

'The merger of the European executive bodies' from Il Popolo (28 September 1960)


Caption: On 28 September 1960, the Italian daily newspaper Il Popolo describes the progress of negotiations on the merging of the European executives and considers the formation and the role of the future Community bodies.

Source: Il Popolo. dir. de publ. Moro, Aldo. 28.09.1960, n° 269; anno 27. Roma. "L'unificazione degli esecutivi europei", p. 4.

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The merger of the European executive bodies

One of the main topics on the agenda of the meeting in Rome of the European Parliamentary Assembly's Political Affairs Committee is the merger of the executive bodies of the three Communities, of which the European executive bodies have already expressed themselves in favour. The question will be discussed during the Assembly's November session, on the occasion of the annual 'colloquium' with the Councils of Ministers of the EEC, the ECSC and Euratom and based on the report prepared by Maurice Faure. The Committee Chairman, Senator Emilio Battista, said at a press conference that, for the time being, this would not be a new and radical review of the Treaties establishing the three Communities, but solely the creation of a single European executive body, an idea advocated by the Assembly itself. The institution of a single European executive body — replacing the ECSC High Authority as well as the EEC and Euratom executive bodies — would entail no more than a very limited review of the existing treaties, with changes either in technical measures or in certain economic regulations which clearly need to be harmonised.

The merger of the existing executive bodies must obviously not lead to any restrictions in the current prerogatives and powers. As far as the number of members of the planned single body is concerned, there is talk of 9 or 14 Commissioners (although a more authoritative title would have to be found for them): the Commission has not yet expressed its views on this subject or on whether to retain the 'co-opted member'. The principle of the 'co-opted member' is in force within the ECSC High Authority (one of whose nine members is co-opted while the remaining eight are appointed by the national governments), but not in the EEC and Euratom executive bodies, whose Commissioners are all government appointees.

As far as the European Parliamentary Assembly is concerned, its prerogatives are to be increased: among the Assembly's tasks will be the formal establishment of the single executive body, discussing a common report and requesting a debate, whenever it thinks fit, concluding in a motion of censure where appropriate.

According to Committee Chairman, Senator Battista, the Committee is unanimous in its views on the Faure report, although certain Parliamentarians have pointed out the need for and advisability of more reviews of the Treaties establishing the three Communities. It is not unlikely that the merger of the European executive bodies can be achieved by next year, if the revision procedure follows the fastest course.

The merger of the European executive bodies should not be seen as a merger of the three Communities — the latter would in fact require radical redrafting of the Treaty of Paris (for the ECSC) and the Rome Treaties (for the EEC and Euratom) — but as a measure to rationalise the existing Community structures. It is essentially a question of a personal union rather than an actual merger, because the individual areas of activity would continue to be regulated by the respective Treaties. As reported by the AEP Agency, the merging of the ECSC High Authority and the EEC and Euratom executive bodies into a single organ is now, according to European political representatives, in every way a requirement that must be met, and the time has now come for the solution of the problem.

The issue of merging the European executive bodies poses yet again the much debated but urgent question of a single seat for the Community institutions. For the time being, the Assembly will have to tackle and solve the problem of its own headquarters, a subject for which Mario Scelba was appointed rapporteur before his place was taken by Senator Natale Santero. One of the first questions that the new rapporteur will have to deal with will be the choice between the alternatives of adopting a limited solution of a purely practical nature or finding an effective permanent solution to the problem of the seat in general.

There is no doubt that the second proposal is the one to be considered seriously. A resolute — and, frankly speaking, a courageous — gesture on the part of the Assembly might persuade the national governments to take a decision. Letting time slip by will only make the situation more complicated and the choice of a single seat more difficult.

Ad.