

## Telegram from Maurice Faure to Maurice Couve de Murville (13 November 1956)

**Caption:** On 13 November 1956, Maurice Faure, French State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Head of the French Delegation to the Intergovernmental Conference on the Common Market and Euratom, sends a telegram to Maurice Couve de Murville, French Ambassador to Germany, in which he informs him of the substance of a letter sent by Guy Mollet, President of the French Council of Ministers, to Konrad Adenauer, German Chancellor, outlining the importance that he places on the establishment of the proposed Euratom Community.

**Source:** Ministère des Affaires étrangères; Commission de publication des DDF (sous la dir.). Documents diplomatiques français. Volume III: 1956, 24 octobre-31 décembre. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1990. 642 p. p. 288-289.

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## Mr Maurice Faure, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, to Mr Couve de Murville, French Ambassador to Bonn

Paris, 13 November 1956, 22.00

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Please find below the text of a personal message from the Prime Minister to Chancellor Adenauer. Kindly forward it to the Chancellor without delay.

‘Dear Chancellor,

I am anxious to emphasise to you once again the great importance which I attach to the discussions that we had last Tuesday. In these dramatic times, when the dangers threatening Europe are clearer than ever, our meeting demonstrated our solidarity and our desire to work towards Western unity in a spirit of complete confidence.

The crisis that we are undergoing shows that atomic energy is one of the areas in which the strengthening of European cohesion is most urgently required. We cannot allow the material well-being and development of our countries to be increasingly dependent on oil from the Middle East. By uniting the atomic destiny of our peoples, we shall protect them from the political vagaries and influences which dominate that region of the world.

The work to be carried out by the three independent figures, whose nomination we have asked Mr Spaak to speed up, will give us a clear idea of what needs to be done.

However, there is no doubt that, whatever the scale and speed of our enterprise, our countries will need substantial quantities of fissile material supplied by the United States in order to speed up the actual accomplishment thereof. If these materials were subject to unilateral control exercised either by the United States themselves or by the agency of the United Nations with the involvement of the Soviet Union and the Arab and Asian countries, the supply thereof would, over time, be increasingly difficult for the countries of Europe to accept and would compromise not only their independence but also the essential solidarity between Western Europe and the United States.

Therefore, it is extremely important politically for Euratom itself to exercise sole control over all nuclear materials which are imported or produced. We can legitimately ask the United States to transfer control to Euratom only if the control and ownership of the fissile materials are subjected by Euratom to rules which are identical to those already applied in Britain and the United States. Under these rules, Euratom would retain exclusive ownership of the fissile materials. However, the users could be allowed to acquire ownership of the ores and non-enriched materials.

The solution envisaged by the ministers for foreign affairs in Paris on 20 October, which defined Euratom’s rights over fissile materials as *sui generis* rights, is clearly insufficient in this respect. It would not make it possible to ensure that the United States relinquished to Euratom the right of resale which they exercise over nuclear material supplied to third countries.

I should add that Euratom’s exclusive right of ownership could be limited to a period of a duration to be determined at a later date. At the end of that period the system could be reviewed and possibly amended by the Council of Ministers. In that regard I would remind you that the problem of private ownership of fissile materials will not arise, in any event not for several years. In the near future most fissile materials will be imported from the United States, which will demand that they remain the property of either the American State or Euratom.

I personally attach the greatest importance to this matter on which depends Euratom’s policy remit and, hence, its contribution to the creation of a united Europe, which you and I firmly support. The aim is to develop relations between Europe and America on the basis of equality.

Should you deem it necessary, Mr Maurice Faure is prepared to travel to Bonn to set out in greater detail this proposal which I am submitting to you for your personal consideration.

I should be pleased to have your agreement so that we may jointly authorise our experts to draw up the relevant implementation procedures. By removing this final obstacle in the Brussels negotiations, a rapid decision would allow them to progress at a swifter pace, as we would both like.

Yours etc.,

*Signed: Guy Mollet.*