

Note from Jean Monnet to Robert Schuman (9 March 1951)

Caption: In this note to Robert Schuman, French Foreign Minister, Jean Monnet sets out the terms for the participation of the Saar, which is economically attached to France, in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).

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Note from Mr Monnet to President Schuman on the participation of the Saar in the Schuman Plan (9 March 1951)

1. Mr Bruce told me of the telephone conversation that he had this morning with Mr McCloy about the negotiations that Mr McCloy is conducting with Mr Adenauer on demergers in the Ruhr. Those negotiations are coming to an end. Furthermore, every possible effort is being made to ensure that the Germans accept Articles 60 and 61 of the draft Treaty. Accordingly, it is possible that we shall be able to initial the documents early next week and sign them before you leave for the United States.

This time, Mr McCloy was concerned at the misunderstandings that might result from the recent controversy about the Saar and which might hinder the signature of the Schuman Plan.

Following recent statements by Mr Hoffmann, the German press has jumped on the issue.

2. Mr Bruce asked me to tell you that he could not imagine the Saar issue creating difficulties since the Allies had agreed that it must be resolved through the Peace Treaty with Germany. Mr Bruce is at your disposal to discuss this with you.

3. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, particularly with our Allies, allow me to list the suggestions that we have already discussed:

The Schuman Plan may not in any way prejudice the future regime for the Saar. Its provisions must take account of the current situation and remain valid, without changing the relative positions of France and Germany, whatever the final regime for the Saar might be. They must, of course, be such that they apply to the Saar without leaving any room for dispute.

The Saar is currently a territory politically separated from Germany and economically linked to France which, under the territory's Constitution, is also responsible for the Saar's international relations.

This is essentially a provisional status that applies only until there is a peace settlement.

It is clear that any solution that pre-empt a final settlement of the Saar problem and alters the status quo, one way or the other, will be deemed unacceptable either by France or by Germany, as the case may be.

Therefore, there can be no question of the Saar acceding to the Treaty as a seventh state which would mean asking Germany and the other countries involved to recognise the de facto regime in the Saar for the next 50 years.

By virtue of the very principle of the Franco-Saar Economic Union, it is France that must commit the Saar by signing the Treaty, and it is the French Government that must assume the obligations and exercise the rights conferred on participating governments under the Treaty as far as its implementation in the Saar is concerned.

4. As a result, the French Government could inform the other Governments taking part in the Schuman Plan of its intention to settle the participation of the Saar in the following way:

(a) this settlement will be provisional, and the French Government would make it clear that it has no intention of pre-judging the terms of the Peace Treaty;

(b) the article in the draft Treaty defining the territories that it covers should refer to 'European customs territories of the High Contracting Parties', a wording which would include the Saar and which is already now in the French-German trade agreement; accordingly, there will be no separate French signature on behalf of the Saar.

5. Having established that, France should, as far as is possible, guarantee the inhabitants of the Saar that

their interests will be defended under a practical and provisional procedure that will be in force until the territory's international status is finally determined:

(a) as long as the current regime remains in place, France will keep one or two seats in the Joint Assembly that would be filled by nominations from the Saar Parliament;

(b) in the same way, the interests of producers, workers and consumers will be represented in the Consultative Committee pursuant to conditions enshrined in an agreement between the French Government and the Saar Government;

(c) the French representative in the Council of Ministers will act in consultation with the Saar Government;

(d) recommendations from the High Authority will be communicated through the French Government to the Saar Government, which will be bound by France's signature and by the arrangements reached between France and the Saar.

To this end, all these provisions will be the subject of a Protocol between the French Government and the Saar Government.