Chapter 2
The Early Years of European Integration—German and Dutch Reactions to the Schuman Plan

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Abstract On 9 May 1950, Robert Schuman, the French minister of Foreign Affairs, launched his daring and—to many contemporaries—shocking plan to put the Franco-German production of coal and steel as a whole under a common High Authority. By doing so, he not only hoped to prevent war in Europe in the future, but also started the process of European integration. How did the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) react to this controversial plan and why did they decide to join the European integration process? This chapter claims that although there were a number of similarities between Bonn and The Hague, they had different reasons for joining the European integration process from the start. For the FRG, it was mainly a way to regain its sovereignty and to be seen as a normal state again. For The Netherlands, however, the reasons seem mostly to have been economic. By integrating Germany into the Western block, Europe and especially The Netherlands could profit from Germany's economic potential, while at the same time preventing the country from becoming a military threat ever again. It also explains the Dutch resistance towards more political integration. In fact, the Dutch government remained anti-supranational well into the 1950s. The Dutch European policy, especially in the early years, was driven primarily and maybe even exclusively, by economic considerations, whereas that of the Federal Republic was above all inspired by political motives.

Keywords (West) Germany · The Netherlands · Allied policy · Schuman Plan · Economic relations · Foreign policy · Supranationalism · European Coal and Steel Community · High Commission

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2.1 Introduction

The European Union is going through a severe crisis. First hit by the debt crisis of 2008, it now faces a growing number of "Eurosceptics," the "Brexit," and above all a seemingly uncontrollable number of refugees desperately trying to reach and enter the Continent. This forces the EU, despite growing resistance, to further deepen the integration process, as these problems cannot be solved at a national level. For example, the EU now has a permanent fund to help member states that are in financial troubles, the so-called European Stability Mechanism.[1] Prior to 2008, this would have been unthinkable.[2] However, at the moment, national interests seem to prevail over those of the European Union as a whole.

What were the opinions of the Founding Fathers of the European integration in the first years after the Second World War? Ideas of such a process were not new in 1945. In the wake of the destruction of World War I, Louis Loucheur, a French businessman who had become minister in the French cabinet during the *Mutterkatastrophe*, suggested creating international coal and steel cartels. He did so not only for economic reasons, but most importantly to shift control of essential basic industries "from emotional nationalist warmongers to the rational, international business community."[3] This could also end the German threat to Europe.[4]

During World War II, a number of Dutch illegal newspapers advocated a new, higher, supranational institution to organise the peace after the demise of the Third Reich, that would at the same time allow Germany to retake its central position as the economic heart of Europe.[5] For example, the illegal, left-wing Protestant *Vrij Nederland—Free Netherlands*—stated on 5 July 1943, the starting day of the last great German offensive on the Eastern Front, that economic reorganisation of Europe was necessary.[6]

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[1] See European Security Mechanism website 2015.

[2] de Bruijn 2013, p. 7.

[3] Klemann 2010, p. 78.

[4] de Wagt 2015.

[5] Lak 2010, p. 408.

[6] *Vrij Nederland*, 5 July 1943.

After the end of hostilities in Europe in May 1945, multiple ideas on co-operation with regard to coal and steel were going around, especially at the end of the 1940s, both from the French as well as from the Americans. In March 1949, the future first *Bundeskanzler*, Konrad Adenauer, stated in two much-discussed interviews that he did not only opt for a full-fledged union between Germany and France, but also for "*ein verschmelzen der beiden Länder in bezug auf Zölle und Wirtschaft*."[7]

However, the first specific proposal was that of the French minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert Schuman, dated 9 May 1950, almost five years to the day after the end of World War II. Although there is some discussion as to who actually initiated the plan—most historians say it was the French official Jean Monnet,[8] head of the French Planning Bureau, who wanted "to submerge Germany in international structures, thus providing the stability and prosperity in Western Europe and simultaneously ensuring France's security,"[9] while others state it was Schuman's idea from the start[10]—the plan addressed the core question after World War II: what to do with Germany? How to ensure its economic integration into Europe without it ever becoming a military threat again? European integration seemed to offer an opportunity.

Schuman proposed to put the Franco-German production of coal and steel as a whole under a common High Authority, within the framework of an organisation open to the participation of other democratic European countries. According to Schuman:

"The pooling of coal and steel production should immediately provide for the setting up of common foundations 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 manufacture of munitions of war, of which they have been the most constant victims. The solidarity in production thus established will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible. By pooling basic production and by instituting a new High Authority, whose decisions will bind France, Germany and other member countries, this proposal will lead to the realisation of the first concrete foundation of a European federation indispensable to the preservation of peace."[11]

Schuman's plan took almost everyone by surprise. It came as a true shock, even in France itself,[12] as Schuman had hardly told anyone about his plan except, interestingly, Adenauer on 7 May 1950, who reacted very positively.[13]

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[7] "A merger of the two countries with regard to customs and economy." As quoted by Lappenküper 1994, p. 407.

[8] See for example Judt 2007, p. 156; Milward 1984, p. 395.

[9] Stone 2014, p. 74.

[10] Krijtenburg 2012, pp. 118–119; Krijtenburg 2015, p. 148.

[11] Schuman 1950.

[12] Harryvan and Van der Harst 2008, p. 125.

[13] Segers 2013, p. 75.

The Netherlands and West Germany participated from the start in this process of European integration, although the latter did so more enthusiastically than the former. Why did they do so? For both countries this development was something that above all just seemed to happen to them, without much planning.[14] With hindsight, the reasons to join the European integration process are clear: the developing Cold War, the need to rebuild the shattered Continent, and the material and economic advantages. This article analyses the differences and similarities between The Netherlands and West Germany in their policy towards the ideas of European integration. It starts with a sketch of the economic situation in Europe in the early post-war years and the ideas of the Allies with regard to Germany's future, so as to provide a context for the developments after World War II. As such, this article focuses on the 1945–1950 period. Secondly, it analyses the reaction of West Germany and especially The Netherlands on the announcement of the Schuman Plan.

2.2 Europe and Germany in Shambles

On 8 May 1945, people in large parts of Europe swept to the streets to celebrate feverously the Allied victory over Nazi Germany and the formal end of World War II.[15] At the same time, the Continent was in ruins and millions of its inhabitants were adrift. Inflation ran rampant, cities had been obliterated, millions of forced labourers were returning home. Europe's trade had come to a standstill and "resembled a spaghetti bowl of more than two hundred bilateral arrangements."[16] The Allied bombing campaign had inflicted extensive damage to the German infrastructure. In the last year of the war, Allied planes roaming the skies by the thousands, had bombed German roads, bridges and rails with impunity. Ninety percent of the country's rail network was either blocked by wrecked rolling stock or rendered impassable by bomb damage to the tracks.[17] The river Rhine, the most important European waterway, was "one big ruin of blown bridges, distorted steel constructions, wrecks and debris, on which all shipping has become impossible."[18] Only one bridge across the Rhine remained intact.[19] More importantly, however, was the fact that Germany, the dominant economic power in Europe since the late nineteenth century, had ceased, at least temporarily, to be an independent, sovereign nation. This slowed and severely threatened Europe's economic recovery.

[14] This point has especially been brought forward by Segers 2013, p. 10.

[15] The mood of exaltation is described very well by Buruma 2013, especially Chap. 1.

[16] Eichengreen 2007, p. 73.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55.

[18] As quoted by Lak 2015a, b, p. 79.

[19] Judt 2007, p. 82.

The core of the German economic problem and in its wake European problem lay in the fact that the industrial area of the Ruhr was at a standstill. Although industrial damage from Allied bombing was limited, production was low because the Ruhr was isolated from the rest of Germany and Europe. The transport of vital raw materials was impossible for a long time.[20] It meant, for example, that the Ruhr could not be supplied with food and clothing.[21] The problems in infrastructure had an immense and acute impact on the economy of occupied Germany. The occupying authorities had seized most available means of transport and capacity dropped to a minimum. For example, by 1947, the number of serviceable locomotives in the Bizone—the fusion of the American and British occupation zones as of 1 January 1947—had dropped from almost 9,000 in 1936 to 6,821, or just 76%, whereas the percentage of serviceable passengers' wagons was only 59% of the 1936 figure. Moreover, there were fewer foreign ships on the Rhine and they were seldom admitted to the internal German waterways. Germany was not the only country dependent on Ruhr coal; many other parts of Europe were as well.[22] Before the war, the Ruhr—the industrial heart of Europe, but also the weapon blacksmith of the Reich—had supplied coal to a major part of Europe.[23] This meant that the problems in Germany always had immense European-wide repercussions.

2.3 The Future of Germany?

Germany's future was *the* central question in Europe after the end of hostilities in May 1945. The main problem was that the Allies that now occupied the former Third Reich differed strongly on the topic and all had a veto in their own occupation zone. This made the creation of central German institutions all but impossible, and deepened the gulf between the various zones.[24] The division of the country shattered its pre-war economic unity. As a number of Dutch and German historians have stated, the Allied trade policy was not based on economic considerations.[25] According to the Dutch economist Jozias Wemelsfelder, the general trend seemed to be to try "to keep Germany small and broken."[26] The Allies were primarily concerned with their own interests and not those of Germany, the Germans or its neighbouring countries.

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[20] Reichardt and Zierenberg 2009, p. 71.

[21] Schlieper 1986, p. 149.

[22] Abelshauser 1984, p. 7.

[23] Rombeck-Jaschinski 1990, p. 11.

[24] Abelshauser 2004, p. 66.

[25] Wemelsfelder 1954, pp. 3–4; Kleßmann 1991, p. 46; Abelshauser 2004, p. 87.

[26] *Ibid.*, Wemelsfelder 1954, p. 4.

As the Allies were unable to reach agreement on the future of Germany and the creation of joint German economic institutions, the occupation authorities only paid attention to matters relevant to their own zones. According to the Potsdam Agreement, the responsibility for the implementation of the treaty would be in the hands of the Allied Control Council (ACC), the supreme authority in occupied Germany. It should govern Germany as a united country and treat it as an economic unit.[27] In practice, it soon turned out to be incapable of functioning adequately.[28] Decisions had to be supported unanimously,[29] but any proposal could be blocked by one of the commanders of the occupation zones. They interpreted any decision and regulation according to their own insights. In fact, this was implicit in the Potsdam Agreement stating that, in principle, each military governor was the highest authority in all zonal affairs.[30] This meant that the principle according to which the German population should be treated equally in all zones and that the German economy should be treated as a unit,[31] was seriously undermined from the start.[32] The Allies reserved the right to act as they deemed necessary in their own zones.[33] These became closed areas with their own economic systems. Trade between them was complicated, to say the least, and this even worsened the poor economic situation in Germany. Countries like The Netherlands that depended on trade with Germany were faced with the negative consequences of this policy. A normal export-oriented economy could not prosper under these circumstances.[34] The economic chaos in Germany was probably the biggest stumbling block on the road towards German recovery. To sum up, Germany was described by many as a hopeless case.[35]

Moreover, the Allies displayed very different opinions on the treatment of German industry.[36] The French government wanted security. Although France was not invited to any of the major conferences about Germany's future, including Potsdam,[37] Paris advocated a policy aimed at containing and limiting German industry, and keeping it in a permanent state of weakness.[38] The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) strove for nationalisation. It intended to dismantle German companies and remove as much industrial machinery and capital goods as

[27] Van Hook 2004, pp. 19, 39.

[28] Benz 2000, p. 267.

[29] Benz and Faulenbach 2002, p. 7.

[30] Schwarz 1980, p. 108.

[31] Benz 1984, p. 35.

[32] Kleßmann 1991, p. 32.

[33] Schwarz 1980, pp. 107–108.

[34] Abelshauser 2004, p. 87.

[35] Wolf 2006, p. 323.

[36] Wubs 2008, p. 172.

[37] Kiersch 1977, p. 61.

[38] Wubs 2008, p. 172.

possible to compensate for the enormous damage done to their own industry.[39] The United Kingdom followed a somewhat ambivalent policy in its zone of occupation. Germany's war potential was to be eliminated, but Whitehall also hoped to be able to obtain certain machines from Germany to further British economic recovery. At the same time, London did not oppose a peaceful German economic reconstruction. On the contrary, a wealthy Germany would be less prone to war and would be a good consumer market for British products.[40] There was an obvious reason for this. Britain was practically bankrupt and had to import food from the United States "[I]t had nothing to spare for Germany from its own domestic resources […] Morgenthau-style deindustrialisation—*i.e.* to dismantle German industry and turn Germany into an agricultural nation so it could never again be a threat—began rapidly to fade in the light of the terrific burden that a helpless Germany represented for a Britain that was itself economically prostrate."[41] In the end the British promoted a constructive approach in their occupation zone.[42]

2.4 American Policy Towards German Industry

The United States advocated at first a harsh policy when it came to, for example, the deconcentration of German industry. Although opinions differed strongly on the post-war industrial policy in Germany, German major businesses were held accountable for their co-operation with Hitler.[43] The most radical plan was Henry Morgenthau's of 1944, which envisioned a major deindustrialisation of the Ruhr and flooding of the coal mines.[44] Most US bankers and industrialists held quite different views, however, and advocated Germany's industrial recovery.[45] During the war, Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's chief diplomatic adviser, strongly opposed the destruction of the Ruhr area. As it was the main European supplier of coal, iron and machines for ten European nations and the best customer for seven others, disrupting this pattern would be sheer folly. "I cannot see as realistic the suggestion that such an area in the present economic condition of the world can be turned into a non-productive ghost territory."[46]

In the immediate post-war period, radicals had the upper hand in US decision-making, resulting in the splitting up of companies like *IG Farben*. This firm had

[39] Becker 1979, p. 20. See also: Lak 2014, pp. 446–447; Slaveski 2013, p. 127.

[40] Farquharson 1997, p. 334.

[41] Taylor 2011, p. 204.

[42] Wubs 2008, p. 172.

[43] Wiesen 2004, p. 43; Also Eisenberg 1996, p. 139.

[44] Wubs 2008, p. 172.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 172.

[46] As quoted by Eisenberg 1996, p. 40.

indeed been pro-Nazi, had built a massive factory complex near Auschwitz and had produced the Zyklon B poison gas that was used in the gas chambers of Auschwitz and Treblinka.[47] It was subsequently split up into the *Bayer*, *Höchst*, *Agfa* and *BASF*-companies.[48] Likewise, the highly interwoven coal and steel industries were cut up into twenty-three independent steel producers and dozens of collieries.[49] All this reflected the US anti-trust policy, which manifested itself in the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) policy directive 1067 (JCS 1067) of April 1945. One of its goals was "to prohibit all cartels and other private business arrangements and cartel-like organisations."[50] JCS 1067 provided for rigid control of political life and a strong reduction and control of the German economy. Steps towards economic recovery or to strengthen the German economy were forbidden.[51] The German industry should be dismantled. The directive "foresaw a period of punitive deprivation for the German people as not merely inevitable, but just."[52]

In practice, however, many Americans, especially those working in the military occupation authorities in Germany, resented JCS 1067. With approval of his boss, an employee of Lucius D. Clay—the commander in the US zone of occupation—referred to the directive as the work of "economic idiots."[53] The directive showed little insight in what was happening at that time: those on the ground held quite different and also more realistic views. Although on paper Great Britain and the United States sided with the USSR and France in advocating a rigid approach towards Germany, in practice it soon turned out to be otherwise. According to the Americans in the occupation zone, hundreds of thousands of Germans would starve to death if the country was forbidden to export to acquire revenues. The most practical officials considered that the main priority towards Germany should be the rapid restoration of its capacity to pay and feed itself.[54] They felt that Washington failed to recognise the seriousness of the situation, and insisted upon making amendments to JCS 1067, although it provided limited room for manoeuvre, and the local military authorities in Germany were rather free in their interpretation of it.[55] In fact, although JCS 1067 was only withdrawn officially in July 1947, the American occupation policy was constructive from day one. The chemical industry, for example, was seen as an engine for economic growth that contributed to an enhanced standard of living. Thus, it "could be instrumental in helping one of the sides—*i.e.* East or West in the developing Cold War—prevail."[56]

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47 Taylor 2011, p. 245. Also Hayes 1987, pp. 347–364 and Rees 2005, p. 62.

48 See for example Stokes 2009.

49 Jarausch 2006, p. 77.

50 As quoted by Wubs 2008, p. 172.

51 Kleßmann 1991, pp. 22–23.

52 Taylor 2011, p. 253.

53 Kleßmann 1991, p. 100.

54 Taylor 2011, pp. 118–119.

55 Ahrens 2010, p. 29.

56 Stokes 2006, p. 67.

Moreover, curbing war potential and constraining future German industrial competition contradicted "the desire to limit costs and length of the occupation."[57]

Nevertheless, a considerable number of German firms were dismantled as a consequence of the Allied policy. This often cut up foreign investment in these firms as well, especially in the mining, steel and iron industries.[58] In 1945, fifty-five percent of all coal mining was technically, economically, or by ownership, combined with the iron industry: "Technically through the exchange of fuels and energy, economically through the harmonisation of investments and of profits and losses, organically through the combination of mines and iron factories into integrated business concerns."[59] The Allies aimed to break up these conglomerates, as many were convinced that the Ruhr industry was not only guilty of having supported the rise of National Socialism, "but also of having provided the basis for German war production and for nearly six years of warfare."[60]

In December 1945, seventy-six senior executives from major Ruhr conglomerates were arrested, among which were the directors of *Thyssen*, *Hoesch* and the *Vereinigte Stahlwerke*. Most of the senior management of *Krupp* had been rounded up in September 1945.[61] Deconcentration of the Ruhr industry and especially of its coal mining industry did, however, not only affect Germany, but also the neighbouring countries. Because of Germany's central position in Europe—geographically as well as economically—the Allied policy had consequences for the whole of Europe, not in the least to the small and middle-sized economies in the West and North-West.[62] They depended on supplies of German coal and industrial products. Therefore, deconcentration always had an international dimension. This and decartelisation were not just German problems, but had far-reaching European implications as well.[63]

After the collapse of the Third Reich, it became fundamentally important to reactivate mining in the Ruhr and to breathe new life into its industry. The economic recovery of Europe depended on it.[64] The Continent could simply not do without the products of the Ruhr industry. This applied especially to The Netherlands. In spite of all that had happened during the war, nothing could erase the fact that Germany was indispensable for The Netherlands's long-term recovery.[65] For this reason, in October 1945, the Dutch Council of Economic Affairs stated that demolition of German industry would not be in the best interests of The

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[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 46–47.

[58] Harryvan and Van der Harst 2008, p. 119.

[59] Diegmann 2004, p. 197.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 198.

[61] Taylor 2011, pp. 307–308.

[62] Klemann 2004, pp. 1–2.

[63] Diegmann 2004, p. 198.

[64] Kleßmann 1991, p. 110.

[65] Griffiths 1984, p. 33.

Netherlands, as it would hit the country's means of existence.[66] A strong German economic recovery was seen by some as a means of strengthening Western Europe, provided this would go hand in hand with the economic integration of the community of states.[67] While Germany was down, Europe's economic recovery would fail. The problem was that this only became clear to the British and Americans much later. The policy of the Allies, and especially the Americans, had serious repercussions for Europe's recovery. This policy only changed as the Cold War developed and the Marshall Plan was introduced.[68]

During the first post-war years, Dutch policy towards Germany showed a marked ambivalence. On the one hand, The Netherlands sought to punish Germany by annexation and reparations, but on the other, The Hague continuously demanded that the Allies restore normal trade relations with Germany as soon as possible.[69] In October 1945, The Netherlands objected to plans to dismantle German factories. The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture stated that "Germany is vital to us as a trading partner, especially with regard to agriculture."[70] In numerous discussions with the Allies shortly after the war, The Netherlands emphasised the importance and bare necessity of re-establishing the Dutch-German trade relations as a stimulus for the Dutch economy.[71]

This was not because the Dutch liked the Germans, but because the recovery of the Dutch-German trade relations was a necessity. To most Dutch politicians and businessmen, one thing was crystal clear: at the basis of the relations with Germany were the economic ties, and the necessity to restore these as soon as possible. In November 1947, a report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated: "When the war was won, our main goal was to prevent any new German aggression in the future […] but this has already taken second place. It is inevitable that we help put Germany on its feet again if we do not want to go down with it."[72] Without a healthy Germany, The Netherlands's most important trading partner since the mid-nineteenth century, a Dutch economic recovery was out of the question. The emphasis shifted slowly towards the recovery of economic relations, while pleas for reparation payments, restitution of stolen goods and annexation of parts of Germany quietly moved into the background.[73]

However, the Dutch appeals with the Allies fell on deaf ears for years. Only as late as September 1949 did the Americans suddenly—and to the astonishment of

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66 National Archives 1945.

67 Hess and Wielenga 1987, p. 352.

68 Lak 2008, p. 5.

69 See for example Lak 2015a, b, especially Chap. 2 and conclusion.

70 Nordrhein-Westfälisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf (HstAD) 1948.

71 Wielenga 1989, p. 226.

72 Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1947 Otto 1948.

73 For an extensive analysis in of the Dutch policy towards Germany in the first post-war years see Lak 2009, pp. 45–85 and Lak 2011.

the Dutch delegation—liberalise the German imports of Dutch products, with spectacular results. Dutch exports to Germany between 1947 and 1950 grew from 58 to 1109 million guilders, about as much as total Marshall Aid in the 1948–54 period. In practice, this meant that the extra demand from Germany resulted in an impulse of 8% of Dutch Gross Domestic Product,[74] that is around four times as much as the Marshall Aid in the 1948–1954 period, which has been estimated at two per cent,[75] making the recovery of economic relations with Germany of greater importance to the Dutch economic recovery than the Marshall Aid.[76] The liberalisation of German imports basically normalised the Dutch-German economic relations.[77]

2.5 Not a *Deus ex Machina*

However, the question how to deal with West Germany—the *Bundesrepublik* had been established on 23 May 1949—and its economic potential still hovered over Europe. How was this to be exploited to the benefit of the Continent, without Germany once again becoming a military threat? It is no coincidence that many of the plans for European economic integration as a way of ending the German menace came from France. The country had waged war against its arch enemy three times between 1870 and 1945, had been decisively beaten in two of them, and had only just survived the Great War. Both economically and demographically, Germany was potentially a far stronger nation. As coal and steel were indispensable for waging war, it seemed to be a good idea to put them under some sort of supranational authority, and to promote competition by breaking up large producers and pre-World War II cartels, most of which were found in Germany.[78] The Schuman Plan "did not emerge like a *deus ex machina*." Its contours had already been visible during the London Conference of 1948.[79] What was lacking was a precise economic formulation of such a policy "which went beyond the vague ideas of an understanding between French and German industries in a wider European framework so that it was acceptable to the Western European countries and so that it was acceptable to the United States and did not appear there as a barrier to American ideas on integration."[80]

The French ideas partially found their origins in the Marshall Plan, which had a resounding effect on the European integration. With the Americans, especially

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74 Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS) 1970; own calculations.

75 Fase 1997, p. 426.

76 Lak 2011, p. 140.

77 Lak 2015a, b, p. 161.

78 Eichengreen and Boltho 2010, p. 279.

79 Milward 1984, p. 164.

80 *Ibid*.

since late 1947, now completely focused—convinced as they had become that the alliance with the Soviet Union had finally and irreparably faltered—on Germany's economic and political revival, Paris had to reformulate its policy towards Germany. No longer did or could it strive for dismantling the German potential, especially in the Ruhr and the Rhineland, which had also collided with American plans on the future of Europe.[81]

Therefore, it was suggested that France and Germany—and for that matter any other democratic European state in Western Europe that wished to join—"should pool their coal and steel industries, placing them under the international, binding control of a High Authority." The latter would contain Germany, as the High Authority would in effect preside over a new European economic balance of power. However, this was to be done in a constructive way, not by means of a humiliating military occupation. As such, "it would offer an olive branch to Germany while placating French anxieties over German recovery."[82] Moreover, the Americans would be pleased by it, since they had been pressing Schuman for some time to take such an unprecedented step, especially by the efforts of the US Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dean Acheson.[83] Above all, in the words of Tony Judt, "it would take control of the Ruhr and other vital German resources out of purely German hands."[84] That way, it would ensure France's security.

On 9 May 1950, Schuman indeed launched a bold plan for the creation of a European Coal and Steel Community, although he called it a jump into uncertainty.[85] His declaration can be seen as "Europe's moment of conception," although it was both a cry of distress as well as a cry of joy.[86] Washington warmly accepted the Schuman Plan.

The US ambassador in Paris, David Bruce, hailed it as "the most constructive thing done by the French government since the Liberation,"[87] hinting at the strong American irritation with France's early post-war policy. The British, who had not been informed beforehand, felt as having been ambushed.[88]

2.6 West Germany: A Prospect of Regained Sovereignty

How did The Netherlands and Germany respond to Schuman's bold and unexpected move? Which differences and similarities can be distinguished, how can

[81] Segers 2013, p. 77.

[82] This paragraph and its quotations are based on: Hitchcock 2010, p. 171.

[83] van Middelaar 2009, p. 203.

[84] Judt 2007, p. 156.

[85] Schwabe 2007, pp. 13–14.

[86] van Middelaar 2009, p. 204.

[87] Hitchcock 2010, p. 171.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

they be explained and why did Bonn and The Hague join the European integration from its earliest moment? Of course, no one could reasonably have anything against the prospect of harmony between France and Germany.[89] At the same time, leaders in both countries were taken completely by surprise.[90] Except for, as mentioned earlier, Adenauer, who wholeheartedly welcomed Schuman's initiative, and thanked him in a personal letter, stating: "*Ich begrüße die Gedanken als einen entscheidenden Schritt zu einer engen Verbindung Deutschlands mit Frankreich und damit zu einer neuen, auf der Grundlage friedlicher Zusammenarbeit aufgebauten Ordnung in Europa. Der Plan der französischen Regierung, den Sie mir in großen Zügen entwickelt haben, wird in der deutschen öffentlichen Meinung einen starken Widerhall finden, da zum ersten Mal nach der Katastrophe des Jahres 1945 Deutschland und Frankreich gleichberechtigt an einer gemeinsamen Aufgabe wirken sollen*."[91]

To West Germany, Schuman's proposal was mostly interesting from a political point of view to regain (parts of) its sovereignty and independence. Adenauer interpreted the French offer mainly from this point of view. In his correspondence with French representatives, he was very polite, calling it "a fresh impetus towards constructive co-operation". In a more private setting, for example when speaking to his aides, he was much blunter, stating "*Das ist unser Durchbruch*"—this is our breakthrough. For the first time since the end of World War II, Germany would enter an international organisation on equal terms,[92] and no longer as the pariah among the nations.[93] It would also mean that the Federal Republic of Germany would be bound to the Western alliance—precisely what Adenauer had been aiming at for a number of years.[94]

Adenauer followed two clear policy goals. First, there was his policy of "Binding to the West and Integration in the West"—*Westbindung* and *Westintegration*. It was a policy directed at integration with the Western powers and in a Western block.[95] In practice, this meant integrating West Germany into the European and Atlantic organisations by concluding agreements with the Western Allies. Secondly, Adenauer strove to regain West German sovereignty and an equal place in Europe.[96] These policies were highly criticised, even within the

[89] Davies 1998, p. 1084.

[90] Segers 2015, p. 88.

[91] 'I welcome the ideas as an essential step towards a close collaboration with France and therewith towards a new European order, based on peaceful co-operation. The plan of the French government, as you have generally explained them, will be warmly welcomed in the German public opinion, as for the first time after the catastrophe of 1945, Germany and France will work together on a task on an equal footing. **Gez. Adenauer** 1950.

[92] Judt 2007, p. 151.

[93] van Middelaar 2009, p. 193.

[94] Judt 2007, p. 151.

[95] Kitchen 2006, p. 326.

[96] Boterman 2005, p. 418.

FRG. One KPD Member of Parliament even called the *Bundeskanzler* "nothing but an American general."[97] Adenauer's great rival, the leader of the social-democrats, Kurt Schumacher, referred to him as "the Chancellor of the Allies."[98] The young Federal Republic had indeed long been little more than a protectorate of the victorious Allies.

Although the FRG was formally established on 23 May 1949, it was by no means a sovereign state. Allied influence remained enormous, as can be seen in the Occupation Statute, part of the Constitution of the *Bundesrepublik*, which came into effect on 21 September 1949. The Western Allies still controlled the foreign relations of the new West German state, and the Ruhr area. Decartelisation, the dismantling of German industry and reparation payments also remained in Allied hands. Finally, the Allies held the right to take back authority completely, should democracy in the FRG fails to materialise,[99] although at the end of 1949 Adenauer had been able to make claims for West German sovereignty and equal treatment for the first time in the advent of the so-called "*Petersberger Abkommen*" of November that same year.[100]

In fact, the Schuman Plan offered much that Adenauer strived for. He saw the European Coal and Steel Community as "*die Erfüllung seiner eigenen Hoffnungen auf eine Versöhnung zwischen Fransozen und Deutschen*."[101] Moreover, for the first time since 1945, the stipulations that the Allied High Commission was to represent the Federal Republic in international affairs, was lifted. West Germany could now speak for itself in a central theme of its foreign policy.[102] That is why the French proposal was given full support by the Germans.[103]

The Schuman project offered the prospect of a joint control of coal and steel, and as such on the armaments-sector as well. Adenauer even hoped that the Schuman Plan would serve as an example to other sectors of the European economy, which might even result in political and military co-operation. Moreover, the Schuman Plan collided with parts of the Occupation Statute and as such offered the way to political sovereignty. Finally, with West Germany joining, it could be respected as a normal state again.[104] In short, to the Federal Republic, the Schuman Plan was of importance above all from a political point of view.

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97 van Clemen 2009, p. 162.

98 Kleßmann 1991, p. 229.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 199; Boterman 2005, p. 418.

100 Lappenküper 1994, p. 406.

101 "The fulfilment of its own hopes to a reconciliation between the French and the Germans." Schwabe 2007, p. 21.

102 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

103 van Middelaar 2009, p. 70.

104 Lappenküper 1994, p. 443.

2.7 The Netherlands: Primacy of Commercial Considerations

Like West Germany, The Netherlands was taken completely by surprise by Schuman's announcement. Bonn and The Hague shared a number of similarities. Both were forced to shift their focus more towards the Continent after the war. This was especially true for The Netherlands, as the loss of the Dutch East Indies only augmented the importance of Germany as an economic partner.[105] At the same time, both Bonn and The Hague were more focused on their Atlantic partnership with the United States, which led to a remarkable split in their policy. After World War II, the Dutch reality became more and more continental European, especially more German, but at the same time "the Netherlands was going somewhere else. The future would be Atlantic."[106]

The Schuman Plan meant the start of the so-called "Small-European" co-operation with West Germany, but without the United Kingdom, which rejected the plan. The French proposal was received with mixed feelings. Some Dutch politicians—most notably prime minister Willem Drees—preferred intergovernmental co-operation, and were hesitant of supranational ideas.[107] The Dutch Minister of Finance, Piet Lieftinck, had doubts as well and was hesitant in transferring national sovereignty, as did his colleague of Social Affairs, A.M. Joekes.[108] Their colleague of Foreign Affairs, Dirk Uipko Stikker, made public that he did not know what to think of the French plans.[109] However, the Minister of Economic Affairs, Jan van den Brink, strongly urged the Dutch government to participate in the negotiations, with Stikker accepting the underlying conditions of the plan as a basis for these talks.[110] Sicco Mansholt, Minister of Agriculture, also strongly supported the French plan.[111] When the content of the Schuman Plan became clearer, Stikker supported it. However, the Dutch government would remain "anti-supranational" and anti-political integration well into the 1950s.[112]

The Hague was in fact taken completely by surprise by the Schuman Plan,[113] although that remained, in the words of historian Mathieu Segers, "a well-kept secret." The establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community by "the

[105] Van der Linden 1985, p. 64; See also Lak 2011, p. 44.

[106] Segers 2013, p. 11.

[107] Brouwer 2008, p. 125.

[108] Lieftinck, pp. 241–260; Salzmann 1999, pp. 240–241.

[109] *Ibid.*, Salzmann 1999, p. 240; See also: Hellema 2001, p. 163.

[110] Aanhangsel tot het Verslag van de Handelingen der Tweede Kamer (7 June 1950) Vel 78, 157.

[111] Segers 2013, p. 80.

[112] Vollaard et al. 2015, p. 19. Also: Harryvan and Van der Harst 1994, pp. 143–171.

[113] Salzmann 1999, p. 240.

Six" was reduced as much as possible to a "non-event."[114] In fact, The Netherlands had few options but to join. Its economic dependence on West Germany was simply too strong.[115] The establishment of the ECSC did result in some difficult questions, above all about how much power this new supranational institution would have, for example on wages and prices. Coal prices were indeed harmonised and dual coal prizing was brought to an end, but "differential national and international rail freight rates remained in force."[116]

What bothered The Hague the most was the lack of clarity of the ECSC's power. It objected to the presumably great and undefined powers of the new High Authority.[117] Stikker and the Dutch administration saw supranationalism as problematic, and, during the negotiations, emphasised time and again its reservation towards this topic.[118] In the end, historian Bob Reinalda writes, the ECSC "created a framework for transparency and competition in the coal and steel sectors that was acceptable to the Dutch coal mines and steel industry."[119]

So why did the Netherlands—be it with reservations and sometimes hesitantly—ultimately decide to join the ECSC? One reason could be that it resembled plans developed earlier by the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Dutch government in exile in London, Eelco Nicolaas van Kleffens. In April 1943, he wrote a note to the big powers in order to prevent a renewed German aggression in the long run. In this perspective, he suggested the establishment of an international organ for the control of the import and production by Germany of three products—iron, steel and nitrogen—that were indispensable for modern warfare.[120]

However, joining the Schuman Plan and later the ECSC was also—and perhaps above all—inspired by the economic importance of Germany to the Netherlands. As stated by the economic historian Jan Luiten van Zanden, "[e]very plan that would further the integration of Germany in Western Europe, was self-evidently accepted by the Dutch."[121] To the Netherlands, the integration of the FRG enabled "the necessary western reinforcement against the Soviet Union. In this way, German recovery could be continued without risk and the other European countries could benefit from West German economic potential."[122] The Netherlands would not consider any form of co-operation that would exclude its largest trading partner.[123] It was also clear that the Dutch European policy was driven by "the

114 Segers 2013, p. 84.

115 *Ibid.*, p. 77.

116 Milward 1984, p. 408.

117 *Ibid.*, p. 409.

118 Reinalda 2009, p. 751.

119 *Ibid.*, p. 751.

120 Lak 2010, pp. 406–407.

121 van Zanden 1997, p. 177.

122 Wielenga 1999, p. 42.

123 Griffiths 1990a, b, p. 10.

consistency and primacy of commercial considerations."[124] The Dutch historian Albert Kersten states that "one can draw the conclusion that the Dutch government was primarily, and maybe even exclusively, interested in economic co-operation and integration."[125]

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that a growing number of those responsible in the Dutch Ministries of Economic and Foreign Affairs believed that after the loss of the Dutch East Indies, the Dutch future lays in co-operation in Western Europe.[126] The first West German ambassador to The Netherlands, Karl Du Mont, confirmed this view, as he noted that the loss of the Dutch East Indies and the failure of the Benelux had once again confirmed that co-operation with Germany was a necessity.[127] This points to the economic importance of West Germany to The Netherlands, which seems to have caused the Dutch policy described above: "Trade was simply too important to the Dutch to allow ideology or dislike to get in their way."[128]

Integration also meant Western reinforcement against the Soviet Union. It corresponded with the Dutch wish for the economic integration of the *Bundesrepublik,* on the one hand, and security in the Atlantic treaty, on the other hand.[129] It seems likely that the economic side of the European integration and especially the integration of West Germany in this process was the most important reason for The Netherlands to strongly support the project. Bonn, with the division of Germany, focused on Western Europe more than ever before.[130] It had mostly political considerations and the quest for a renewed sovereignty at heart.

2.8 Conclusions

Why did The Netherlands and West Germany participate from the start in the process of European integration? With hindsight, the reasons to join the European integration process are clear: the Cold War, the need to rebuild to shattered continent and the material advantages.

There were a number of similarities between The Netherlands and the *Bundesrepublik*. After the war, both countries were forced to increasingly focus their attention on the Continent. This was especially true for the Netherlands, as the loss of the Dutch East Indies only augmented the importance of Germany as an economic partner. At the same time, both Bonn and The Hague were more focused

124 *Ibid.*, "Preface," p. XI.

125 Kersten 1992, p. 6. Also Kersten 1990, p. 119–138.

126 *Ibid.*, p. 138.

127 Politisches Archiv Auswärtiges Amt Berlin 1950.

128 Mallinson 2010, p. 196.

129 Hellema 2001, p. 191.

130 Klemann 2006, p. 59.

on their Atlantic partnership with the United States—especially militarily—which led to a remarkable split in their policy.

The integration of the new Federal Republic of Germany was also seen, for example by The Netherlands, as a way to make sure that the country and the Continent as a whole could profit from West Germany's economic potential, but at the same time to prevent the country from ever becoming a military threat again. Although the Schuman Plan came like a bolt from the blue, Bonn and The Hague decided—the former much more enthusiastically than the latter—to join the European integration process and the ECSC.

However, there were different reasons why The Netherlands and West Germany were part of the European integration process from the start. For the latter, it was above all an opportunity to regain its sovereignty and independence, and to be respected as a normal state again. That was essentially the core element of Konrad Adenauers *Westbindung* and *Westintegration*. For the *Bundesrepublik,* political considerations seem to have been dominant. To The Hague, however, economic reasons were the most important. It remained fundamentally the case for the upcoming years. When it came to economic integration the Dutch were keen to take this process further, but politically it was far more hesitant, mostly with regard to supranational institutions.

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