

Address given by Jean Monnet at the session to initial the ECSC Treaty (Paris, 19 March 1951)

Caption: On 19 March 1951, Jean Monnet, Chairman of the Schuman Plan conference, welcomes the decision taken by the representatives of the six governments that participated in the negotiations on the Schuman Plan in Paris to initial the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) at the Quai d'Orsay.

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Declaration of Mr. Jean Monnet President of the Schuman Plan Conference

The Delegations entrusted by the German, Belgian, French, Italian, Luxembourg and Netherlands Governments with the task of placing in effect the French proposals of May 9, 1950, have finished their work. In the presence of Mr. Robert Schuman, Minister of Foreign Affairs, they initialed this morning the documents which they have prepared - a draft Treaty constituting a European Coal and Steel Community, and a draft Convention for the transition period.

These documents will be forwarded to the governments of the six countries. A meeting of Ministers will then be held, at a date to be fixed, to take certain final decisions. Lastly, the texts will be submitted to the different Parliaments for ratification.

First of all, it is important that you should know that the delegations have accomplished their work by initialing an agreement without reservation.

My colleagues and I wish to draw your attention to three essential points which characterize the basic transformation which the Schuman Plan must bring to Western Europe: First, the supranational character of the proposed Community. Next, the creation of a single market of 150 million consumers and the pooling of coal and steel resources. Finally, the elimination of restrictive cartel practices and of excessive concentrations of economic power.

Of primary importance is the supranational character of the proposed Community. For the first time, six countries have come together not to seek a provisional compromise among national interests, but to take a concerted view of their common interest. This single view is expressed in a limited delegation of sovereignty to common institutions to be charged by the six countries with the fulfillment of functions which have until now been reserved to national sovereignties. This represents a fundamental change in the nature of the relations among the countries of Europe, from the national form which opposed and divided them to the supranational form which reconciles and unites them.

The next point is the pooling of the production of coal and steel through the creation of a single market covering the territory of the six countries, in which all producers will have free and equal access to markets and all consumers a free and equal access to supplies. No longer will customs duties or quantitative restrictions hamper the movement of coal and steel within the territory formed by the six countries.

In this market, discrimination will be abolished; in particular, during periods of shortage, the total resources of these basic raw materials - regardless of origin - will be allocated among all of the countries according to their needs.

Thus, to the advantage of all, there will be opened to each producer in these countries a market of 150 million inhabitants - as large as that of the United States; thus will be traced the path to an increase in production and productivity on a level with modern technology.

Finally, it should be emphasized that freedom and initiative are at the very basis of the projected organization. The enterprises will have complete responsibility for their own management. Initiative will be restored by the elimination of restrictive cartel practices, the consumer will be protected against excessive concentrations of economic power. Thus will be stimulated technical progress, the increase of productivity and the improvement of the standard of living.

The institutions and rules worked out by the Conference are democratic both in inspiration and in expression. The High Authority, executive organ of the Community, will be held responsible to a common Assembly, representing collectively the Parliaments and thus the peoples of the member States; the rule of law will be guaranteed by a Court of Justice. Domination of any sort will be excluded, and the necessary coordination between the action of the supranational authority and the general policy of the national governments will be insured by a Council of Ministers.

This Treaty for the Schuman Plan should open a breach in national sovereignty, by substituting for the barriers of the past, which have until now divided and impoverished us, common rules accepted by all and applicable to all for the common good of our six countries.