

'The European Coal and Steel Community at the crossroads', from Süddeutsche Zeitung (2 June 1955)

Caption: On 2 June 1955, on the day of a meeting in Messina attended by the Foreign Ministers of the six Member States of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the German daily newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung outlines the positions of the French and German leaders on possible ways to revive European integration.

Source: Süddeutsche Zeitung. Münchner Neueste Nachrichten aus Politik, Kultur, Wirtschaft, Sport. Hrsg. FRIEDMANN, Werner; SCHÖNINGH, Dr. Franz-Joseph; GOLDSCHAGG, Edmund; SCHWINGENSTEIN, August ; Herausgeber FRIEDMANN, Werner. 02.06.1955, n° 129; 11. Jg. München: Süddeutscher Verlag. "Die Montanunion am Scheidewege", auteur:Paulus, E.G. , p. 1; 2.

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The European Coal and Steel Community at the crossroads

The Foreign Ministers of the six Member States are holding discussions in Messina about proposals to expand European integration / René Mayer expected to be elected as the new President and successor to Monnet

From our correspondent E. G. Paulus

Paris, 1 June

The Foreign Ministers of the six countries in the Coal and Steel Community met on Wednesday in Messina on the island of Sicily. Although the fall of Mendès France has changed the course taken by the government in France, there is no unanimity in the government of Edgar Faure, either. It depends for its support simultaneously on 'pro-Europeans' and 'anti-Europeans', and there is no agreement about the continuation of the policy of European integration. The instructions given by the Cabinet to the 'moderate European', Antoine Pinay, as the basis of his stance in the negotiations in Messina therefore consist of compromises.

In the case of the first item on the agenda in Messina — agreement on a successor to Jean Monnet, the President of the High Authority — the compromise determined in the French Cabinet is as follows: the demands of the 'anti-Europeans' in the government are being accepted in as far as the French Government supports the exclusion of Jean Monnet. The demands of the 'pro-Europeans' in the government are being taken into account to the extent that it is not an 'anti-European', such as Ramadier, but a 'European', such as René Mayer, who is being proposed as the successor to Jean Monnet. Although the French Government is expecting René Mayer to be elected by the six Foreign Ministers, a second candidate has also been nominated out of courtesy, the former Minister and Member of Parliament for the People's Republican party, Jean-Marie Louvel. René Mayer has imposed two conditions for his agreement to stand as candidate. Firstly, he wants to retain his mandate as a Member of Parliament; secondly, he wishes to take a direct part in the formulation of any future integration plans. Both of these conditions set by René Mayer have been accepted by the French Government, which means that it will also be extremely difficult to implement the possibility that had previously been envisaged of entrusting Jean Monnet with the drawing up of new integration plans after he has left the High Authority of the Coal and Steel Community. Now that the Belgian Foreign Minister, Paul-Henri Spaak, had declared himself in agreement with the selection of René Mayer, everyone in Paris believes that he is certain to be elected.

The second item on the agenda in Messina is the opinion of the six Foreign Ministers on the proposals submitted by the Benelux countries regarding the expansion of European economic integration. These proposals were handed to the governments in Bonn, Rome and Paris by the Benelux countries in a memorandum on 20 May. This document proposes that Europe should be unified by the establishment of additional common institutions, the setting-up of a common European market and approximation of social security legislation in the countries of the Coal and Steel Community. A separate authority should be given the task of drawing up plans for a European transport network of motorways, canals and electrified railways and for the standardisation of rolling stock. The transfer of electricity and gas across national frontiers should be stepped up. In addition to this community for the entire European transport system, a European authority should be created to oversee the exploitation of industrial energy and, above all, the use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. However, it is the wish of the Benelux countries that, as well as the integration of individual branches of industry, the idea of combining the economies of Europe overall should be promoted. In order to achieve this, they are calling for the progressive abolition of customs barriers and the lifting of quantitative trade restrictions.

The compromise on this, determined within the French Government, means that, in Messina, Mr Pinay will declare his agreement of principle to the proposals from the Benelux countries being discussed. The current concern of the French Government is not to compromise the plans for Europe put forward by the Benelux countries but to secure a postponement before anything is done about them until after the French parliamentary elections in June 1956. Paris is willing to go along with revitalising the policies for European integration but not to give up any new sovereignty rights in any sectors of the economy. Here, with regard to

the future European transport and energy community, the French are using Switzerland as an alibi and are claiming that the two European communities could not be brought about without the participation of Switzerland, while neutral Switzerland could not take part in the establishment of new supranational authorities.

With regard to the creation of a common European market, France feels that it is not yet ready to face free competition within Europe. This does not change the fact that France will probably be prepared to convene an international conference at which these questions will be clarified. The Conference of Ministers of the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC), which is taking place in Paris in ten days' time, will also debate these same problems.

Bonn (dpa)

On the opening day of the Foreign Ministers' Conference in Messina, the responsible government circles in Bonn explained the standpoint of the Federal Government with regard to the continuation of the policy of economic integration in Europe. According to this, the Federal Government is pursuing three objectives: 1. The integration policy should be given unreserved support. 2. The aim should be the establishment of a common market by means of 'functional integration', that is, through the reform of the currencies and through the dismantling of all trade barriers. 3. If it is to become a permanent system, the projected common market must be secured by certain institutions which are federative in structure and do not have the character of supranational authorities along the lines of the Coal and Steel Community. Bonn government circles believe that this objective may be attained after a generous transitional period. The main difficulty — for France, above all — is seen in the currency problem.