

Address given by Jean Monnet (Luxembourg City Hall, 10 August 1952)

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Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would particularly like to thank His Royal Highness the Prince of Luxembourg for honouring us by his presence at this reception. Mr Mayor, Minister, I also thank you very warmly on behalf of my colleagues in the High Authority for the cordial welcome you have just extended to us. Mr Mayor, you said that we were pioneers and builders. Generally speaking, pioneers begin working as best they can, camping wherever they can, for better or worse, and often under canvas. Thanks to you, gentlemen, the High Authority has done better. A fortnight ago the ministers from the six countries met and, in one historic night, decided that the High Authority would begin its work in Luxembourg. No preparations had been made and yet, in fewer than ten days, you have managed to provide us with the buildings we needed in order to start to work, and to equip them. I know how much each one of you — and each one of you, the members of the City Council — has had to do in taking the initiative, giving instructions and issuing authorisations to make sure that everything would be ready for the installation of the High Authority by today, 10 August, the day set by the governments of the six Community countries. The installation committee which you set up and the technical departments of the State and the City vied with each other to get it done. I cannot acknowledge by name everyone to whom we offer our congratulations and our gratitude today. They go, in particular, to the organisational talent of Mr Reichling, who, from day one, centralised everyone's efforts and maintained contact with our departments in Paris and with your architects; they go to Mr Schaak, the Government architect, Mr Schmit, the City architect, and Mr Heinze, architect for the Luxembourg Railways. We know that they have had sleepless nights this week, but they achieved their results; the buildings in which the High Authority is to be installed will be ready and we can move into our offices from tomorrow. Lastly our friend Mr [Werner], who, throughout the negotiations for the establishment of our Community, contributed to their success by his spirit of cooperation and his wide experience, and took on his share of all this work without counting the cost. I thank him most particularly on behalf of my colleagues. You have made it possible for us to begin our work on the appointed day. And let me tell you, Mr Mayor, there are many of us who had not ... or at any rate some of us who had never been to Luxembourg. But I can assure that those who know Luxembourg and those who, like me, are newcomers to this city are happy to be here and happy to be received by you. You said, Minister, that we bore a heavy responsibility on our shoulders and that success in building Europe would depend partly on the work of the High Authority, reminding us that the Schuman Plan was one of the foundations of that success. But I should not like you to dissociate the High Authority from the responsibilities which the governments and administrations must also take on. And we will overcome our difficulties and succeed in our task only if the administrations and governments themselves make an effort to break, if I may say so, old habits — habits which we mean to change by organising Europe on a supranational basis but which, you know as well as I do, are still firmly entrenched in many of the national organisations with which we have to deal. For our own part, we will do everything in our power, as you know, to make sure that this first embodiment of Europe, which is what our Community is, is a success and acts as the spur to further developments. We will no longer have to define principles, as you have put it; we have moved on now to practical action. And what we must busy ourselves with is creating real achievements which have a tangible effect on the day-to-day lives of the peoples of our six countries. We are confident that, little by little, we will arrive at a situation in which today's resistance and mutual distrust will evaporate and that the popular wish for a united Europe will finally win the day and make Europe a reality. I have read somewhere that people start their experience afresh with each generation and that it is therefore vital for institutions which last longer than a single human lifetime to acquire wisdom, in other words to become capable of channelling the work of successive inexperienced generations. I believe that very strongly. We must make sure that Europe's supranational organisations grow strong and wise. To summarise, we will have to achieve in Europe that solidarity on a broader scale of which you have managed to supply a model here in your country. To conclude, Minister, Mr Mayor, I would like to say once again that we are glad to be starting our work as your guests here.