

'The EDC Treaty is dead' from the Hannoversche Presse (31 August 1954)


Caption: On 31 August 1954, the German daily newspaper Hannoversche Presse reacts to the failure of the European Defence Community (EDC) and refers to the German people's wish for reunification.

Source: Hannoversche Presse. 31.08.1954. Hannover: Hannover Druck- und Verlag-GmbH. "Der EVG-Vertrag ist tot".

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The EDC Treaty is dead

The treaty establishing what was known as the 'European Defence Community' (EDC) no longer exists. The decision was taken yesterday in the French National Assembly. An overwhelming majority of the National Assembly declared that there were no grounds for further discussion. The EDC thus received the most total rejection possible under parliamentary law in France.

The decision taken in Paris comes as no surprise, although the three days of sittings in the National Assembly were full of drama. The decision simply reflects the extent to which the EDC was not commensurate with political reality. And this EDC has prevented any political development in Europe for nearly four years, blocking all possibilities of overcoming the conflict between East and West and the division of Germany. A treaty without any real value influenced developments. The EDC has proven itself to be unquestionably bloodless.

The relevant conclusions must now be drawn in Paris, London, Washington and Bonn. Whoever said that there was no alternative to the EDC has lost any responsibility conferred upon him as a statesman or politician. That applies particularly to Bonn. The Chancellor has always said that he wanted to reunite Germany through the EDC. If the EDC is not to become a political end in itself, then Bonn at least has the duty at this time to remind itself of its responsibility towards the whole of Germany. The EDC is dead. Does this mean that the resolve to reunite Germany is also dead, since that was supposedly what justified the EDC?

Immediately before the decisive vote in Paris, it was stated in Bonn that an alternative to the EDC was not a matter for the Federal Government but rather for the other five partner states. There is, therefore, no desire to bow down before political reality. The vote in Paris is as much such a reality as the call for reunification. The responsibility for Germany and for Europe is now perhaps greater than ever before. The thrust of a European policy has to be devised anew. This concerns Bonn as well, because Germany's fate is tied to that of this European policy.