

Merging the executives

Source: CVCE. European Navigator. Étienne Deschamps.

Copyright: (c) CVCE.EU by UNI.LU

All rights of reproduction, of public communication, of adaptation, of distribution or of dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

Consult the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/merging_the_executives-en-575850b6-f472-406a-936d-8c08a9eodb32.html

Last updated: 08/07/2016



Merging the executive bodies

France wanted the position of the Council of Ministers to be strengthened, but its partners envisaged the creation of an independent body with extended powers, based on a merger of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the Commission of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the Commission of the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom). France opposed the merger of the executive bodies for some time. However, under pressure from the other Member States, it finally accepted the principle of merging the Community executive bodies at the meeting of the Council of Ministers of 23 September 1963 but tried to limit the supranational power of the new single Commission. Following three years of difficult negotiations, the Treaty establishing a Single Council and a Single Commission of the European Communities was signed in Brussels on 8 April 1965. It entered into force on 1 July 1967. Henceforth, the Commission of the European Communities was the single executive body of the three European Communities: the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom). In response to a proposal from France, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (Coreper), composed of the Ambassadors of the Member States, was appointed to provide permanent support for the Commission, which was invested with the right to propose legislation and the powers of execution and representation.

The first President of the Single Commission was Walter Hallstein, of Germany, who had been President of the EEC Commission since 1958 and had formerly served as a Minister under Chancellor Adenauer. His strong personality soon left its mark on the Commission. To supporters of federalist thinking, the Commission was the embryo of a future federal European government. General de Gaulle, meanwhile, was firmly opposed to this approach and managed to ensure that Hallstein's mandate was extended for only six months after the merger. Refusing to accept any weakening of the Commission's powers, Hallstein resigned.

The Council of Ministers was the main decision-making body of the EEC. It regularly held meetings of those Member State Ministers with responsibility for the issues on the agenda. Each EEC country held the Presidency for six months on a rotating basis. The Council's decisions were drafted by Coreper, assisted by various committees of experts and senior officials from the national Ministries.