

## **FOREIGN OFFICE FILES FOR POST-WAR EUROPE**

### **Series One: The Schuman Plan and the European Coal and Steel Community**

**Part 1:** 1950-1953

**Part 2:** 1954-1955

**Part 3:** 1956-1957

#### *Publisher's Note*

*"FO 371 Files are the crucial UK source for the 'insider's view' at the Foreign Office over the whole Schuman Plan and ECSC scheme, providing primary data and intelligence on the early years of operation."*

**Dr Martin Dedman**

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Within this microfilm collection of British Foreign Office Files can be found documents that relate directly to the fundamental questions of European co-operation and integration. The foundation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in April 1951 was the first significant move towards European Union, requiring countries to forsake a degree of national sovereignty and accept a supranational authority. Proposed by French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman and drafted by Jean Monnet, head of the French Planning Commission, it made clear from the outset its federal objectives:

*"The pooling of coal and steel production will immediately provide for the establishment of common bases for economic development as a first step in the federation of Europe, and will change the destinies of those regions which have long been devoted to the munitions of war, of which they have been the most constant victims."*

These British Foreign Office Files, taken from Public Record Office Class FO 371, contain files covering all the major issues raised by the creation of the ECSC. As well as looking at the ramifications of the pooling of European coal and steel production, these documents investigate the wider issues stemming from this move for both Britain, and continental Europe, such as:

- The reorganisation of the German coal, iron and steel industry, with special focus on the German steel cartels and the iron and steel works in the Soviet Occupied Zone
- The relationship between the ECSC, OEEC and GATT, and the problems arising
- British fears of being isolated in the move towards Western European integration, and Britain's emphasis on maintaining close relations with America
- British plans regarding Association with the Community
- European Coal and Steel Community relations with trade unions
- Observations on German and French views concerning the problems facing the ECSC
- The development of Euratom and the possible co-operation in the field of nuclear energy

The ECSC Treaty was signed in Paris in 1951 by France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. In part, the momentum developed for such an agreement reflected the influence of key people committed to some form of "common future" for Western Europe: Schuman and Monnet in France, Adenauer in West Germany, Alcide de Gasperi and Carlo Sforza in Italy, Paul-Henri Spaak in Belgium, and Joseph Beck in Luxembourg. From 1951 onwards, it set the tone for renewed debate culminating in the establishment of the European Economic Community, a landmark reached in 1957. Britain, however, always preferring an inter-governmental rather than a federal approach, did not sign up, but nonetheless monitored the plan closely. The Foreign Office Files included in this collection contain the information and analysis that resulted from this monitoring.

The original draft of the Schuman Plan was the work of Jean Monnet, who certainly saw it as only the first step in a chain that would ultimately lead to the complete political and economic integration of Europe. Monnet became first president of the High Authority of the ECSC and remained in office until 1955, (when he was succeeded by René Mayer) during which time he continued to imprint his federalist creed upon the organisation. But what were the original motives of the French and the Germans for signing up to the Community? These papers allow scholars to study the aims and objectives of these two major players, and provide British interpretations of their actions and intentions. Key themes include:

- French views on the Schuman Plan as the first step towards effective political integration
- French desires for stability and union within Western Europe in the interests of national security, which they believed had to be based on a rapprochement between themselves and West Germany
- Security issues and the balance of power in Europe. Although France was content for Germany to remain divided, the economic growth of West Germany following the major currency reforms of 1948 meant that France wanted to keep not just a political and military, but also an economic check, on her new neighbour
- Economic advantages for France in a combined effort to grapple with the difficulties, experienced in several countries, pertaining particularly to coal and steel

Similarly West German motives can be assessed:

- Her desire to rid herself of the economic restrictions of the international Ruhr Authority, and to regain sovereignty over the coal and steel producing Saar, which still remained in French hands
- The new West German state's aspirations for achieving equality in the international arena
- Adenauer's views and interests in integration to safeguard a better future and a more advantageous economic climate

The documents in this collection allow researchers to see the ECSC in operation, to witness the problems, to judge its achievements, and to investigate how it acted as a stimulus for greater European co-operation in the years from 1951-1957. In them can be found much information on the important groundwork which laid the foundations for the creation of the economic Common Market. There are also the first signs of Britain's continuing ambiguous relationship with Europe and the idea of integration. Although the United Kingdom decided to remain outside of the formal ECSC structure, she found it vital to maintain permanent delegations in Luxembourg accredited to the High Authority.

By 1958 the effects of the ECSC were being felt, much trade discrimination had been eliminated, production and volume of trade had greatly expanded and an impetus for further integration started. On the other hand there were problems; the ECSC constantly had to wrestle with national objections and intransigence; the French in particular continuing various policies and practices which infringed the terms of the treaty. Furthermore, no solution was found to stem coal over-production. Nevertheless, despite these difficulties, the ECSC set the agenda for further European integration, and remains a topic of central importance to any scholar wishing to understand the beginnings of the European Community, and the pressure to create a federal Europe.

Part 1 of this project covers the early years of the Schuman Plan from 1950 to 1953, and deals with the key issues facing the six countries who signed the treaty, as well as the implications of Britain's decision to remain outside the organisation.

Part 2 deals with British attitudes to the Schuman Plan from 1954 to 1955, and looks at the continuing problems that the UK had in balancing her position as a European nation whilst upholding her Commonwealth obligations.

Part 3 covers the years 1956-1957 which saw the Community playing a defining role in the development of Europe, and the broadening of its interest into other areas such as nuclear power and relations with other organisations such as the UN and GATT.

*"John Young's recent historiography of Britain and Europe (in The Contemporary History Handbook edited by B Brivati, J Buxton and A Seldon) sets out a number of as yet unanswered questions about "one of the most significant debates for historians of post-war Britain". It is clear that at least some of Young's questions - and others which go beyond the British standpoint - can be more easily illuminated by the bringing together of the public records that are in this collection."*

**Professor Elizabeth Meehan**

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The Queen's University of Belfast

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#### *Technical Note*

Our microfilm publications have been prepared and produced in accordance with recommended and established guide-lines for the production of microform of superior quality. These conform to the recommendations of the standard guides to good microforming and micropublishing practice.

Attention should be drawn to the nature of the original material. A few manuscript documents consist of faintly legible correspondence and records written with a variety of inks, pens or pencils and on paper of many different types and thicknesses. A few items are stained or discoloured at the edges, or comprise material on very thin paper, which is so thin that there is show through that renders the original document difficult to read. A few items consist of carbon copies of documents and these again pose problems where the original is very faint or blurred.

These original characteristics present difficulties of image and contrast which stringent tests and camera alterations cannot entirely overcome. Every effort has been made to minimise these difficulties. Subject headings and item numbers are clearly marked. Each frame is filmed with a vertical strip target which identifies the relevant Public Record Office piece number in Class FO 371.

The Public Record Office at Kew, England, has exercised the most responsible care in the filming of this unique collection and this microfilm publication meets the standards established by the Association for Information and Image Management (AIIM) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)

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#### *Sample Extracts from Documents*

Memorandum on French proposal to establish Franco-German coal and steel authority, May 1950 [FO 371/85841]:

*"It is easier to understand the motives and timing of the French proposal than to estimate its value. French efforts since the war to establish a control of Ruhr industry have been progressively frustrated. They have realised for three years that an extra-territorial status for the Ruhr was not practical politics. Subsequent attempts to establish international ownership were equally unsuccessful. In 1947 M Bidault made the following statement at the Conference of Foreign Ministers in London:*

*'France is not opposed, and never has been opposed to the revival of a peaceful German economy, nor to the establishment of a normal standard of living for the German people. She merely asks that Germany's resources shall in no event be used for the preparation of aggression and , on the other hand, that the restoration of Germany shall not have priority over that of the Allied countries.*

*In order to comply with those requirements of security, it is necessary firstly to ensure that a special regime be applied to the Ruhr, principle centre of German mining and metal resources'..."*

Report of a meeting held in the Home Secretary's room in the House of Commons on 21 November, 1951 [FO 371/94356]

*"The meeting was called by Mr Nutting to consider the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards the Council of Europe and to decide whether any general statement of policy should be made in the consultative Assembly by the leader of the United Kingdom Delegation. It was generally agreed that a statement was desirable and that it should be as positive as possible.*

*Mr Foster hoped that we might be able to make a definite statement on our relationship with the Schuman community and the European Army. Lord Hood pointed out that the two schemes were in very different stages of development and that it would be impossible to treat them together.*

*It was, however, agreed that some statement on our position in relation to the Schuman Plan would be both possible and politically desirable. Mr Nutting suggested that the proposed statement might declare that His Majesty's Government intended, once the Schuman treaty is ratified, to establish a permanent mission at the seat of the High Authority to enter into relations and to transact business. Such a statement would, it was felt, be most warmly welcomed at Strasbourg and in Europe as a whole. The Home Secretary agreed to consult the cabinet and seek its approval."*

Note from a telegram concerning Euratom and the Common Market, October 1956 [FO 371/122037]

*"German Foreign Ministry have given us an account of the meeting which broadly agrees with the description in the telegram under reference.*

*According to this German account, this breakdown had occurred over the deadlock on harmonisation of social charges. The French maintained that their high social charges were already a burden on their exports and that they could not expect the French Assembly to ratify any treaty which did not equalise the burden all round. The Germans, who had rigid instructions on the point, had maintained that they for their part had not the power to impose by law weekly working hours over which overtime at fixed rates would be payable; this sort of thing was fixed by free bargaining. Moreover, any such provisions would make overtime in certain German industries no longer worthwhile and thus reduce the national product and national income. The other countries represented had tended to support the German view, but unlike them had been prepared to compromise with the French. The official to whom we spoke, while not committing the Federal Government, expressed the personal view that Germany would have to make some move towards a compromise..."*

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FO 371/116050 Papers for 4 October-20 October 1955  
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FO 371/116053 Papers for 11 November-14 November 1955  
FO 371/116054 Papers for 14 November-22 November 1955  
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FO 371/116056 Papers for 29 November-15 December 1955  
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#### *Brief Chronology: 1950-1958*

##### **1950**

MAY

Robert Schuman first proposes his plan to pool European coal and steel resources

JUNE

France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg begin negotiations on establishment of European Coal and Steel Community

##### **1951**

APRIL

The Treaty of Paris is signed by the 'Six' (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and Netherlands) formally establishing the ECSC

##### **1952**

FEBRUARY

King George VI dies and is succeeded by Elizabeth II  
Dwight Eisenhower becomes US President

MAY

European Defence Community treaty signed by the 'Six'

AUGUST

ECSC ratified by the six signatories of the Treaty of Paris

SEPTEMBER

First meeting of the High Authority of the ECSC

##### **1953**

MARCH

Stalin dies, replaced as Soviet Premier by Malenkov

JUNE

Giuseppe Pella succeeds Italian Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi

DECEMBER

René Coty replaces Vincent Auriol as French President

##### **1954**

MAY

French surrender at Dien Bien Phu

JUNE

Pierre Mendès-France replaces Laniel as French Premier  
Soviet Union rejects re-unification of Germany at meeting of Foreign Ministers at Berlin

AUGUST

French National Assembly fails to ratify EDC treaty, leading to its collapse, and dealing a blow to the cause of European integration

OCTOBER

Western European Union treaty signed

## DECEMBER

Britain and European Coal and Steel Community form a limited association

## 1955

### JANUARY

Soviet Union recognises West Germany

### FEBRUARY

Mendès-France's administration falls, replaced by Edgar Faure

Malenkov resigns as Soviet Premier and is replaced by Nikolay Bulganin

### APRIL

Churchill resigns as British Prime Minister and is replaced by Anthony Eden

### MAY

West Germany joins NATO

Warsaw Pact signed

Conservative Party, under Eden, wins general election.

### JUNE

Monnet resigns as President of the High Authority of ECSC; and is succeeded by René Mayer

At the Messina Conference in Italy, the Six agree to aim for further European economic integration

Austria and West Germany regain full sovereignty

### OCTOBER

Referendum in the Saar shows overwhelming support for re-integration with West Germany

## 1956

### MARCH

High Authority decides to abolish maximum coal prices

### MAY

Spaak Report approved

Elimination of remaining frontier charges in movement by rail of coal and iron ore within the ECSC

Occupation of Hungary by Soviet forces

### OCTOBER

Visit to High Authority by representatives of the Iron and Steel Board and the UK steel industry

### NOVEMBER

British and French forces invade Egypt to secure the Suez Canal

High Authority issues memorandum on the ECSC's general objectives

Eisenhower re-elected US President

## 1957

### JANUARY

The Saar region becomes a state of the Federal Republic of Germany

Eden resigns as British Prime Minister and is replaced by Harold Macmillan

### FEBRUARY

Britain proposes the European Free Trade Association

### MARCH

Treaties of Rome establish the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)

Eisenhower and Macmillan hold talks at the Bermuda Conference

## 1958

### JANUARY

Treaty of Rome enters into force

### MARCH



Schuman elected President of the European Parliamentary Assembly

JUNE

Charles de Gaulle replaces René Coty as French President

JULY

Stresa Conference lays the basis for the Common Agricultural Policy

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### *Key Personalities: 1950-1958*

#### **PRESIDENT OF THE HIGH AUTHORITY OF THE ECSC:**

Jean Monnet 1952-1955

René Mayer 1955-1958

#### **BELGIUM:**

Prime Minister

Jean Pierre Duvieusart 1950

Louis Marie Pholien 1950-1952

Jean Marie van Joutte 1952-1954

Achille van Acker 1954-1958

Gaston Eyskens 1958-1961

Foreign Minister

Paul-Henri Spaak 1938-1966

Belgian Premier 1938-1939, 1956, 1947-1949

#### **FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY:**

President

Theodor Heuss 1949-1959

Chancellor

Konrad Adenauer 1949-1963

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Konrad Adenauer 1951-1955

Heinrich von Brentano 1955-1961

#### **FRANCE:**

President

Vincent Auriol 1947-1954

René Coty 1954-1958

Charles de Gaulle 1958-1969

Premier

Henri Queuille 1950

René Pleven 1950-1951

Henri Queuille 1951

René Pleven 1951-1952

Edgar Fauré 1952

Antoine Pinay 1952-1953

René Mayer 1953

Joseph Laniel 1953-1954

Pierre Mendes-France 1954-1955

Edgar Fauré 1955-1956

Guy Mollet 1956-1957

M Bourgès-Maunoury 1957

Félix Gaillard 1957-1958

Pierre Pflimlin 1958

Charles de Gaulle 1958-1959

Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Robert Schuman 1948-1953  
Georges Bidault 1953-1954  
Pierre Mendes-France 1954-1955  
Edgar Fauré 1955  
Antoine Pinay 1955-1956  
Christian Pineau 1956-1958  
René Pleven 1958  
M Couve de Murville 1958-1968

**ITALY:**

Prime Minister  
Alcide De Gasperi 1945-1953  
Guiseppe Pella 1953-1954  
Amintore Fanfani 1954  
Mario Scelba 1954-1955  
Antonio Segni 1955-1957  
Adone Zoli 1957-1958  
Amintore Fanfani 1958-1959

Foreign Minister  
Carlo Sforza 1947-1951

**LUXEMBOURG:**

Prime Minister  
Pierre Dupong 1937-1953  
Joseph Bech 1953-1958  
Pierre Frieden 1958-1959

**NETHERLANDS:**

Prime Minister:  
William Drees 1948-1958  
Louis J M Beel 1958-1959

**GREAT BRITAIN:**

Prime Minister  
Clement Attlee 1945-1951  
Winston Churchill 1951-1955  
Anthony Eden 1955-1957  
Harold Macmillan 1957-1963

Foreign Secretary  
Ernest Bevin 1945-1951  
Herbert Morrison 1951  
Anthony Eden 1951-1955  
Harold Macmillan 1955  
Selwyn Lloyd 1955-1960

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:**

President  
Harry S Truman 1945-1953  
Dwight Eisenhower 1953-1961

US Secretary of State  
George C Marshall 1947-1949  
Dean Acheson 1949-1953  
John Foster Dulles 1953-1959

**UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS:**

General Secretary

Stalin 1922-1953

Georgii Malenkov 1953

Nikita Khrushchev 1953-1964

Premier

Stalin 1941-1953

Georgii Malenkov 1953-1955

Nikolai Bulganin 1955-1958

Nikita Khrushchev 1958-1964

Foreign Minister

Andrei Vyshinski 1949-1953

Vyacheslav Molotov 1953-1956

Dmitri Shepilov 1956-1957

Andrei Gromyko 1957-1985

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#### *Abbreviations*

COCOM - Coordinating Committee  
ECE - Economic Commission for Europe  
ECSC - European Coal and Steel Community  
EDC - European Defence Community  
EEC - European Economic Community  
EFTA - European Free Trade Area  
EPU - European Payments Union  
EURATOM - European Atomic Energy Community  
FO - Foreign Office  
FRG - Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany)  
GATT - General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade  
GDR - German Democratic Republic (East Germany)  
ILO - International Labour Organisation  
IBRD - International Bank for Reconstruction and Development  
IMF - International Monetary Fund  
NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organisation  
OEEC - Organisation for European Economic Co-operation  
UK - United Kingdom  
UN - United Nations  
US - United States  
WEU - Western European Union

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