

## Aide-mémoire by the Government of the United Kingdom (19 March 1952)

**Caption:** On 19 March 1952, the United Kingdom submits to the Council of Europe an aide-mémoire which proposes that political authority over the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Defence Community (EDC) be given to the Council of Europe.

**Source:** Archives historiques du Conseil de l'Europe - Historical archives of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg. Functions and the Future of the C.E. 1949, 00125, Vol. 2, 18/3/52-17/5/52.

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**URL:** [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/aide\\_memoire\\_by\\_the\\_government\\_of\\_the\\_united\\_kingdom\\_19\\_march\\_1952-en-76fe825f-7afd-4e2f-8321-5f4d3bdba17c.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/aide_memoire_by_the_government_of_the_united_kingdom_19_march_1952-en-76fe825f-7afd-4e2f-8321-5f4d3bdba17c.html)

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### Committee of Ministers

#### Tenth Session

#### First Meeting of the Ministers' Deputies

1. The Agenda of the meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe which opens in Paris on the 19th March includes a number of items which raise the question of the future rôle of Strasbourg in the development of the European Community which is gradually taking shape in the form of the European Defence Community and the Schuman Plan.

2. The movement for unity in Europe, which led to the creation of the Council of Europe, is now flowing along two main streams: the Atlantic Community, a wide association of states which without formal surrender of sovereignty is achieving increasing unity of purpose and action through the machinery of the North Atlantic Organisation, and the European Community, a smaller group of states which is moving towards political federation by the progressive establishment of organisations exercising supranational powers in limited fields. The Council of Europe seems to be in danger of becoming stranded between these two streams.

3. In an attempt to acquire "limited authority but real powers", the Assembly has produced a draft new Statute of the Council of Europe, which will be on the agenda at the next session of the Committee of Ministers. This transforms what is now a purely consultative body into a quasi-Federal institution with legislative and executive powers and the right to be consulted by member Governments on certain matters within its competence. If the new Statute were adopted it would undoubtedly make things very difficult for the United Kingdom.

4. In Mr. Eden's view, a more promising future for the Council of Europe would lie in a remodelling of the organisation so that its organs could serve as the institutions of the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Defence Community and any future organisations of the same structure and membership. The advantages would be:

(a) The Council of Europe would be given valuable work to do;

(b) The duplication of European bodies would be avoided;

(c) The European Coal and Steel Community and the European Defence Community would be provided with ready-made machinery.

5. Mr. Eden hopes that the Committee of Ministers will agree that this possibility is worthy of study. The Council of Europe has already served a useful purpose as the mainspring of plans for European unity and any adjustment which is now made to bring it into focus with the European Community would be a logical development of the rôle which it has so far played. It will of course be necessary to consider the position in the reconstituted Council of Europe of those countries which are not members of the Schuman Plan and the E.D.C.: but Mr. Eden is confident that a satisfactory "two tier" system could be evolved which would enable the Council of Europe to continue its work as an organisation for intergovernmental cooperation in Western Europe. On occasions the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly could meet on a 6-power basis to transact business connected with the Coal and Steel Community, the Defence Community and any future organisations of the same type and membership. At the same time both the Committee of Ministers and the Assembly would continue to meet on a 15-power basis as at present for the purposes defined in Article 1 of the Statute. In particular, the present practice of receiving and discussing reports from the O.E.E.C. should be maintained. The full Council would also discuss questions relating to the European Community which were of general interest to Western Europe.

6. Mr. Eden is anxious that M. Schuman should be aware of his views before the meeting of the Committee of Ministers when he hopes that they will serve as a basis for a full and frank discussion on the future of the



Council of Europe.

British Embassy,  
Paris