

‘EEC tones down Werner plan to suit France’ from The Financial Times (3 November 1970)

Caption: On 3 November 1970, the British daily newspaper The Financial Times comments on the position of the European Commission with regard to the achievement by stages of economic and monetary union. The Commission is generally in favour of the proposals contained in the Werner Report, but — well aware of France's reservations over some federalist elements of the plan — it proposes that the transfer of national powers be limited to what is absolutely necessary to ensure the efficacy of the Community's action.

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EEC tones down Werner plan to suit France

BY REGINALD DALE, COMMON MARKET CORRESPONDENT

THE Common Market Commission has toned down some of the more supranational elements in the so-called Werner Plan for economic and monetary union in the Community by 1980—mainly so as not to upset the French Government.

In a resolution to be sent for approval by the Six's Council of Ministers later this year, the Commission avoids any mention of the new Community "decision-making centre" suggested by the Werner report. Instead, the Commission says that any transfer of power that may take place should be in favour of the existing Community institutions.

The Commission has also refrained from inviting the member states to make a specific commitment to revising the Treaty of Rome by the end of the first three-year phase of the move to economic and monetary union. The proposed resolution says that this should be done only if it should prove necessary.

The Commission's paper equally avoids a direct reference to the need to strengthen the European Parliament to supervise the increased power that will be acquired by the Community's institutions. The Commission prefers to talk instead about "democratic control at Community level."

Take into account

The Commission, of course, still believes that economic and monetary union must give the Community an increasingly supranational character. But its immediate objective is simply to get work under way on the first stage without stirring up too much controversy over the final objectives.

The Commission is clearly taking into account in the text of its resolution the doubts about the institutional aspects of economic and monetary union now being expressed in Paris. What it wants to avoid at all costs

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is a renewal of the wrangle between France and her partners over supranationality—a fresh outburst of which might delay the implementation of the whole plan.

At a later stage, it is thought here, the French will become more amenable to increasing supranational control over member states' economic and monetary policies. It will certainly be insisted on by the Germans—who will be bearing most of the monetary burden—and the Dutch who will be pressing for strengthened Community institutions for their own sake.

The Commission's resolution is accompanied by two concrete proposals for the first steps towards economic and monetary union, which would allow the first stage to start at the beginning of next year. These cover greater co-operation between central banks and closer co-ordination of the member States' economies.