

Communication from the liaison office of the free trade unions of the ECSC countries (Venice, 29 May 1956)

Caption: On 29 May 1956, the liaison office of the free trade-unions of the Member States of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) forwards to the President of the Venice Conference of Foreign Ministers a resolution in which it sets out its expectations with regard to the Common Market and Euratom.

Source: Archives Nationales du Luxembourg, Luxembourg. Organisations internationales. Conférence intergouvernementale pour le Marché commun et l'Euratom. Conférence des ministres des Affaires étrangères à Venise en mai 1956, AE 7690.

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Venice, 29 May 1956

Note to the Chairman of the Conference of Foreign Ministers from the liaison office of the free trade unions of the ECSC countries

The unions belonging to the ICFTU, representing 2 600 000 workers in the countries of the ECSC, request you to transmit to the conference the following resolution, which was adopted unanimously following meetings in Paris on 25 and 26 May.

The organisations taking part in the inter-union conference held in Paris on 24, 25 and 26 May 1956 propose to undertake a thorough examination of the various texts that will serve as a basis for renewal of the European initiative.

However, with reference to the Messina resolution, the OEEC report entitled 'Possible courses of action in the field of nuclear energy', the 'Joint Declaration' of the Action Committee for the United States of Europe, the resolutions of the Common Assembly of 16 March and 11 May 1956, the report of the Intergovernmental Committee established by the Messina Conference, and the resolutions of the ICFTU and the ERO,

the Conference,

Considering that the Foreign Ministers will be called on in Venice on 29 May to take decisions affecting the future of Europe, fully approves the terms of the joint declaration of the Action Committee for the United States of Europe. The accredited representatives of the free trade union movement who helped draw up that document faithfully expressed the ideas and aspirations of the workers, especially with regard to the use of atomic energy exclusively for peaceful purposes, and to the safety of the workforce and the population at large.

Furthermore, addressing the Foreign Ministers on the eve of their next meeting, the Trade Union Conference

(1) recalls that the workers' organisations wish to see the treaty establishing the general common market concluded as soon as possible, and that, in particular, given the energy situation in Europe and the great efforts made by the USA and USSR in the realm of atomic energy, the creation of Euratom cannot be delayed much longer without serious consequences for peace, economic development and living standards,

(2) regrets that the 'Brussels report' makes no mention of workers' representation vis-à-vis the European Commission of the Common Market and the Euratom Executive,

(3) requests that, if a consultative committee of the kind envisaged in the Action Committee's joint declaration is set up for the general common market and for Euratom, its mandate should be wider than in the case of the ECSC, and workers' representation on it should be fairer,

(4) calls, with reference to the experience of the ECSC, for the creation of organisations with extensive economic and social powers that ensure active workers' participation at all levels,

(5) desires the implementation of the Brussels report to provide extensive guarantees regarding imperative social demands.

Lastly, the conference notes with satisfaction the ideas set out in chapter 1 of the third part of the Brussels report. It considers that, pending the extension of economic integration to all forms of energy through the general common market, the ECSC institutions should be instructed to undertake consultations and studies, and to make recommendations, on the whole energy sector. It should be part of the ECSC institutions' mandate to contribute to cooperation and harmonisation in this vast domain.