

The Noordwijk Conference

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The Noordwijk Conference

The Foreign Ministers of the Six met in Noordwijk, near The Hague, on 6 September 1955, under the chairmanship of Johan Willem Beyen, Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The purpose of the conference was to clarify the way in which the steering committee worked, to hear an interim report by Paul-Henri Spaak, Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee set up by the Messina Conference, and to examine the progress made in the technical activities of the committee he chaired. Mr Spaak had to inform his colleagues, however, that the work done in the fields of transport and conventional energy had shown up major difficulties. He also emphasised the importance of agricultural issues. Lastly, he requested that the committee's term of office be extended by two months to give him more time to prepare his final report.

A press release issued after the meeting stated that ministers thanked Mr Spaak for the report he presented. They noted with satisfaction that the Brussels committee had accomplished a great deal, in the area of the common market as also in the areas of transport and nuclear and conventional energy. Yet the six ministers were as yet unable to take any major decision. In fact, it turned out that it was still too early for them to be able to announce any concrete results to the press, which in some cases concluded, therefore, that activities had reached an impasse.