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European integration

Report

Secretary General

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18th April 1957

Mr. President,

I have the honour to inform you that the Committee of Ministers, following the request made to it in the course of the meeting of the Joint Committee on 16th December 1956 for an annual report on the state of European integration, decided to request the Secretary-General to prepare a survey of European integration, which I transmit to you herewith.

Signed : M. Z. N. WITTEVEEN

Chairman of the Ministers' Deputies of the Council of Europe

Monsieur F. DEHOUSSE,

President of the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe, STRASBOURG

2. Survey of European integration

1. The following events which have contributed to the progress of European integration between April 1956 and April 1957 are submitted for attention.

Now measures of economic integration

2. In the course of the past twelve months a notable advance has been recorded in the economic integration of Western Europe. The Treaties establishing a Common Market and a European Atomic Authority for the peaceful use of nuclear energy (Euratom) were signed in Rome on March 25th 1957 by the six countries already members of the European Coal and Steel Community.

Nuclear energy

3. Side by side with the developments which culminated in the Rome Treaties, steps have been taken in the O. E. E. C. towards harmonising the activities of member countries in the sphere of nuclear energy. A Steering Committee was appointed on 19th July 1956, " in order to promote, co-ordinate and complement the



individual efforts of member countries " and to make proposals in the following fields : joint undertakings, security control, international trade, legislation, training and standardisation. Working Parties on all these subjects have been set up. A draft statute for a European Nuclear Agency is under discussion.

Common Market and Free Trade Area

4. In the light of the work of the Brussels Intergovernmental Conference on the preparation of the Common Market Treaty, the O. E. E. C. also set up a Working Party (July 1956) "to study the possible forms and methods of association, on a multilateral basis, between the proposed Customs Union and member countries not taking part therein ". This Working Party reached the conclusion that it would be technically possible to operate a free trade area in Europe to comprise the Customs Union and other countries. It considered the following aspects of the problem : the definition of origin of goods : the removal of tariffs and quotas : escape clauses for the transition period; once the Treaty establishing the Free Trade Area had come into force, rules of competition. It recorded its conviction that certain problems common to a Free Trade Area and the Customs Union should be resolved in an identical manner.

5. In February 1957, the United Kingdom Government circulated a proposal for the creation of an Industrial Free Trade Area in Europe, to include as many countries as possible and of which the primary purpose would be the progressive removal of tariffs and quantitative restrictions. The harmonising of disparities in social policies and regulations is not considered a necessary prior condition for the creation of the Area. The plan considers that escape clauses should be invoked only on the occasion of serious balance of payment difficulties. Foodstuffs are excluded from the United Kingdom proposal. It is thought that the Free Trade Area should be operated by the O. E. E. C., and the view is advanced that in the operation of the plan when in force " some departure from the unanimity rule in O. E. E. C. will be necessary in certain carefully defined matters ".

6. Subsequently the Council of Ministers of the O. E. E. C. meeting on 13th February 1957, decided to enter into negotiations in order to determine ways and means of establishing a European Free Trade Area.

The structure of European collaboration

7. The structure of European institutions has received attention. The Assembly will recall its Recommendation 73 of 7th July 1955 on the duplication of work between European organisations. It was in the light of this Recommendation that the Committee of Ministers instructed the Secretary-General to invite the Secretaries-General of other European organisations, including also the European Coal and Steel Community and the International Labour Organisation, to a meeting to discuss questions of overlapping in day-to-day activities. At this meeting it was agreed that there would be advantage in holding periodical meetings in order to pool knowledge and experience, and thus enable each organisation to advise its respective controlling authorities more effectively on the best practical course of action in the study of a particular problem. In consequence, a decision was taken to set up a Consultative Committee of Secretaries-General which will hold a first meeting shortly at which it will examine the programme of the organisations concerned with regard to social questions and to the studies being made in this field in connection with the establishment of a Common Market.

8. The Secretary-General reported on the meeting at the Nineteenth Session of the Committee of Ministers, who on that occasion recorded their opinion that " a comprehensive study should in due course be made of the institutional structure of European collaboration ". They instructed the Secretary-General to approach the Secretary-General of the O. E. E. C. with a view to preparing a report on the respective competences of the two organisations, on their present working relations, and on measures which might be taken to introduce more effective collaboration between them. This report has now been completed by the Acting Secretary-General of the Council of Europe after consultation with the Secretary-General of the O. E. E. C. and is under consideration by the Committee of Ministers.

9. By its decision of 12th February 1957, the Council of W. E. U. decided to make a study of the closer association and the possible ultimate unification of the European Assemblies. The relations of the Assemblies of the Six with the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Assembly of W. E. U. are also being considered by the Interim Committee set up by the signatory Powers of the treaties of Euratom and the Common Market, which has been instructed to make all the necessary studies and contacts to this end. It will be recalled that a Resolution attached to the Rome Treaties declares that " liaison as close as possible between the various European institutions is highly desirable". It goes on to state that it is necessary " to

examine thoroughly and in detail the conditions under which organic links can be established between the Assembly of the European Economic Community, Euratom, and E. C. S. C., on the one hand, and the Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Assembly of W. E. U., on the other ".

The parliamentary role

10. In the above context the three European Assemblies have been unanimous that in the event of further integration no fourth European Assembly should be created. A delegation of the three Bureaux of the European Assemblies conveyed this opinion to the Conference of Ministers of the Six in Brussels on 4th February. In a memorandum sent to the Conference later the three Bureaux emphasised that membership of any new Assembly of the Six might later be revised by means of a protocol, should it subsequently be decided to hold direct elections. The memorandum concluded that " at a later stage it would be advisable to provide for the absorption of the new Assembly in a single European Assembly ". The possibility of direct elections to the Assembly of Western European Union was advanced by M. Gaetano Martino, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, on 10th December 1956, when he suggested that the Assembly of W. E. U. might be directly elected with power to make proposals which would be put into effect if approved later by national parliaments.

European staff problems

11. Following the initiative of the Committee of Ministers a working party of Government representatives and members of European organisations have held a number of meetings to consider problems affecting the staff structure, recruitment, serving conditions and pensions of European personnel. The following organisations are represented in this group : the Central Rhine Commission, the European Community of Coal and Steel, the Customs Co-operation Council, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, Western European Union, the European Commission for Nuclear Research. Government experts from the following countries are taking part : Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

A common European policy

12. Events of the year, notably in eastern Europe and the Middle East, have contributed to discussions concerning a common European policy within the framework of existing organisations. The urgency of such a policy was recalled by the Committee of Ministers in its Resolution (56) 23 : " The international situation makes it increasingly urgent for Member States to formulate and apply a common policy on all questions of vital concern to Europe". On specific issues, notably on Hungary, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, both organs of the Council of Europe have contributed towards making such a policy articulate.

Human Rights

13. The European Convention on Human Rights provides the means whereby member countries of the Council of Europe have secured the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The European Commission set up by the Convention to watch over the observance of the rights protected has sat frequently during the year in question in order to examine numerous cases submitted under the Right of Individual Petition, Article 25. The first complaint to be brought by a signatory State against another signatory State under the terms of the Convention was laid before the Commission during the year—and is still under examination.

Economic problems

14. The O. E. E. C. has continued its efforts for the progressive liberalisation of intra-European trade. At the same time increasing attention has been given to the problem of reducing trade barriers other than quotas. In the field of payments, discussion has turned on the problem of disequilibrium within the European Payments Union.

15. In the light of the oil shortage arising from the Suez crisis, the O. E. E. C. took action to safeguard overseas oil supplies to Europe, particularly from the Western hemisphere and to ensure their equitable distribution.

An integration balance-sheet

16. During the current year M. Pierre Wigny presented his report to the Common Assembly, 12th February 1957, entitled " Rapport morah— Le témoignage de la Communauté sur elle-même ". M. Wigny's general conclusions, based on the experience of four years, are, first, that a common market over a limited field, that of coal and steel, has not acted to the detriment of other industries in the Community; secondly, that institutions have played an important and necessary part in implementing the Treaty; third, that a common market is a factor representing economic and social advance in the contemporary world.

Social conventions

17. Social questions continue to play an increasingly important part in the overall picture of integration :
- a. The problem of migrant workers has been of especial concern to the E. C. S. C, who have studied this question more especially from the angle of re-adaptation.
 - b. The Committee of Experts on Social Security of the Council of Europe has on its agenda the preparation of a convention safeguarding the social security rights of migrant workers and their families. Consideration has been given, first in the Assembly, later in the Committee of Ministers, to a draft European Convention or European Social Charter, guaranteeing certain social and economic rights and intended to complete the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights. Discussions are now being continued on an intergovernmental basis in the Social Committee of the Council of Europe, which will be making a first report to the Committee of Ministers in July 1957. A draft European Code of Social Security has been transmitted to the Consultative Assembly for an opinion. A draft Protocol to the Code, providing for considerably higher standards of social security, has been prepared by the Committee of Experts on Social Security and will shortly be submitted to the Committee of Ministers.
 - c. The Parties to the Convention on Student Employees concluded by the Brussels Treaty Powers on 17th April 1950 have invited other member countries of the Council of Europe to adhere to this Convention if they so desire.

The refugee problem

18. The social conscience of Europe has been deeply moved by the massive movement of refugees from Hungary into the free world. In the context of this survey the action spontaneously taken to assist these refugees by the countries of the free world finds an honoured place. Tribute in the handling of the problem is due to the Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees, the I. C. E. M. and Red Cross societies, as well as to the national authorities of countries who organised the reception of refugees and to many voluntary helpers. The thanks of all Europe are especially due to Austria on whom a particularly heavy burden has fallen.

Public health

19. An important event in the field of public health has been the signature of the Western European Union Convention whereby the countries of W. E. U. became on 22nd June 1956, a single territory as regards health control of sea and air traffic. The possible extension of this arrangement to all member countries of the Council is under review.

20. In January 1957 the Council of Europe inaugurated a number of medical fellowships. These are awarded with a view to enabling members of the medical and paramedical professions and of the health services of member countries to become conversant with new techniques practised in European countries and to participate in studies and research of common European interest.

Growth of understanding

21. On 15th December 1956, a Convention on the Equivalence of Periods of University Study was concluded between the member countries of the Council of Europe. By this Convention a period of study spent by a modern languages student in a university of another Member State may be recognised as equivalent to a period of study at home. Attention is being given to the possible recognition of periods of study spent abroad by students of other subjects, notably the sciences. Within the field of university action to promote understanding, reference may be made to work now in progress to draft a Convention to recognise the equivalence of university degrees or diplomas.

22. Within the framework of the European Cultural Convention important action designed to further understanding is in progress. This is well illustrated by the cultural programme of the Council of Europe, cultural activities within Western European Union and by the work of the European Universities Committee.

23. In other fields mention may be made of the European Schools' Day, an increasingly popular annual event, whereby prizes are awarded to the best essays written on a European subject. 250,000 schoolchildren took part in the 1956 competition.

24. 24. In the pattern of action undertaken by European local authorities to foster understanding between the peoples of Europe, mention may be made of the plan to facilitate visits between members of European authorities and municipal officials. This came into operation during the year. A European Conference of Local Authorities took place in January under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Its object was to consider the contribution which local government in Europe can make to the work of European construction.

European union and public opinion

25. The importance of mobilising public opinion in support of the efforts to achieve the unity of Europe has been stressed in the European Assemblies throughout the period under review. Four major issues would appear, from the attention which they have received in the press, parliaments, and in public opinion of member countries, to find a special place in this survey. First, the Hungarian tragedy created a spontaneous feeling of solidarity throughout western Europe; secondly, the political and economic events connected with Suez and the Middle East have led the press to emphasise increasingly the importance of a solution of these in the interests of Western Europe as a whole. These facts have not been without influence on the development of a favourable climate for a third issue, namely the establishment of the European Economic Community. Finally, an important contribution has been made to the growth of the feeling of confident collaboration between the European countries by the solution of the problem of the Saar. It is appropriate in this survey to record the appreciation formally expressed by the two Member Governments concerned of the valuable assistance provided in that connection by the Council of Europe and particularly by the Consultative Assembly.