

Letter from Jean Monnet to Robert Schuman (Paris, 1 July 1952)

Caption: In a letter to Robert Schuman dated 1 July 1952, Jean Monnet gives a progress report on the measures for breaking up the industrial monopolies and the abolition of the Ruhr cartels, which were scheduled to be undertaken before the establishment of the common market for coal and iron ore on 10 February 1953.

Source: Jean Monnet, Robert Schuman, Correspondance 1947-1953. Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe, Centre de recherches européennes, 1986. 188 p. (Cahiers rouges). p. 145 - 149.

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Letter from Jean Monnet to Robert Schuman

Paris, 1 July 1952

Dear Mr Schuman,

With regard to demergers, we are now in a position to settle the main issues: the dissolution of the DKV [Deutsche Kohlen-Verkaufsgesellschaft], which means organising the new coal marketing body for the Ruhr; reform of the rebate system and, hence, of the old-style cartel-type management of trade in iron and steel products in Germany; the setting up of new steel companies and the linking of coal and steel.

As set out in my memorandum to Hallstein, we needed to be able to count on the Federal Government implementing its commitments in these three areas so that the Government could ratify the Coal and Steel Treaty and convene the Ministerial Conference tasked with setting up the Community institutions.

Following numerous discussions held in The Hague with the Germans, in Bonn with the economic advisers and the representatives of the Federal Government, and in Paris with the Americans, a meeting took place yesterday in Paris between Dr Westrick, Mr Le Vert and Mr Wilner, the assistant to Mr McCloy. At that meeting, the Germans finally accepted all our main arguments.

We are, therefore, now in a position to reach agreement on the basis of what is set out below and for which I would kindly ask your approval. If you agree, I will give the appropriate instructions to Mr Le Vert, while also informing Mr Willner.

The Federal Government will formally agree that the DKV be wound up for good, that the winding-up operation be completed by 1 April 1953 at the latest, at the same time stating that the High Authority may set an earlier date under its existing powers and bearing in mind the creation of the common market. (I do not need to remind you of the importance of the Federal Government's agreement to this on the eve of the Coal and Steel Community, confirming as it does the winding-up of the DKV in very different circumstances from those prevailing in March 1951, and of the linkage between its dissolution and the creation of a common market.)

The Federal Office's power to delegate to the new marketing offices would be strictly limited to specific cases and in the interest of priority users. (This amended Regulation, as adopted by the High Commission and approved by the Germans, will be more restrictive and more satisfactory than the current wording of the Regulation.)

These are the main points that we now have to finalise. With respect to the holding company, I would ask you to leave it to me to work on it with Le Vert and the Americans, with a mandate to accept the German proposal, should it be essential for the settlement of the three main issues.

Jean Monnet