

The ECSC's political role

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The greatest achievement of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was that it laid down the foundations for reconciliation between France and Germany, despite significant economic conflicts of interest. At the same time, a new Community spirit was developing, and unique institutional instruments were being set up within the Community. The trade unions, employers and various pressure groups also began to cooperate. As for the High Authority, it demonstrated its ability to work with the national governments without reducing them to mere onlookers.

The success of the ECSC led its founders to consider extending the scope of cooperation, firstly to other industrial sectors and then to the entire economy. However, significant problems soon emerged when Europe tried to organise a common defence strategy.