

'The outcome of Paris' from Die Welt (19 April 1951)

Caption: On 19 April 1951, following the signing of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in Paris, the German daily newspaper Die Welt emphasises the decisiveness of the step taken on the road to European unity.

Source: Die Welt. Unabhängige Tageszeitung. Hrsg. SCHULTE, Heinrich ; Herausgeber HELBIG, Adolf. 19.04.1951, n° 91; 6. Jg. Hamburg: Die Welt. "Das Ergebnis von Paris", p. 2.

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The outcome of Paris

Gr. — The Schuman Plan Conference in Paris was the culmination of the Chancellor's political efforts, in close cooperation with France, to reintegrate Germany into the Western world and create a position for it where questions of equality and suchlike would be less important. Dr Adenauer has adhered to this policy, unperturbed by attacks and disappointments. It is not only the specific outcome of these negotiations — the ECSC Treaty — which constitutes success but also the atmosphere with which the German delegation was met in Paris and which the Chancellor has managed to foster. This atmosphere, however, is the prerequisite for the success of the recently signed Schuman Plan. To some people, this Treaty might seem to be a matter for experts and academics only; a gigantic as well as a dangerous attempt by technocrats to direct and command, by means of a High Authority, the mining and sale of raw materials, which, until now, were subject to national and war ambitions.

The European Coal and Steel Community, however, is a lot more. It is a carefully planned, peaceful revolution to secure peace. This, however, also requires the revolutionising of our way of thinking and our actions. This complex apparatus can function only if everyone who believes in it and wishes to cooperate will, from now on, see things from a European point of view. The coal and steel industries of the ECSC's six Member States will become unified only when this Treaty is complemented by and based on a European awareness and if this attitude is developed in line with the challenges facing the ECSC.

It is to the credit of the German Chancellor that he recognised this European significance when the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman and the Plan's spiritual father Jean Monnet mooted the concept of Europe about a year ago. Realising the importance of Europe, the Chancellor was prepared to shelve many a concern.

Objections put forward by critics are rife. The initial idea to make national barriers disappear in a partial customs union for coal and steel in order to safeguard public supply at the lowest prices has been watered down in the course of negotiations. At the top will sit a High Authority, which, potentially, could turn into a super-monopoly with a national binding character and block the initiative. The new market order could lead to a burdening of the German economy and to a weakening of its competitiveness.

One fact that critics often overlook, however, is the possible increase in output which might result from the new agreements and that, thanks to such expansion, many burdens could become easier to bear.

Whether time will prove the opponents or the supporters right depends most of all on whether we learn to handle this new structure as Europeans and manage to put across to the man in the street the message that the High Authority is the cornerstone of a unified Europe.

This task yet remains. The ECSC is, for most Europeans, a lifeless term. The public has hardly noticed the lengthy negotiations. There is not the response that once facilitated the efforts of the likes of Stresemann and Briand. While the agreements signed then were merely frames without content, tangible results have been achieved in Paris this time.

If the High Authority were to be approved by the general public and become the starting point for a united Europe, then possible economic concessions would be easier to bear. It is to be expected that the new order of the ECSC economy will be followed by efforts to cooperate in other areas and that there will be a rapprochement of the European states thanks to the ECSC. Talks held as part of the Foreign Ministers' Conference in Paris made for a hopeful start.

An important outcome of the Schuman Plan Conference is the joint declaration to undertake mutual consultation in future. This might be regarded as the greatest success of Germany's post-war policy. In mutual consultation, it goes without saying that each participating state recognises the sovereignty of the others.