

The failure of the European Defence Community (EDC)

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In the summer of 1950, spurred on by the outbreak of the Korean War in June which had made the communist threat a reality, Jean Monnet, General Commissioner of the French National Planning Board and the man behind the Schuman Plan, sought to organise European defence on a supranational basis comparable to that laid down in the Schuman proposal. At the same time, the USA asked their allies to plan for the rearmament of West Germany. Jean Monnet put his proposal to René Plevin, French Premier and former Defence Minister, who in turn submitted it to the French National Assembly on 24 October 1950.

The plan proposed the creation of a European army, with the eventual involvement of German units, to be placed under a single military and political European authority. This proposal sparked fierce debate in France. Although it was accepted by most Western countries, the [plan for a European Defence Community \(EDC\) was rejected by the French National Assembly in August 1954](#). The refusal of the French National Assembly to ratify the Treaty establishing the EDC automatically led to the plan for a European Political Community, of which it was the institutional corollary, being abandoned.

France's course of action met with considerable consternation in Western Europe and the United States. France, which had for many years been the champion of the European cause, found itself seriously discredited by its refusal to ratify the EDC Treaty. There was intense disappointment, and a rapid response was required.

- [Interview with Egon Bahr: the collapse of the European Defence Community \(Metz, 10 June 2006\)](#)
- [The military, economic and political integration of Europe \(1952\)](#)