

The Val Duchesse negotiations

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On 26 June 1956, [the heads of delegation of the Six](#) met at the Belgian Foreign Ministry in Brussels to determine the rules of procedure for the Intergovernmental Conference on the Common Market and Euratom. This conference was held over several sessions to lay the groundwork for the drafting of the Treaties establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom).

- [Negotiations for the Rome Treaties \(1955–1956\)](#)
- [The resumption of negotiations at Val Duchesse \(Brussels, 1956\)](#)
- [The Château de Val Duchesse](#)

Belgian Foreign Minister Paul-Henri Spaak was again appointed to chair the Intergovernmental Conference, which comprised two groups responsible for examining the technical issues involved in drafting each of the treaties, using the Spaak Report as a basis:

- the Common Market Group;
- the Euratom Group.

The Intergovernmental Conference was made up of national delegations from the Six. Experts from the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and several officials from national administrations also took part in the technical discussions, as did representatives of trade unions and employers' organisations.

While work in the Euratom Group proceeded at a satisfactory pace, the negotiations in the Common Market Group proved more difficult. Some members reopened questions that had already been resolved in the Spaak Report, while others suggested that a number of subgroups be set up to carry out various more or less academic tasks. The French and German delegations found it very hard to compromise on issues including the harmonisation of employment-related costs before the shift to phase two of the common market transition period; the establishment of the common external tariff (CET); how to link the overseas countries and territories (OCTs) to the EEC; competition rules; and the introduction of the institutional system.

- [Interview with Hans-August Lückner: the attitude of the participants in the Val Duchesse negotiations \(Bonn, 15 May 2006\)](#)

It would require all the negotiators' political will, Paul-Henri Spaak's diplomatic skills, and prompting by the Foreign Ministers in order to make progress in the final negotiations held at Val Duchesse, near Brussels, in the winter of 1956 to 1957.

- [Cartoon by Behrendt on Paul-Henri Spaak's role in the preparations for the Rome Treaties \(17 February 1957\)](#)
- [Interview with André Dubois: Paul-Henri Spaak's role \(Brussels, 8 December 2006\)](#)
- ['How the Common Market was born in the Château of Val Duchesse' from Communauté européenne \(March 1967\)](#)