

Letter from Jean Monnet to Pierre Pflimlin (12 February 1951)

Caption: In this Note sent to Pierre Pflimlin, French Agriculture Minister, on 12 February 1951, Jean Monnet describes the supranational character that he would like to see applied to the plan for a 'green pool'.

Source: Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe, [s.l.]. Archives Jean Monnet. Fonds AMG. 58/1/7.

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Letter from Jean Monnet to Pierre Pflimlin (12 February 1951)

Dear Mr Pflimlin,

In your letter dated 5 February 1951, you kindly sent me the draft of a note that might be sent to foreign governments as an invitation to take part in negotiations on the organisation of a common market in agricultural products.

You asked me to let you know how I felt about the text before you submitted it for approval by an Interministerial Committee which would also have to decide to which countries and in accordance with which procedures the invitations should be issued.

During our previous conversations, I had the opportunity to give you a general idea of how a pooling of agriculture could take place. I should now like to emphasise a number of specific points.

I believe that it is important that a reading of the document that you intend to send to European countries should result in the retention of two essential ideas:

- the idea of the transfer of sovereignty to a common High Authority,
- the idea of pooling agricultural resources by the countries involved.

Acceptance of those two principles by the countries concerned should be a precondition for their having a seat at the talks.

In order to remain faithful to the declaration of 9 May 1950, it would be desirable to propose clearly that the agricultural resources of participating countries be pooled by placing them under a common High Authority.

However, in your draft note, the idea of a High Authority is presented merely as a proposal from the French Government rather than as a fundamental principle.

Presenting it in such a way would certainly lead to more countries supporting the Plan, but it would certainly lead the negotiations towards the creation of a consultative body without any powers of arbitration and, therefore, doomed to being ineffectual.

Given that, it is not possible to see how the agricultural resources of participating countries could be pooled in an effective way.

Furthermore, to show the clear linkage between the agricultural organisation and the Schuman Plan, it would have been appropriate to point out that two of the institutions provided for therein, the Court of Justice and the Common Assembly, also apply to agriculture. As for the Council of Ministers and the High Authority, it is clear that they remain separate, since they are technical bodies and are, in a way, the forerunners, at federal level, of a genuine ministerial department.

As regards the form of the document, it seems to me that the text should be very brief so as to highlight the two crucial ideas of the 'High Authority' and the pooling of resources. Hence, the explanatory part which, in your draft, comes before the proposal (pages 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) should be included in an annex that fleshes out the French proposals. This annex could be submitted for approval by the Interministerial Committee at the same time as the draft note that you kindly sent me.

Finally, the negotiations on the Schuman Plan demonstrated how useful it is, right from the outset of the Conference, to submit a working document in the form of a draft treaty which might be used straightaway as a basis for discussion by the foreign delegations. I put this suggestion to you in case you should find it

useful.

Those are my main comments after reading your draft. I am at your disposal to discuss it in a more detailed way before the Interministerial Conference.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Monnet