

Address given by Jean Monnet (Strasbourg, 11 September 1952)

Caption: On 11 September 1952, Jean Monnet, President of the High Authority of the ECSC, opens the inaugural session of the Common Assembly with an address in which he sets out the role of the first Community institutions and emphasises the importance of establishing a single market in Europe.

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.

Copyright: All rights of reproduction, public communication, adaptation, distribution or dissemination via Internet, internal network or any other means are strictly reserved in all countries.

The documents available on this Web site are the exclusive property of their authors or right holders.

Requests for authorisation are to be addressed to the authors or right holders concerned.

Further information may be obtained by referring to the legal notice and the terms and conditions of use regarding this site.

URL: http://www.cvce.eu/obj/address_given_by_jean_monnet_strasbourg_11_september_1952-en-3b3d5393-e7ee-4b04-9867-3dfddd5654b4.html

Publication date: 24/10/2012

Address given by Jean Monnet (Strasbourg, 11 September 1952)

*Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

In addressing you for the first time I am very conscious of the importance of the relationship about to be established between the Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community and the High Authority.

The satisfactory operation and the future of our Community will depend above all on our two institutions, on the action they take and on the relations they maintain.

This Community is based on the separation of powers. The task of the Court of Justice is to ensure the rule of law in the interpretation and application of the Treaty. The principal task of the Council is to make possible the necessary adjustments between coal and steel, which from now on is the field of action of our Community, and the other fields which will continue under the sovereignty of the States. The High Authority has been entrusted with the implementation of the objectives laid down in the Treaty. It is to you, and to you only, that the High Authority is responsible.

Within the limits of its competence your Assembly is sovereign. It is the first European Assembly endowed with the power of decision.

This responsibility makes you and us the trustees of the entire Community and together the servants of its institutions.

In the exercise of their functions the members of the High Authority have solemnly pledged themselves to neither request nor accept any instructions and to abstain from any actions incompatible with the supranational character of their mission. Your mission has the same character. In the performance of your duties you will be the representatives of the Community as a whole.

In order to maintain this sovereignty and your freedom of decision we have entrusted with the preparations for this first session a strictly temporary and completely independent secretariat, a Committee composed of the Secretaries-General of the Parliaments of our six countries and of the clerk of the Consultative Assembly.

I want to thank them for the great work they have accomplished. I also want to thank the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe for the valuable assistance he has given us. This temporary committee will report to you on the fulfilment of its mission.

At your January session the High Authority will have to submit to you a general report on the situation of the Community. This report will be accompanied by an estimate of expenditures which will in fact constitute the first European budget and which will carry the obligation to levy the corresponding financial resources, the first European tax. Indeed, the resources required to fulfil the tasks of the Community and to allow for the working of its institutions, and particularly the budget of your own assembly, will proceed not from contributions made by the states, but from levies directly assessed on production within the Community. In your regular session in the month of May of next year the responsibility the High Authority has towards you will come into operation.

The Treaty provides that an extraordinary meeting of the Assembly can be convened at the request of the Council, of the High Authority or of a majority of the members of the Assembly. We attach great importance to these provisions. We on our part have the intention to make use of this right frequently in order to ensure that we proceed in agreement with you.

But, in addition, independent of the sessions we feel that it is necessary for us to discuss our work with you freely as we progress. The High Authority would welcome your Assembly's electing already at this session a large General Committee with whom we would meet at regular intervals, not to discuss particular technical

problems but to acquire the habit of seeing the Community's problems as a whole and to compel us, the High Authority, to discuss with you extensively the pursuit of the policy which the Treaty has entrusted to us. We would then work out together with your Committee, as the High Authority develops its organization in meeting the problems facing it, what concrete forms our co-operation could take.

The task which we shall fulfil together is, for the first time in European history, to create a single market for 155 million consumers now separated in six countries. It is true that in the beginning this single market will be established only for coal and steel, but our economic system is entirely dependent on these two products.

In the past year the industries of the Community have produced 230 million tons of coal and almost 40 million tons of steel. At this level each inhabitant of our Community has on average only half as much coal and steel as a citizen of the United States. In undertaking to create this vast European market for coal and steel, which is as important as the market in the U.S., we shall eliminate the obstacles preventing the development of production; we shall give producers the possibility to arrive at mass production; we shall help to bring about conditions making for an increase of the standard of living of the European population. Gradually the standard will be brought up to the one which the descendants of the emigrants who came from the old European continent have already reached on the far shores of the Atlantic Ocean. We shall particularly improve the living conditions of the 1,500,000 workers who are employed in the mines and factories of the Community.

In order to attain these aims it is our duty to do away with customs barriers, to eliminate cartels, to prevent excessive concentrations of economic power. The creation of this single market — without barriers, without discrimination, without domination — will ensure the pooling of resources. It will give the enterprises equal access to supplies and markets, and it will give the consumers equal access to all the sources of supply of the Community. In this way, production will develop under the most favourable conditions and will be utilized in the common interest.

The High Authority after its establishment on August 10 immediately began to prepare the initial measures necessary for the creation of this common market. The measures are complex and manifold. I name some of the most urgent ones.

Already at this early date the High Authority must survey the supplies and the requirements of the Community in order to decide to which extent an allocation of supplies will be necessary for the beginning of 1953 and in what manner it will be possible to integrate its action with that of the Organization for European Economic Co-operation.

Negotiations will have to take place which will make it possible to eliminate customs tariffs and quotas between the six countries without other States being able to claim to benefit from these provisions under the most favoured nation clause.

The High Authority together with the Governments will undertake to examine the provisions in the field of legislation and regulation, mainly regarding taxes and the fixing of prices, which might unbalance competition in the common market. A Committee will be convened to suggest measures to eliminate discrimination in the field of transport.

The Consultative Committee composed of representatives of producers, workers, consumers and dealers will be constituted within a short time. We will work in collaboration with Governments, enterprises, workers, consumers and their associations. In organizing our services we intend to create the most limited administrative organization possible and to rely as much as possible on the knowledge and experience acquired outside our institution by the heads of our industrial enterprises, the leaders of our trade unions and by international organizations.

At your January session we shall submit to you the first report on the general situation of our Community. We shall not aim at accumulating statistical data but at ascertaining the position of our industries and their prospects within our economies and on the world markets in a way which will give those who take part in

the life of our Community an overall picture which can guide them in their actions.

The establishment of our Community will transform not only the relations among our six countries, but also those between other countries and Europe.

On the morrow of the assumption of functions by the High Authority, the British Government, pointing out its intention to establish the closest possible association with the Community as soon as the High Authority was established, communicated their readiness to enter into talks with the President of the High Authority.

Following this declaration I had talks in London on behalf of the High Authority with the representatives of the British Government.

We are all aware of the tasks, interests, and ideals linking Great Britain to our Community. We are not going to try and predict or in any way to set down beforehand the developments which might result from our day-to-day co-operation with the permanent delegation accredited by the British Government to the High Authority. The task entrusted to this delegation is entirely new and consists in laying progressively, in co-operation with the High Authority and in conformity with the Treaty, the foundations of a close and lasting association between Great Britain and the Community.

You will no doubt share the satisfaction experienced by the High Authority and the members of the Council in seeing England associate herself on the very first day with our European work.

On the very morrow of the assumption of functions of the High Authority and as soon as the British Government re-affirmed their will of association, the Secretary of State declared in Washington that it was the intention of the United States to give the Coal and Steel Community the vigorous support justified by its importance for the political and economic unification of Europe and that in view of the entry in force of the Treaty, the United States will henceforth deal with the Community as far as questions of coal and steel are concerned.

We were sure to get the support of the United States but its decision to associate itself with the Community constitutes a new development in its policy, the extent of which we appreciate.

When we received the representatives of the U. S. Government to our Community I could not help conjuring up the moment when the nations of the old Continent, by receiving the first ambassadors sent by America, gave strong support to the formation of the American Federation. Like the Americans of that day, the Europeans of to-day need loyal, trustworthy friends to support them in their efforts.

It is in this spirit that we wish to establish a real, tangible co-operation with the Council of Europe and I am happy to see on these benches such a great number of people who for years have been fighting for Europe in this same hall. The Protocol signed by the Foreign Ministers at the same time as the Treaty provides for the liaison between the Council of Europe and the European Coal and Steel Community. The President of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has sent me the resolution inviting the Secretary-General to take up contact with the High Authority in order to set down the most appropriate form of this co-operation.

The High Authority will have to deliberate longer to answer the invitation addressed to it by the Council of Europe. But I have already had a first talk with the Secretary-General.

The High Authority has been trying to seek above all the concrete form of the desired co-operation. This must not be set down in advance in rigid lines. The form will have to be defined with respect to definite problems as they arise. The form will have to remain flexible so that it will be capable of development as soon as the character of the institutions originating to-day becomes clearer. If this co-operation is to bear fruit it is essential for the nature of these relations to take into account the basic differences between the institutions of the Community and those of the Council of Europe.

Bearing these differences in mind I have already suggested to the Secretary-General certain forms of co-operation which seem to me to be particularly promising.

Why, for instance, should not the High Authority go before the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe — a Committee adapted to these new technical relations — and discuss problems of common interest? Moreover, under the terms of the Protocol which I have just recalled to you, the High Authority has to relay its reports to the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe. Your Assembly also will relay its reports. The High Authority would be perfectly willing to answer a request made by the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe in case the latter should wish to hear it and discuss with it, and obtain from it, explanations clarifying the reports made.

So far, I have only been dealing with suggestions which do not in any way exhaust all the possibilities.

To my mind, it would be a mistake to draw a rigid and absolute demarcation line between the Council of Europe and the Community; it would be just as much a mistake to mix them up. These two sets of institutions must be provided with links between them and must have a chance of developing alongside each other.

If, while embarking on the process of unification of our six countries, we succeed in maintaining a constant agreement with all the countries of the Council of Europe and the United States, we shall have made an essential contribution to the cause of progress and peace.

*Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

In all our future efforts we shall have to keep in mind that mankind cannot give concrete shape to all the potentialities with which Nature and History have endowed it, if it does not live in harmony with its time.

The single market which we will institute for the first time represents one of the essential elements for achieving great developments in production. These developments are necessary and are possible, but only if we unite.

Such union cannot be based exclusively on men of good will. Rules are indispensable. The tragic events we have experienced and those we are experiencing now may have made us wiser. But we will pass away, others will come to replace us; we will not be able to leave them our personal experience because this experience will disappear with us. What we can leave to them are institutions. The life of institutions is longer than that of men, and thus institutions may, if they are set up in the right manner, accumulate and transmit the wisdom of succeeding generations.

In these days when the first supranational institutions of Europe are being established, we are conscious of the beginning of the great European revolution of our time: the revolution which, on our Continent, aims at substituting unity in freedom and in diversity for tragic national rivalries, the revolution which tends to stop the decay of our civilization and to initiate a new renaissance.

Our common supranational institutions are still weak and fragile; it is our duty to develop them, to make them strong and to protect them from our tendency to reach short-run compromises. For, since they have sprung into being, the Europe which we wish to leave to our children is no longer only an aspiration. It has become a reality.