

I. FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE ON POLITICAL UNION

(First Meeting)

The Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the Community held their first conference on political union in Munich on 19 November 1970.

It was the first meeting following the adoption by the six Governments of the "Report by the Foreign Ministers of the Member States on the problems of political unification",¹ drawn up pursuant to paragraph 15 of the Hague communiqué. Mr Walter Scheel, German Foreign Minister, chaired this consultative meeting.

According to Mr Scheel's statements to the press, the conference discussed the Middle East situation and took several procedural decisions. It also examined the problems of preparing a European security conference. "A new process has begun", said Mr Scheel, and he stressed the importance of the decisions taken by the Ministers to set up consultative machinery which would enable the six Governments to increase their political cooperation and harmonize their points of view on international policy matters. In this respect the Munich conference was a new stage and a decisive step along the road to the political unification of Europe. This was the substance of the German Foreign Minister's statement.

Mr Scheel would give no details of the topics discussed at the conference (such disclosures might make a closer alignment of the national position more difficult). He did, however, outline the different ways in which Member States' cooperation on foreign policy would be made possible and effective. The "Political Committee", proposed in the Ministers' report, comprising the heads of the six Foreign Ministries' political departments, will meet every three months. Its members will be able to maintain permanent contact with each other thanks to the installation of a special telecommunications network. The first meeting of the political department heads was set for January 1971 in Paris. At such time as is felt necessary, working parties or panels of experts will be set up to prepare the consultative meetings between Governments. The German Foreign Minister noted that, for an effective "system of cooperation" to come about, a real "political will" on the part of the Governments to align their points of view on concrete problems would be required, and, in his opinion, the Munich talks had shown that this will exists.

As regards the questions the Ministers considered, the chairman of the conference indicated that the most detailed exchanges of views had been on the Middle East situation. On some points difference of opinion had probably been narrowed, and on these a common attitude of the Six was not an impossibility.

¹ See Bulletin 11-1970, Part One, Ch. I.

On East-West relations and the possible European security conference, agreement would appear to have been reached on the idea that a satisfactory conclusion to the Berlin talks was a necessary prerequisite.

Mr Franco Maria Malfatti, President of the Commission, had been invited to join the Foreign Ministers for this last part of the conference, devoted to Community relations with the USSR and those aspects of a European security conference of particular interest to the Communities.

Mr Malfatti outlined the Commission's point of view on East-West relations. He said that the situation existing in Europe demanded the active presence of the Community, more coherent action, and the full application of all commitments in matters of common trade policy.

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The day after the Munich conference, and in accordance with a procedure in the Foreign Ministers' report, Mr Scheel, as chairman of the conference, Mr Pedini, Italian State Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Mr Malfatti took part in a meeting of the Political Affairs Committee of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, to which they presented the results of the Munich conference. The meeting was strictly confidential, but it would seem that particular stress was laid on the need to give full weight to those sections of the Foreign Ministers' report which provide for a six-monthly meeting between the Ministers and the members of the Political Affairs Committee of the European Parliament to discuss questions which are the subject of consultations in the framework of foreign policy cooperation.

At the request of Mr Scarascia Mugnozza, Chairman of the Political Affairs Committee, Mr Scheel agreed to hold a second meeting with the Committee on these questions, after it had been able to discuss the information provided on 20 November 1970.

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On 2 December 1970, also as part of the procedures agreed in the Foreign Ministers' report, the six Ministers met the Foreign Ministers of the countries applying for membership of the Communities (Great Britain, Denmark, Ireland and Norway). A working lunch was followed by a meeting at which topics raised at the Munich conference were discussed.

The four countries had already been informed of the results of the latter on 20 November 1970 by the Chairman of the Political Affairs Committee, so that their Governments had been able to prepare for this meeting.

According to Mr Scheel's statements to the press, discussion had mainly centred on problems of the preparation of a European security conference, a

topic which had received insufficient attention at Munich because of the short time available. The German Foreign Minister also gave a detailed picture of the situation in and around Berlin.

This meeting "of the Ten", which was practically a political consultation, was welcomed by both the Member States of the Community and the applicant countries, which expressed their satisfaction.

The next consultation conference of the Foreign Ministers of the Six will take place in Paris in May 1971 and will be followed some days later by a further meeting of "the Ten".