

Address given by Jean Monnet (Luxembourg, 10 August 1952)

Caption: On 10 August 1952, Jean Monnet opens the inaugural session of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in Luxembourg with an address in which he sets out the key objectives of the ECSC and the High Authority.

Source: Speeches delivered by Monsieur Jean Monnet, President of the High Authority -at the inauguration of the High Authority on August 10th, 1952, in Luxembourg -at the opening session of the Assembly on September 11th, 1952, in Strasbourg. Strasbourg: European Coal and Steel Community, September 1952. 29 p.

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URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/Address_given_by_Jean_Monnet_Luxembourg_10_August_1952-en-218b0df9-f81d-43d5-aecb-d1c6aecba604.html

Publication date: 14/08/2011

Speech by Jean Monnet (Luxembourg, 10 August 1952)

Gentlemen,

The first meeting of the High Authority of the Coal and Steel Community is now open.

At this moment, which marks the accomplishment of an undertaking tenaciously carried out for over two years, I must first pay homage to the statesmen of our six countries whose farsightedness and determination made it possible. I want also to extend the thanks which they merit to all of those who have contributed to the preparation of the Treaty which is our charter.

Especially, at the moment when the establishment of the Community turns what the world rightly calls the "Schuman Plan" into a living reality, let me recall the gratitude which Europe will always cherish towards President Robert Schuman who, by launching the appeal of May 9, 1950, took the initiative and the responsibility of setting our Continent on the road to unity.

In proceeding with the installation of the High Authority of the Coal and Steel Community we are performing a solemn act. We are taking charge of the responsibility which has been entrusted to us by our six countries.

Each of us has been appointed, not by one of our Governments, but by the common consent of the six Governments. Thus we are all of us the common representatives of our six countries: Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. One important sign of hope I wish particularly to emphasize: we are here together, French and Germans, members of the same Community; vital interests of Germany and France are under the control of an Authority which is no longer either German or French, but European.

SOLEMN PLEDGE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE HIGH AUTHORITY

In the names of all of you, I publicly repeat the pledge which each of us took when we accepted our appointment:

We will perform our duties with complete independence in the general interest of the Community.

In the performance of our duties, we will neither request nor accept instructions from any Government or organization and we will abstain from any action incompatible with the supra-national character of our functions.

We take note of the pledge of the member States to respect this supra-national character and not to seek to influence us in the performance of our duties.

SUPRA-NATIONAL CHARACTER OF THE INSTITUTIONS

For the first time, the traditional relations between States are now transformed. Under the methods of the past, even when European States are convinced of the need for common action, even when they set up an international organization, they retain their complete sovereignty. Thus the international organization can neither make decisions nor carry them out, but can only make recommendations to the States. These methods cannot eliminate our national antagonisms; as long as national sovereignty is not surmounted, such antagonisms can only be aggravated.

But today, six Parliaments have decided after careful deliberation, by substantial majorities, to create the first European Community which merges a portion of their respective national sovereignties and submits it to the common interest.

Within the limits of the powers conferred upon it by the Treaty, the *High Authority* has received from the six

States a mandate to take decisions with complete independence, decisions which immediately become effective throughout their territory. The Authority obtains its financial resources, not from contributions by the States, but from direct levies on the industries under its control.

It is responsible, not to the States, but to a *European Assembly*. The Assembly was elected by the national Parliaments, but it has already been provided that it may be elected directly by the people. From the beginning, the members of the Assembly are not bound by any national mandate; they vote freely and individually, not by national blocs. Each of them represents not his own country but the whole Community. The Assembly controls our activities. It has the power to refuse us its confidence. It is the first European Assembly endowed with sovereign powers.

The acts of the High Authority are subject to review. But such review will be not by national courts, but by a European court, the *Court of Justice*.

Any of these institutions may be changed and improved in the light of experience. What cannot be challenged is the principle that they are supra-national – in other words federal – institutions. They are institutions which are sovereign within the limits of their competence – that is to say, which are endowed with the right to make decisions and carry them out.

However, coal and steel represent only a part of economic life. For this reason there must be continual liaison between the High Authority and the Governments which are still responsible for the overall economic policy of their States. The *Council of Ministers* was set up, not to exercise control and guardianship, but to provide this liaison and to assure the coordination of the policies of the High Authority and those of the member States.

THE CREATION OF A COMMON EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL MARKET

The task entrusted to us by the Treaty is heavy. We must create and maintain a single market for coal and steel throughout the territory of the Community. In a few months, all customs barriers, all quota restrictions, and all forms of discrimination will be eliminated. There will no longer be frontiers for coal and steel within the Community; they will be at the disposal of all buyers under the same conditions.

The Treaty, which is the first anti-trust law in Europe, gives us a mandate to disband cartels, to forbid restrictive practices, and to prevent any excessive concentration of economic power. Thus, under a system of wholesome competition, the production of coal and steel will really be at the service of the consumers.

The Treaty prescribes that we take such steps as are necessary to mitigate the effects of economic fluctuations, to facilitate the expansion and modernization of these industries. In the great effort of economic development which will be undertaken, we will especially keep in mind as our chief aim the promotion on behalf of our workers of better living standards and employment conditions, leading to their equalization at the highest level.

What will this single market for 155 million consumers mean in the daily life of the citizen of our six countries? It will doubtless be said that few of them purchase coal and steel in large quantities. But coal and steel enter into the manufacture of everything which modern man needs: gas, electricity, tools, machines, and automobiles. Through the plow and the tractor, textile equipment, sewing machines, and structural steel, they play an essential part even in our homes, our clothing, and our food. More abundant, better quality, lower-priced coal and steel mean the opportunity for everyone to buy more and for every family to achieve a higher standard of living. The size and freedom of the single market will make it possible to develop mass production, which is the only way to obtain lower costs, expanded markets and greater production.

But this single market which includes the territories of our six countries has another significance. How can we help but be impressed, when we consider the activities entrusted to the Community, by this extraordinary concentration of iron and coal, by the density of the mining resources and industrial installations in such a limited area, which undoubtedly represents a concentration unique in the world.

Note how the basin of the North of France is prolonged into Belgium, how the Belgian coal mines fit together with the coal mines of Aix and the Ruhr; look at the Campine which is shared by Belgium and the Netherlands, and the same coal divided between the Saar and Lorraine, the same iron ore between Lorraine and Luxembourg! These resources which nature has made the primary industrial asset of Europe have been the stake of struggles for domination between States and industries. By erasing the divisions which men have arbitrarily made, we are today recreating the natural basin whose unity they have broken and whose development they have limited.

In the attainment of these objectives, the Treaty and Convention provide for stages. Fully aware of the adaptations which are necessary, we shall carry out the mandate entrusted to us with determination, but also with caution.

COOPERATION OF THE HIGH AUTHORITY WITH GOVERNMENTS, PRODUCERS, WORKERS AND CONSUMERS

It is not our task to direct the production of coal and steel. That is the role of industry. Our task is to establish and maintain conditions under which production will develop to the best advantage of the common interest.

We will immediately establish contact with the governments, the producers, the workers, the consumers and the dealers, as well as with the associations which the various groups have created. Thus from the beginning, we will place the operation of the Community on the basis of constant consultation. Thus we will establish among all concerned a common view and a mutual recognition. Thus we ourselves will obtain an overall picture of the situation of the Community and of the problems which it faces; thus can be prepared the concrete form of the measures which must be taken to meet these problems.

We shall submit a report containing this overall picture to the Common Assembly during its second meeting five months from now. Sometime in the next few weeks, we will bring together the *Consultative Committee*, composed of business men, workers, consumers, and dealers.

In all cases provided by the Treaty we will submit our decisions to the test of discussion and we will render public the reasons for them.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY

The prosperity of our European Community is indissolubly linked with the development of international trade; the Community in its turn will contribute to solving the problems of trade which the world now faces.

We are determined to seek without delay, in direct conversations, the means of carrying into effect the declared intention of the British government to establish the closest association with the Community.

We are convinced that in the execution of the mandate which has been given us by the parliaments of our six countries, we can envisage a close and fruitful cooperation with the United States, which, since Mr. Schuman's proposal of May 9, 1950, have given us repeated proof of their active sympathy.

We will make contact with the United Nations and the Organization for European Economic Cooperation. We will develop with the Council of Europe all of the forms of cooperation and mutual assistance provided by the Treaty.

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We are only at the beginning of the effort which Europe must accomplish in order finally to achieve unity, prosperity and peace.

Our obligations require us to get down to work without delay. We have both immediate responsibilities and the task of preparing for basic transformations; these responsibilities are so important that no time should be lost in getting started.

We can afford no further delay in the building of Europe.