

# 'In their turn, Dr Adenauer, Mr Bech and Mr Robert Schuman confirm the need for a united Europe' from Le Monde (27 September 1956)


**Caption:** On 27 September 1956, the French daily newspaper Le Monde reviews the speeches made by Robert Schuman, Joseph Bech and Konrad Adenauer at the Grandes Conférences Catholiques (Major Catholic Debates), held in Brussels the previous day.

**Source:** Le Monde. dir. de publ. BEUVE-MÉRY, Hubert. 27.09.1956, n° 3 632. Paris: Le Monde. "MM. Adenauer, Bech et Robert Schuman affirment à leur tour la nécessité de l'Europe unie", auteur:Le Lorrain, Georges , p. 5.

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## Speeches from the 'Grandes Conférences Catholiques' (Major Catholic Debates)

### In their turn, Dr Adenauer, Mr Bech and Mr Robert Schuman confirm the need for a united Europe

*From our special correspondent Georges Le Lorrain*

Brussels, 26 September. Speaking yesterday evening to the 'Grandes Conférences Catholiques', together with Mr Joseph Bech, Prime Minister of Luxembourg, and Mr Robert Schuman on the theme 'Why must Europeans unite?', Chancellor Adenauer evoked 'European disarray and the responsibility of the Christian community'. In essence, he said:

'A completely new political alignment is taking shape in the world today. Action is therefore necessary, otherwise Europe will disappear from the world scene where, since the time of the Greeks and Romans, it has played a decisive role. Undoubtedly, all risk of war is now excluded between European nations, but more needs to be done.'

According to the Chancellor, four factors are behind the new developments in the world political order: the consolidation of the USSR resulting from Western discord; the concentration of political and economic power in the United States; the enormous difference between the political and economic strengths of the 'Super Powers', the United States and the USSR, and those of other countries; and, lastly, the appearance of coloured people on the world scene.

Dr Adenauer continued:

'The European Union is therefore a necessity. We must ruthlessly jettison any scruples resulting from nationalistic ideas and traditions. European integration must not be rigid, it must be as supple and flexible as possible. For the peoples of Europe, it must not be a suffocating breastplate, but rather a support, and it must respond to the rightful concerns of each nation. The future of Europe is that of each European nation. Maybe Great Britain will come and join our circle, but European Catholics must not forget that millions of human beings live in godless states where personal freedoms are not recognised.'

For Mr Bech, economic integration is a matter of greater urgency than political union. He referred to the Benelux countries as an example. Europe, defied by Nasser, has now become 'the sick man' of the world, lacks solidarity and must unite. Whether it is a Europe of six or of fifteen does not matter. What matters is that we get a move on.

Mr Robert Schuman expressed his confidence in European unity. However, he regretted the number and the complexity of the measures put forward with a view to achieving integration. There was a danger that they would lead to stagnation, a weariness in the process which would jeopardise the future of a united Europe. Nevertheless, Europe was the target of the current conflicts in the Middle East and in North Africa. Under the umbrella of 'anti-colonialism', antagonistic feelings have coalesced against a divided Europe. 'We must react,' concluded Mr Schuman. 'Our civilising endeavours in our overseas territories must be coordinated. We must invest together in the underdeveloped countries of Africa and Asia. Now that the United Nations Organisation no longer meets our needs, European integration is more necessary than ever, and we must establish a truly humanitarian and Christian community.'

Today, Wednesday, Chancellor Adenauer was on his way back to Bonn and will not be returning to Brussels.