

Address given by Walter Hallstein: the revival of European integration (Bonn, 14 May 1956)

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We must finally avoid allowing ourselves to be forced into a too rigid methodological pattern. The whole way need not be covered in one bound. Nor can all the stages be completed in an order of continuity settled in advance. Again, François-Poncet recently used a very good comparison in this respect. A swimmer, he said, can enter the water in two ways: he can dive in, or walk in gradually. In the question of the unification of Europe, the jump from the springboard — the European defence and political communities — did not come off. So we must get used to the idea of walking into the pool gradually. The Coal and Steel Community was an initial step; the next steps are indicated by the Messina Resolutions, and this is what the Messina Resolutions mean.

As you may know, an expert conference, which was held in Brussels, just concluded its work, and they drafted a report they addressed to the governments concerned. This comprehensive report — about 150 pages — makes practical proposals to advance European integration. They concern mainly two subjects. First, the Common Market. This was the predominate feature of the Messina Resolutions: a gradual fusion of the six national markets into one single market having the character of a domestic market. And, as a device to achieve this end, the experts considered a customs and economic union to be the best solution.

The other subject is atomic energy. Here, too, the Brussels consultations produced a practical result. Realising that the task connected with this — research, security, joint facilities, supply of nuclear fuel — exceed the possibilities at the disposal of individual national states, the experts demanded an international organisation, although in this field and this organisation is more or less modelled after the example of the Coal and Steel Community. At the end of this month, the Foreign Ministers are going to meet at Venice in order to discuss these proposals made by the experts, and I hope we shall come to a common decision to start negotiations between state delegations about these two topics.