



**European
Community**

PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY INFORMATION SERVICE

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

THE SCHUMAN PLAN DECLARATION

On May 9, 1950, Robert Schuman, then French Minister of Foreign Affairs, speaking in Paris on behalf of the French Government, made the following declaration which was the first step in the creation of the European Community. The Schuman plan for pooling the coal and steel economies of Western Europe under a common authority came into existence in 1952 as the European Coal and Steel Community, with Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands as members. This first step led the six member nations to form, in 1958, the European Economic Community (Common Market) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom).

"World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of constructive efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it.

"The contribution which an organized and living Europe can bring to civilization is indispensable to the maintenance of peaceful relations. In taking upon herself for more than twenty years the role of champion of a united Europe, France has always had as her essential aim the service of peace. A united Europe was not achieved, and we had war.

"Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single, general plan. It will be built through concrete achievements, which first create a de facto solidarity. The gathering of the nations of Europe requires the elimination of the age-old opposition of France and Germany. The first concern in any action undertaken must be these two countries.

"With this aim in view, the French Government proposes to take action immediately on one limited but decisive point. The French Government proposes to place Franco-German production of coal and steel under common "higher authority", within the framework of an organization open to the participation of the other countries of Europe.

"The pooling of coal and steel production will immediately provide for the setting-up of common bases for economic development as a first step in the federation of Europe, and will change the destinies of those regions which have long been devoted to the manufacture of munitions of war, of which they have been the most constant victims.

"The solidarity in production thus established will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes, not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible. The setting-up of this powerful production unit, open to all countries willing to take part, and eventually capable of providing all the member countries with the basic elements of industrial production on the same terms, will lay the real foundations for their economic unification.

"This production will be offered to the world as a whole without distinction or exception, with the aim of contributing to the raising of living standards and the promotion of peaceful achievements. Europe, with new means at her disposal, will be able to pursue the realization of one of her essential tasks, the development of the African continent.

"In this way there will be realized, simply and speedily, that fusion of interests which is indispensable to the establishment of a common economic system; and that will be the leaven from which may grow a wider and deeper community between countries long opposed to one another by sanguinary divisions.

"By pooling basic production and by setting up a new higher-authority, whose decisions will be binding on France, Germany, and other member countries, these proposals will build the first concrete foundation of the European Federation which is indispensable to the preservation of peace.

"In order to promote the realization of the objectives it has thus defined, the French Government is ready to open negotiations on the following basis:

"The task with which this common "higher authority" will be charged will be that of securing in the shortest possible time the modernization of production and the improvement of its quality;

the supply of coal and steel on identical terms to the French and German markets, as well as to the markets of other member countries; the development in common of exports to other countries; and the equalization as well as improvement of the living conditions of the workers in these industries.

"To achieve these objectives, starting from the very disparate conditions in which the productions of the member countries are at present situated, certain transitional measures will have to be instituted, such as a production and investment plan, compensating machinery for equating prices, and an amortization fund to facilitate the rationalization of production. The movement of coal and steel between member countries will immediately be freed of all customs duties; it will not be permissible to apply differential transport rates to them. Conditions will gradually be created which will spontaneously ensure the most rational distribution of production at the highest level of productivity.

"In contrast to international cartels, which aim at dividing up and exploiting the national markets by means of restrictive practices and the maintenance of high profits, the proposed organization will ensure the fusion of the markets and the expansion of production."

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