

Press conference held by Robert Schuman

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The press conference was held at 6 p.m. on 9 May 1950 in the *Salon de l'Horloge* at the Quai d'Orsay (the French Foreign Ministry). More than 200 journalists from France and abroad were invited to witness the declaration by the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, concerning the pooling of coal and steel resources. But, having been informed of the press conference at the last minute, few were actually able to attend. Only journalists based in Paris witnessed the event. There were no photographers in attendance, nor radio or television to record proceedings. As a matter of interest, Schuman was obliged to record his famous address shortly afterwards for posterity.

The declaration underlined the role played by France in the construction of a strong, prosperous and peaceful Europe, resting on a Franco-German foundation. The declaration did not simply set out the objectives. It also proposed opening negotiations on clearly defined principles. It set out the purpose of the High Authority, which was referred to for the first time in the international arena. In a preliminary statement, René Mayer, the French Minister for Justice and Member of Parliament for Constantine, insisted that France should also invite the other European nations to work jointly to support development in Africa, since France was no longer able to meet the costs of developing its overseas territories alone.