

Reply by Jean Monnet to the address given by Konrad Adenauer (Luxembourg, 8 September 1952)

Caption: On 8 September 1952, Jean Monnet, President of the ECSC High Authority, replies to the opening address delivered by the German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, who, as President of the ECSC Special Council of Ministers, inaugurates its first meeting.

Source: Projet. Procès-verbal de la première session du Conseil tenue à Luxembourg du 8 au 10 septembre 1952, PV Col 1/52. Luxembourg: Conseil de la Communauté européenne du charbon et de l'acier, 22.09.1952. 12 p. p. Annexe I b.
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Reply by Mr Jean Monnet, President of the High Authority, to the address given by Chancellor Adenauer, President of the Council of Ministers

Mr President,
Gentlemen,

The meeting of the Council of Ministers that you have just declared open marks a new phase in the progressive establishment of our Community's institutions. The Common Assembly will be starting its first sitting the day after tomorrow. We have no doubt that this group of institutions will shortly be completed by the establishment of the Court of Justice, which is an essential adjunct to it.

As you have just said, Mr President, the Community creates a new sovereignty. However, that sovereignty still operates in only a limited sphere, that of coal and steel, which the parliaments of our six countries have agreed to hand over to it. It was, therefore, vital to provide for a constant link between the activities that are now part of a common market and covered by this supranational system and the other parts of the economies to which they belong, which are still under the jurisdiction of national governments. The fundamental role of your Council is to provide regular coordination between the activities of the Community and those of the Member States.

In performing that role, it has a responsibility to the Community as a whole. Only if our various governments are conscious of that responsibility, which goes beyond the purely national standpoint, shall we create the optimum conditions for progress in our joint task. We have to cast off our old habits. But I have no doubt that everyone will very quickly realise that the true interests of each of our countries are ultimately served only if they are founded in the common interest.

That is why there is a fundamental difference between your Council and the international organisations to which we have, to date, been accustomed. The unanimity rule will not apply to its deliberations unless the circumstances are exceptional. The Council's role is to formulate a common position, not to seek a compromise between specific interests. In the decisions that the High Authority has to take, you will, therefore, have a part in exercising the new sovereignty of our Community.

You may rest assured that the High Authority will endeavour to maintain close relations with the governments and to hold regular consultations with the Council.

But, at the same time, I should like to emphasise the crucial role that has been assigned to the Assembly that is to meet in two days' time and to which the High Authority is responsible.

You are seeing the whole of the High Authority here for the first time. If our joint work is to be successful, there must be a proper understanding between all the participants. That understanding has immediately been established in the High Authority itself, and we are all of one mind in working to carry out successfully the tasks assigned to us.

Mr President, I was pleased to see the importance that, like us, you attached to the association between the United Kingdom and the United States and the Community that started to develop as soon as we came into office. We are all aware that that association is vital for peace and progress.

I cannot finish without thanking you for sending us to Luxembourg. We have had a splendid reception there. Our working conditions there are excellent, and we are happy to start our work there.