

'The significance of the Schuman Plan' from the Luxemburger Wort (10 May 1950)

Caption: On 10 May 1950, the Luxembourg daily newspaper Luxemburger Wort considers the various elements of the Schuman Declaration and the reactions to it in Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Source: Luxemburger Wort. Für Wahrheit und Recht. 10.05.1950, n° 130; 103e année. Luxembourg: Imprimerie Saint-Paul. "Die Bedeutung des Schuman-Planes", p. 1.

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The significance of the Schuman Plan

Paris, 10 May (AFP). The French proposal concerning the amalgamation of French and German coal and steel production is being seen as a political initiative with enormously far-reaching consequences. Many have even called it revolutionary. Its significance is twofold.

Firstly, the French proposal represents the first attempt to resolve the problems between France and Germany once and for all. It establishes Franco–German relations on a basis of peace and cooperation. The initiative also contains the first concrete proposals from which a united Europe may emerge. The Plan is based on the amalgamation of two hitherto rival parties and offers the possibility of including the whole of Europe in the new system. Traditional conflicts would thereby be set aside, something that, to date, no war has been able to eliminate. As soon as coal and steel prices are the same everywhere, there can no longer be any talk of competition.

Another argument being put forward is that coal and steel production organised in this way would serve the cause of peace. What was still a military arsenal yesterday will be put to peaceful purposes tomorrow. By means of its own initiative, the French Government would, it is argued, be certain of playing a part in the future peaceful development of the world. Its proposal would lead to an improvement in living standards which has, to date, been held back by these conflicts of interest.

From all this, Europe will emerge, a Europe pursuing the same goals in France, the Saar and the Ruhr. All Europeans would profit from this cooperation without exception, as would less-developed areas, above all Africa, which could expect progress and prosperity from the old continent.

Reception of the Plan in the USA ...

Official circles in the USA took note of the French proposals with a great deal of satisfaction. They believe that Acheson and his experts will study in detail a range of issues associated with the Plan whilst in London, and that the Foreign Ministers will discuss them at their conference.

... in England ...

Reports from London suggest that Schuman's proposal has been received with a feeling of relief.

A spokesman for the British Iron and Steel Federation explained that the French initiative showed that the way was open for genuine European cooperation. The implementation of such an initiative, he said, would put an end to the steel price war, the consequences of which would have been devastating for the whole of Europe.

... and in Germany

Chancellor Adenauer called the French Government's initiative 'decisive progress in the development of Franco–German relations' and said that the French proposals constituted 'concrete proposals on the basis of equality', which could work to the advantage of the development of Europe as a whole.