASE and Sir Thomas BRIMELOW could accept both the analysis and conclusions of their Netherlands colleague; M. MANZINI could also support the Dutch viewpoint, and M. PHILIPPE said that his instructions were to the effect that his Government did not think it advisable to organise a ministerial meeting at the present time.

Although without formal instructions, M. ROTHSCCHILD could support the view expressed by other delegations.

Summing up, the CHAIRMAN remarked that it was the Council's unanimous view that the meeting proposed by the Assembly did not appear advisable at the present time. He asked if the Netherlands Ambassador had any suggestions as to how they should now proceed vis à vis the Assembly.

At the suggestion of Baron GEVERS, the CHAIRMAN then circulated a draft reply to be addressed by the Chairman in Office to the President of the Assembly.

After discussion, the Council reached agreement on the text attached hereto which the Netherlands Ambassador undertook to transmit to The Hague for signature by the Chairman in Office.

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ANNEX

Reply of the Chairman in Office of the Council
to the letter of 18th October, 1973 addressed to him
by the President of the Assembly

"As Chairman in Office of the Council of Western European Union, I have the honour to acknowledge the letter of 18th October, 1973, in which you transmitted to me a recommendation of the Assembly concerning events in the Near East.

I can at once assure the Assembly that the Council share the concern which led to the adoption of this recommendation.

Moreover, as you are aware, the various aspects of the Near-East conflict have been, and still are, under discussion in a number of international bodies. The Governments of the States members of W.E.U. have taken part in these discussions from the outset.

The members of the Council have deemed that the need for an emergency meeting at ministerial level does not arise in present circumstances."

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