

‘Europe – the following day’, from Süddeutsche Zeitung

Caption: On 4 December 1969, the German daily newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung takes a cautious stance on the decisions adopted by the Six two days earlier, at the end of the European Summit in The Hague.

Source: Süddeutsche Zeitung. Münchner Neueste Nachrichten aus Politik, Kultur, Wirtschaft und Sport. Hrsg. Dürrmeier, Hans ; RHerAusgeber Proebst, Hermann. 04.12.1969, Nr. 290; 25. Jg. München: Süddeutscher Verlag. "Europa - am Tag danach", auteur:Fackler, Maxim , p. 4.

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Europe — the day after

by Maxim Fackler

Although, on the day after the EEC Summit in The Hague, there is no reason to rush out and ring all the European bells, there is even less cause to fly the flags at half-mast. The EEC has passed a test in which, of course, examinees and examiners were identical. They have awarded themselves high marks. The grades for the European nations still have to be given out; they will depend on the view that each one of them has of Europe. Patience is unequally distributed on our Continent. But the relief that reigned in all six delegations at the end of the Conference made it clear just how precarious the European situation had been. While most participants had predicted discords during the conference, only a few had completely ruled out failure.

It is not, though, as if the EEC has only just been rescued. The result is better than that: the Community has been stabilised and the word 'Trust', which of late had already come into vogue again among the Six, seems to have considerably gained in credibility. Was it just the 'need to succeed' that caused this? The most important general lesson to be learnt from this meeting is the following: The participants were not satisfied with merely establishing that, 12 years after the signing of the Treaties and shortly before the transition to the final stage that will definitely start on 1 January 1970, it would be impossible for the EEC to die. On the contrary, they seriously discussed its future and how — rather theoretically at first — it will present itself in the three areas of completion, deepening and enlargement. This trinity, originally devised by the French, had already been widely discussed before the Conference, but not everything had been coordinated — far from it!

The success lies in the fact that no automatic constraints have been imposed on this trinity and that its tasks and projects could be interlinked. France has confirmed her European commitment through President Pompidou: it will no longer veto Great Britain's accession. (Although the deadline of the end of June 1970, by which the accession negotiations are to start, could no longer be included in the Communiqué, it will nevertheless apply.) By giving priority to others in The Hague, President Pompidou, the Summit's initiator, has largely contributed to the victory of the European cause. And France's specific proposals were yet to come. The conference room was not the most important scene of the action, though. Much progress was made in discussions between two or four participants or during dinner conversations. It would therefore be wrong to say that this Summit has been unnecessary and that a normal EEC Council of Ministers could have achieved the same result.

The Communiqué is rich in words such as faith, trust, resolution and determination. As the Conference asserted, however, that the Community's success had resulted in its reaching a turning point, it was unavoidable that the motives expressed when it was being established should be ousted once again. These cannot be considered mere clichés. What the individual will is supposed to achieve has been set out as a programme, to be implemented by the EEC's competent authorities.

This includes: a definitive scheme for funding agricultural policy, a better agricultural production policy, a phased plan for the transition towards a proper Economic and Monetary Union, technological activity, research programmes, youth exchanges. The order of the agricultural market, hardly comprehensible any more even for the experts, is therefore still wide open, with all its risks. The Communiqué touches only slightly upon political cooperation: it will be the duty of the Foreign Ministers to think about this 'with the prospect of enlargement', which means that future Member States — and they will come — should already be taken into consideration. Some problems may be lurking here. More rights for the European Parliament — this is welcome news; let us just hope that Paris, above all, will give way.

All the projects listed in the Communiqué are good, but one could also say that they all *have to be* implemented if the EEC is not to come to a standstill. The Conference has fulfilled its European duty, although it has not yet conquered new dimensions or opened up doors to these. Giving out individual marks would be quite inappropriate, but it is nevertheless obvious that Franco-German cooperation has proven its worth, that Pompidou and Brandt have recognised the 'seriousness of the situation'. This still does not mean, however, that their interests are identical. The EEC has remained true to the Treaties; it now presents itself

in such a way that there is hope again for European unity to develop out of it. This will not happen in the near future, though.