

## 1958–1968 Successes and crises

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In response to the energy crisis caused by the 1956 Suez Crisis, the Common Assembly proposed extending the powers of the European Steel and Coal Community (ECSC) to other sources of energy such as gas, electricity and atomic energy. Jean Monnet, however, preferred to have established a separate atomic energy community because he was convinced that atomic energy was a source which had great potential for industrial development and that it was essential to promote applied research for its civil use. The Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) put Louis Armand, an engineer and the President of SNCF (French National Railways), in charge of a study into the prospects for nuclear energy in Europe. In his report, Louis Armand illustrated the need for the countries of Europe to join together in creating a nuclear industry capable of taking up the challenge and filling the energy deficit facing Europe because of the exhaustion of its coal deposits and of its dependence on oil producers.

Rather than a mere Atomic Energy Community, Germany and the three Benelux countries were particularly keen on the creation of a general common market. However, that idea came up against the strong protectionist tradition of the French business world. For his part, Jean Monnet felt that such a community would be too large and too difficult to manage. Ultimately, in order to reconcile the interests of France and of its partners, Monnet proposed the establishment of both Communities.