

## Address given by Konrad Adenauer to mark the establishment of the ECSC Special Council of Ministers (Luxembourg, 8 September 1952)

**Caption:** On 8 September 1952, in Luxembourg, the German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, delivers the opening address at the ECSC Special Council of Ministers — having been appointed its first President on the basis of the alphabetical order of the names of the Member States — in which he outlines the Council's objectives.

**Source:** Entwurf. Protokoll der ersten Sitzung des Rates in Luxemburg vom 8. bis 10. September 1952, Prot R 1/52. Luxemburg: Rat der Europäischen Gemeinschaft für Kohle und Stahl, 22.09.1952. 12 S. "Anlage I a". Archives centrales du Conseil de l'Union européenne, B-1048 Bruxelles/Brussel, rue de la Loi/Wetstraat, 175.

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Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

In accordance with the provisions of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Economic Affairs of the six signatory States — Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands — have met today to constitute the Council of Ministers laid down in the Treaty and to inaugurate their activities. As the representative of the country which appears first in the alphabetical list of our States, I have the honour to be the first President of the Council of Ministers.

I should first like to welcome the Ministers of the Luxembourg Government and thank them on behalf of the Council for the welcome which the City and State of Luxembourg have extended to the Community's institutions. Accommodating such institutions gives rise to many difficulties; I therefore thank the people of Luxembourg all the more warmly for their willingness to bear with this inconvenience. I should like to thank my colleague, Mr Bech, in particular.

I welcome the President and Members of the High Authority. I am convinced that the Community's institutions will work in close collaboration.

I also welcome the members of the diplomatic corps accredited to the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, as also the representatives of the British Mission and the Mission of the United States of America to the High Authority, whose presence promises to forge a close link between the Community and these two countries.

With the constitution of the Council today, and with the High Authority already having begun its work a month ago, the second institution of the Community now takes office.

### **Great responsibility**

The task which awaits involves great responsibility. The Council is the federative institution of the Community. As such, it has a dual task under the Treaty.

On the one hand, it is to function as a Community institution, i.e. an entity with supranational attributes, which has its own sovereign prerogatives and, henceforth, acts independently alongside the Member States. As a Community institution, the Council participates in the ordering and administration of the sovereign prerogatives which the Member States have separated from their own domain and have transferred to the Community. In this capacity, it is required by the Treaty to cooperate extensively in the regulatory activity undertaken by the Community: it is consulted on all essential measures to be taken by the High Authority and, in important cases, is required to give its consent or take a decision; on matters of special significance, it is required to take a unanimous decision.

The Council of Ministers also has a second task. Not only does it represent the interests of the Community in the area of transferred sovereign powers, but it also looks after the interests of the Member States themselves in the area of the sovereign powers which they retain. This applies both to general economic questions and to other questions of State activity, in particular political matters affected by the activities of the Coal and Steel Community, in so far as the Member States have not transferred their sovereign powers.

Accordingly, the Council of Ministers has a role which involves coordination and mediation.

It stands at the interface between two sovereignties: one supranational, the other national. It must uphold the interests of the Community in the same way as the interests of the individual States and strike a balance which does justice to each. It must, as the Treaty says, harmonise the interests of both parties. As an institution, it thus has a task which represents a problem for anyone who is concerned with the unification of Europe. Indeed, that unification cannot be brought about by creating some centralised European entity. It must, as the Treaty on the Defence Community says, become established on the basis of a federal or

confederal structure, or it will not become established at all. It must take equal account of the diversity and special features of the individual Member States, which are the product of their historical development, and of the unifying convergence which confronts us with imperative demands for the future.

### **A bold enterprise**

The project which we have begun is a bold enterprise. The development of nation states since the beginning of the nineteenth century has not promoted a sense of common purpose among the nations. Even though the Council of Ministers has to defend the national interests of Member States, it must refrain from considering this duty to be its pre-eminent task. On the contrary, its pre-eminent task will be to promote the interests of the Community, without which the latter cannot develop. It must therefore be generous in allowing the supranational entity of the Community, the High Authority, to enjoy the freedom for development which it needs, where necessary by creating that freedom for it.

It will not be easy to find the solution. But I am confident that we shall succeed. The great forces of our age are on our side, and what has happened in the short time since the Treaty on the Coal and Steel Community came into force strengthens us in our hope.

We call to mind with sincere gratitude the unstinting work of all those who took part in the creation of this Treaty, we call to mind the bold concept of the French Government, of Foreign Minister Schuman and the current President of the High Authority, Mr Monnet, when they approached the countries of Europe with their plan to create this union.

Since the very first meeting of the High Authority, a truly European spirit has been discernible in its work. We have also seen with gratitude and satisfaction, in the establishment of the British Mission and the Mission of the United States to the High Authority, that these powerful producer countries are ready to promote the purposes and aims of the Coal and Steel Community in cooperation with it. The cooperation which we hope to see from the establishment of these Missions will increase the already significant importance of the Coal and Steel Community by a substantial amount, will develop the economy of a very considerable part of the Earth and, hence, will make a beneficial contribution to prosperity and political understanding.

### **The force of facts**

The Community has been given the name '**European**' Coal and Steel Community. This conveys the idea that it was the hope of the founding States that it would not remain limited to them. We place our trust in the power of development. The Community has now advanced beyond the stage of construction and planning; the project itself, the supranational project, has commenced. We trust **that the force of facts will bring development and drive it forward**, whatever form it may take. We cherish hopes for the force of development in another sense as well. There has been much planning and discussion regarding the creation of Europe. In the time when people thought only in terms of the nation state, it was an almost perverse idea, and, to many, it seemed Utopian, although they could not fail to see that there was a need for a new kind of Europe. Now the first step from plan to reality has been taken. As we confidently hope, this ushers in a new era for our Continent, an era of peace, common endeavour and new prosperity. A grand vista opens up before us, and, here, too, I am sure that many whose minds are too focused on the past look to the future with scepticism. Now that the Coal and Steel Community has been brought into being and the Treaty on the European Defence Community and associated Treaties have been signed, the doubters should have courage and be confident that a united Europe will be created. I hope that the deliberations and decisions of the Council of Ministers will bring further progress and that such progress will be considerable. In the interests of peace, in the interests of progress, we must create Europe, and we shall create Europe.