

Extract from minutes of the 304th meeting of the WEU Council concerning the reply to Assembly Recommendation 137 (26 October 1966)

Caption: The minutes of the 304th meeting of the Council of Western European Union (WEU), held on 26 October 1966, provide details of the debates between the delegations, particularly the French and British delegations, concerning the reply that should be given to Recommendation 137 of the WEU Parliamentary Assembly on the state of European security, France and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). French Ambassador de Courcel is opposed to the first version of the reply as advocated by the United Kingdom. France therefore puts forward another wording which confirms that no WEU member countries have the intention of going back on their commitments under the Modified Brussels Treaty. If this suggestion is rejected, he does not appear to be willing to compromise.

Source: Council of the Western European Union. Extract from minutes of 304th meeting of WEU Council held on 26 October 1966. CR (66)21. pp.1;10. Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux). <http://www.anlux.lu>. Western European Union Archives. Secretariat-General/Council's Archives. 1954-1987. Organs of the Western European Union. Year: 1966, 01/06/1966-30/11/1966. File 202.414.20. Volume 1/1.

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EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF 304th MEETING CR (66)21OF W.E.U. COUNCIL HELD ON 26 Oct. 1966II QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE ASSEMBLY2. Draft Replies to Assembly Recommendationsb) Recommendation 137

The CHAIRMAN reminded delegates that they had discussed this Recommendation, which was particularly important in present circumstances, at their last meeting. A reply should be forthcoming if the Council wished to avoid the subsistence of a serious doubt as to the determination of their members to continue to apply the provisions of the Brussels Treaty.

As regards paragraph one, the first version had been approved by the German, British, Netherlands and Belgian delegations; Italy and Luxembourg could agree to either version.

The second version was supported by the French, and might be agreed by the Luxembourg delegation, although they would prefer the first text. The Italian delegation also preferred the first version but suggested that the text proposed by the French delegation be studied ad referendum in a constructive spirit.

Two compromise solutions had been tabled, one modifying the first version as follows: "... unreservedly committed to fulfilling all obligations contained in the modified Brussels Treaty of 1954". This would of course cover Article V, without actually mentioning it. The second compromise proposal, designed to take account of the explanation given by the French delegation to the Council, would consist in replacing the word "still" by "naturally".

M. de COURCEL said that his delegation could not accept the first version of the first paragraph as seen in WPM (546). Moreover, the wording proposed by France seemed to offer a completely satisfactory answer on the points of concern to the Assembly. In any case, it was not for the Council to renew the undertaking which derived from a treaty in force. He proposed, however, a new second version of the same paragraph which would read as follows:

"So far as the Council are aware, no Government of a member country of Western European Union has declared its intention of going back on commitments entered into when signing the Brussels Treaty."

Mr. van ROIJEN considered this new text unacceptable. If it were not possible to get agreement on this point, there should be no reply to the Recommendation.

M. GUIDOTTI favoured the first version, which gave the Assembly a clear answer. However, as this was unacceptable to the French delegation, he suggested that discussion be resumed at the next meeting, taking into account the new French text which he would transmit to his Government.

Lord HOOD preferred to give a clear answer to the Assembly's question and the first version did this.

Mr. BLANKENHORN would submit the new text to his Government, but he thought it might lead to certain interpretations which would not be useful.

M. de COURCEL felt that if it were not possible to answer along the lines he had just proposed, it was to be feared that no reply could be made to the Assembly.

Delegations agreed to consult their Governments further and to rediscuss this Recommendation at a forthcoming meeting.