

BENEŠ AND GERMAN STATE SECRETARY
CARL VON SCHUBERT'S CONCEPTION
OF EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION

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In the new relaxed atmosphere in Europe after the signing of the Locarno treaties in 1925, Czechoslovak-German relations were affected by the growing political and economic influence of Germany. Carl von Schubert, State Secretary in the German Foreign Office and an author of the Locarno idea, favoured a customs union and close economic cooperation in Europe, partly out of fear that the continent would otherwise soon suffer an economic collapse. When Beneš visited Berlin for the first time in May 1928, Schubert used the occasion to present these ideas and suggested, as a first step, an economic union between Czechoslovakia, Austria and Germany. Beneš agreed with the basic idea, but since he was fearful of the intended German expansion in Southeast Europe and of German dominance in this grouping, he suggested including France. This possibility was in line with Schubert's thinking. For a long time, he had tried to promote a basic economic understanding between France and Germany. Beneš's attitude strengthened Schubert's intentions to achieve a European agreement on security and on economic cooperation which he thought the best way to secure peace and to reestablish Germany as a great power. But he was unable to carry out his plans before Stresemann's death and before Brüning gave German foreign policy a new character.