

Secretary-General's note for the meeting of the seven Foreign Ministers on 18 December (14 December 1954)

Caption: On 14 December 1954, the Secretary-General of Western European Union (WEU) circulates a note drafted by the Interim Commission for the meeting at ministerial level scheduled for 18 December (document IWG/20). Following the previous discussions (documents IWG/8 and IWG/10), the Commission has adopted the principle that no organisation or non-member country should be systematically represented within the Council or its subsidiary bodies. Moreover, in order to promote cooperation between WEU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the Commission suggests that contact should be established between the Secretaries-General of WEU and NATO and that a NATO observer should be invited whenever the WEU Council considers it appropriate.

Source: The Interim Commission. Secretary-General's note for the meeting of the Seven Foreign Ministers in Paris, 18th december 1954. 14.12.1952. IWG/16. Copy No 73. 3 p. Archives nationales de Luxembourg (ANLux). <http://www.anlux.lu>. Western European Union Archives. Secretariat-General/Council's Archives. 1954-1987. BTO 1 12th - Consultative Council - 14th Meeting - Paris - April 1954. Year: 1954, 15/03/1954-30/12/1954. File BTO-012. Volume 1/1.

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14th December, 1954

WESTERN EUROPEAN UNION

THE INTERIM COMMISSION

Secretary-General's Note

for the Meeting of the Seven Foreign Ministers

in Paris, 18th December, 1954

The Interim Commission set up by the Nine-Power Conference has met six times since 29th October; for each of the problems relating to the creation of the constituent bodies of Western European Union, it has endeavoured to find the solution most likely to meet the wishes of Governments, in particular as regards the following points.

1. Permanent Structure of the Council

The Commission considers that, at ministerial level, Governments should normally be represented by their Foreign Ministers, assisted where necessary by their colleagues of the technical Ministries. It would be for each country to decide its own system of permanent representation.

2. Machinery for fulfilling the Permanent Military Tasks of the Council

Since the Agency, within the rôle assigned to it by the Paris Agreements, would be the only military body to be set up within Western European Union, the Council could seek advice on matters of defence either by applying to NATO, as a general rule, or by other methods to be decided in the light of each special case, such as by calling a meeting of the Chiefs of Staff of the Brussels Treaty countries, a possibility foreseen as far back as 1951.

3. Machinery for maintaining and extending the present Activities of the Brussels Treaty Organisation

The Commission considers that, subject to any future decision on the part of the Council, the present committee structure in the Social and Cultural spheres should be maintained, as should the preliminary meetings held on the occasion of the General Assemblies of the United Nations, ECOSOC and Unesco, in which Germany and Italy are anxious to participate.

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As regards OEEC, it would appear advisable not to encroach on the territory of that Organisation, although such a policy should not in any way prejudice future economic cooperation between the Seven Powers.

4. Relationship with other International Organisations and with Countries who are not signatory to the Brussels Treaty

The Commission, desirous of affirming the individual character of Western European Union, agreed in principle that there should be no permanent or regular representation within the Council or its subsidiary bodies of other Organisations or non-Member countries.

The principle of close collaboration with NATO having been agreed, the Commission, seeking to evolve the most efficient means of putting it into effect, invited Lord Ismay to attend one of its meetings. It was agreed that, whilst experience alone would show what was the best procedure for ensuring this collaboration, contacts should be established between the Secretaries-General of the two Organisations and NATO would be invited to send observers whenever the Council of Western European Union considered their presence desirable. The Commission has requested the Secretary-General to draw their attention to those questions which may be of interest to NATO, so that representatives can be invited in good time to take part in discussions.

The same considerations have led the Commission to agree to invite the Governments of the United States and Canada to send an observer whenever questions of mutual interest are being studied, a formula which would seem appropriate in the case of meetings of the Council.

This procedure would probably meet the wish of the United States Government, expressed in a Memorandum submitted to the Commission, to take part in the discussion of certain questions, including those relating to the Saar.

Certain delegations would like to draw the attention of Ministers to the relations between Western European Union and the E.C.S.C.

5. Organisation of the Assembly of Western European Union

The Commission considers that meetings of the Assembly might for the sake of greater convenience be held in Strasbourg at the same time as those of the Consultative Assembly, making use of the administrative facilities available in the Maison de l'Europe.

Since the Ministers, when they attend the meeting of Ministers of the Council of Europe, will be considering the Resolution adopted by the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe at its Meeting of the 11th December dealing with the Assembly of the Union and the form of liaison to be established between the Union and the Council of Europe, they will no doubt wish to hold a preliminary exchange of views on this subject, noting in particular the following points :

- a) Representation of the Council of Western European Union at the Committees of the Assembly, through its executives and spokesmen from its subsidiary bodies (Council of Europe Document 322, II. 6)
- b) Communication of the budget of Western European Union to its Assembly (Doc. 322, II. 8)

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- c) Appointment of the Clerk to the Assembly and his relations with the Secretary-General of Western European Union (Doc. 322, II. 9);
- d) Relationship between the Assemblies of Western European Union and of E.C.S.C. (Doc. 322, C);
- e) Date of the 1st meeting of the Western European Union Assembly.

6. Agency for the Control of Armaments

Since the drafting of a scheme for the organisation of the Agency must be the responsibility of its Director, the Commission considers the appointment of this official to be a matter of immediate concern; preliminary exchanges of view have already been held on this subject between delegations.

7. Preparation for the Working Group on Arms Production and Standardisation


This meeting, due to begin in Paris on 17th January, 1955, has also been considered by the Commission, which is responsible for its organisation, and the Secretary-General has been requested to make the necessary administrative arrangements with the assistance to be provided by the French and other Governments. NATO will be invited to participate in the work of these meetings.

8. Other Questions

It has not yet been possible to deal with certain questions such as the working out of agreements on internal Defence Forces and Police, the definition of A. B. C. weapons, the study of special arrangements for settling disputes about the interpretation and application of the Treaty and its Protocols, and problems arising from the Franco-German Agreement on the Saar, either because their settlement is considered to be less urgent than that of other questions or because more information is needed before their study can be undertaken.

Finally, the Interim Commission has requested a number of Working Groups to submit schemes for the settlement of legal, financial and administrative matters relating to the Council and its bodies. The drafting of these documents is proceeding simultaneously with the consideration of political issues.

At the conclusion of its studies, the Interim Commission intends to present Governments with a draft General Report on the structure of Western European Union, thus completing the mission assigned to it.


2 Eaton Place,
S.W.1.