

'Implementation of the ECSC stepped up' from the Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (21 April 1951)

Caption: On 21 April 1951, the German daily newspaper Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung reports on the political debates preceding ratification of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in Germany.

Source: Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung. Die unabhängige Zeitung des Ruhrgebiets. Hrsg. Funke, Jakob ; Herausgeber Brost, Erich. 21.04.1951, Nr. 93; 4. Jg. Essen: Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung GmbH. "Montan-Union wird beschleunigt", p. 1.

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Implementation of the ECSC stepped up

The Chancellor presses for early ratification / Talks with government parties to be held on Monday

From our Bonn office
Vo. Bonn, 20 April

The final decision concerning the Schuman Plan would not be put on ice, the Federal Chancellor, Dr Adenauer, declared on Friday before members of the national and international press in Bonn. He would be putting his weight behind the treaty's speedy ratification by the Bundestag. Talks with the leaders of the government parties were already scheduled for Monday.

In a reference to the SPD, the Chancellor said, 'The Federal Republic is not the only country blessed with an opposition; the other countries are in the same situation.' The Government had been able to dispel final reservations within union ranks. The DGB and relevant specialist unions could therefore be expected to receive the Schuman Plan favourably. There was every likelihood that they would cooperate in putting it into practice.

The Federal Chancellor read out a letter from Mr Schuman, the French Foreign Minister, according to which the French Government would urge the other occupying powers to agree to abolition of the Ruhr Authority and the freeing of German steel production. 'The Ruhr Statute and the Schuman Plan cannot coexist,' the Chancellor said.

Improved prospects for US loans

Once the Schuman Plan had got properly underway, coal and steel production costs could be expected to fall and quality of output to improve. American loans could now also be obtained more easily.

On the subject of the Saar, the Chancellor commented that agreement on the Schuman Plan would also pave the way for a solution that was both sensible and in accordance with the wishes of the Saar population. It was his continuing conviction that the people of the Saar should decide on their future destiny through a ballot. The Schuman Plan had not anticipated any decisions concerning the Saar.

The Chancellor rejected as 'completely absurd' the declaration by Dr Schumacher that the Schuman Plan was no more than a perpetuation of occupation law.

DGB: independent decision

Report from our own correspondent, Düsseldorf, 20 April

Reports from union circles indicate that the DGB will take its decision on the Schuman Plan independently and uninfluenced by party political statements. But although the unions approve the basic idea underlying the Schuman Plan, they have continuing strong reservations concerning the treaty's formulation of certain important issues. As matters stand, they feel unable to see how far their demands have been taken into account, especially concerning the sale of German coal. This will, however, largely determine whether the unions endorse or reject the Schuman Plan. As soon as the exact wording of the treaty is known, the DGB's federal committee will probably take a decision on this question.

Ollenhauer: fears confirmed

Bonn, 20 April

Mr Schuman's announcement that the Schuman Plan is to be submitted to the Saar state parliament for ratification has been interpreted by the SPD's Deputy Chairman, Erich Ollenhauer, as a confirmation of all the fears expressed by the SPD before Adenauer's trip to Paris.

The German Foreign Ministry describes the ratification by the Saar state parliament as ‘of no legal consequence’.