

Note from the Interim Commission on the organisation of the WEU Assembly (London, 29 April 1955)

Caption: Note from the Interim Commission of Western European Union (WEU), dated 15 April 1955, on the issues surrounding the establishment and organisation of the WEU Assembly.

Source: National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>, Records of international organizations, DG. Copies of records of the Brussels Treaty Organisation and Western European Union. Brussels Treaty Organisations and Western European Union: Microfilm copies of files, DG 1.

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BRUSSELS TREATY ORGANISATION

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W.E.U. 1st MARCH 198929th April, 1955.INTERIM COMMISSIONNOTE ON THE ORGANISATION OF THE ASSEMBLY
OF WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

The Seven Western European Union Governments have given preliminary consideration to the problems involved in the creation of the Western European Union Assembly and, in so doing, they have had the advantage of having before them Resolution No. 67 of 1954 of the Consultative Assembly. The final solution of these problems can only be reached in agreement between the Council of Western European Union and the Assembly of Western European Union, neither of which will come into existence until the Paris Agreements have entered into force, and the Seven Governments are at present the less inclined to frame firm conclusions because they believe that many of these problems are essentially matters for the Assembly and they accordingly wish to leave wide latitude to the Assembly representatives to formulate their own views. Nevertheless, they think they should provide a measure of guidance in the belief that it will be helpful to the Assembly representatives when they come to consider these problems to know the attitude of Governments.

Relations with the Council of Europe

2. Western European Union and the Council of Europe have the common aim of promoting European unity. It is thus essential that the two Organisations, and notably the two Assemblies, should work closely and harmoniously together; that they should develop the closest possible relations and avoid duplication of machinery and work. By laying down that the representatives to the two Assemblies should be the same persons, the Governments believe they have provided the closest possible practical link between the two Assemblies.

3. These aims will be the more readily attainable if the Western European Union Assembly normally meets in Strasbourg immediately before or after the Consultative Assembly. The Governments are thus in full agreement with Part II, 1, of Resolution 67. Equally they are in full sympathy with Part II, 2 and 3, as conducive to the development of close and harmonious relations between the two Assemblies.

4. Relations .../

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4. Relations between the two Organisations can also, as suggested in Part B of Resolution 67, be usefully developed on the basis of the existing Agreement between the Secretaries-General of the Brussels Treaty Organisation and the Council of Europe. In this connection, it would seem appropriate that the Council's Annual Report to the Assembly should, with the exception of passages describing activities of exclusive concern to Western European Union, also be made available to the Consultative Assembly.

Composition of the Assembly

5. No new agreement is required to provide for the creation or the membership of the Western European Union Assembly, since the necessary provision exists in Article IX of the Brussels Treaty. There should be the same arrangements for substitutes in the Western European Union Assembly as in the Consultative Assembly.

Powers, Organisation and Working Methods of the Assembly

6. The powers, organisation and working methods of the new Assembly should correspond to those of the Consultative Assembly, adapted in the measure necessary to make them suitable for Western European Union. This principle, which is expressed in Part A I of Resolution 67, should also apply to the budgetary arrangements, which do not seem to call for special handling as is suggested in Part II, 7 and 8, of the same Resolution.

7. Apart from discussing the Annual Report presented by the Council and making recommendations on it to the Council where appropriate, the Assembly might also discuss and make appropriate recommendations upon any matters coming within the purview of Western European Union. It would draw up its own agenda and, in doing so, should strive to avoid duplication with the Consultative Assembly.

8. It is assumed the Assembly will wish to draw up its own Rules of Procedure. These might be modelled on the Rules of Procedure of the Consultative Assembly, adapted as necessary to make them suitable for Western European Union.

9. In order to avoid unnecessary duplication of machinery the Assembly might with advantage refrain from establishing automatically all the committees provided for in Rule 40 of the Rules of Procedure of the Consultative Assembly and only set up committees for subjects common to both Assemblies as specific need for them arises.

Relations between the Assembly and the Council

10. The Annual Report of the Council would normally be presented to the Assembly by the Chairman or by one of the other members of the Council. The Report on the Saar might on occasion be presented by the Saar Commissioner himself. These Reports would be made available in good time before the opening of the Assembly session so that they can be communicated to all representatives in advance, but the exact period need not be laid down by Statute and can be settled later. The Council will certainly wish to provide full information to the Assembly in order to enable the latter to discuss and reply to the Report in the light of full knowledge of the circumstances.

The questioning .../

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The questioning of officials, as suggested in Part II,6 of Resolution 67, a matter liable to cause difficulty, should be carefully studied, and this subject could be examined later between the Council and Assembly representatives.

11. It will also be necessary to consider whether any special machinery should be set up in order to maintain close and continuous relations between the Council and the Assembly. One possibility would be the creation of a Joint Committee composed of Ministers and Assembly representatives corresponding to the Joint Committee of the Council of Europe. In the case of Western European Union the problem should be the easier to resolve because the Council, unlike the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, is organised to exercise its functions continuously.

Secretariat

12. It is necessary to devise arrangements which would reconcile

- (a) the separate identity of the Assembly;
- (b) the need for close links between the two Assemblies;
- (c) economy of manpower and expenditure.

13. This reconciliation has been attempted in the plan proposed in Resolution 67 (Part II 9) but the arrangements there suggested seem to present certain difficulties, notably the suggestion that the Clerk of the Western European Union Assembly should also be Deputy Clerk of the Consultative Assembly, since this suggests that he would not be solely the servant of Western European Union.

14. Other arrangements seem preferable :

- (a) Some Governments suggest that the Clerk should be appointed by the Assembly on the nomination of the Council and should be a member of the Secretariat of Western European Union. He could thus perform, in addition to his services to the Assembly, certain functions in the London Secretariat. His appointment would be preceded by consultation between the Assembly and the Council about the nomination to be submitted to the Assembly for their approval.

b) In order .../

(+) The French Government reserved its position on this subject.

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- (b) In order to emphasise the Assembly's independence of the Council, other Governments would prefer that the Clerk should not be a member of the W.E.U. Secretariat; for reasons of economy, the Clerk to be appointed would only need to be present during sessions of the Assembly and of the Committees.

15. If text(a) were adopted, the Clerk of the Assembly would be assisted by a Secretariat consisting of:

- i) members of the London Secretariat of W.E.U.;
- ii) members of the Secretariat of the Council of Europe, who would be placed at his disposal under arrangements to be agreed between the two Organisations.

The dividing line between these two categories would fall to be settled in the light of practical experience.

Category 1 would consist, in addition to the Clerk,

1st alternative text "of senior officials required to act as Secretaries for Assembly Committees dealing with subjects falling outside the scope of the Council of Europe. For the purpose of servicing Assembly Committees dealing with subjects common to both Assemblies, the necessary Secretariat staff should preferably be drawn from the Council of Europe Secretariat".

2nd alternative text "of the senior officials of the Assembly Secretariat".

Category 2 would form the bulk of the Secretariat and would cover all technical services (interpreters, translators, minute-writers, typists, etc.).

If text(b) were adopted, the Clerk not being a member of the London Secretariat, in the interval between sessions a very small permanent staff would be responsible for the reception and distribution of documents, and also for the necessary arrangements for meetings. During the sessions, the Secretariat staff would be increased by the addition of technical staff borrowed from the Council of Europe Secretariat.

Links to be established between the Western European Union and the European Coal and Steel Community

16. The relationship to be established between these two bodies can only be determined in the light of future developments. It may well be desirable to conclude an agreement between the two Organisations but it seems premature at present to provide for the communication of any report by one Organisation to the other.

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