

Reactions in Germany

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Robert Schuman's declaration took Germany by surprise since it represented a total reversal of French policy towards its neighbour. The proposal that Germany should be offered equal treatment could not fail to be welcomed since it satisfied a long-standing German demand and made possible the irreversible integration of the Federal Republic of Germany into Western Europe.

The reaction of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, who was personally informed of the Plan by Schuman only on the morning of 9 May 1950, was shown in his gratitude towards France. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Liberal Party (FDP), like most business leaders and even German trade unions, were almost unreservedly in favour of the French Plan.

The Social Democratic Party (SPD), which strongly supported a united Germany, feared a deepening of the division between the part of Germany that was under Western influence and the other part, which was under Soviet influence. The SPD's pacifist and anti-capitalist orientation made it all the more mistrustful of the Schuman Plan since the Plan did not include the nationalisation of heavy industry in the Ruhr basin, a measure for which the Social Democrats had been calling for some time. German public opinion, although aware of the Plan's symbolic value, was for the most part undecided and even, at times, hostile and ill-informed.