

Address given by Jean Monnet on the occasion of his resignation from the ECSC High Authority (9 June 1955)

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[Jean Monnet] After presiding over the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community for two and a half years, I am leaving Luxembourg, where we have been made so welcome and where we have started our work so successfully. The new President, Mr René Meyer, takes up his post tomorrow, and I have no doubt that what was started, two and a half years ago now, will be continued. What was started is the United States of Europe. I think it is very important that every one of you should realise what the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community and the United States of Europe means for you and for your children in the years to come. The United States of Europe is the federal union of Europe's peoples and countries in a market with 160 million consumers. The Coal and Steel Community is the beginning of it and it is the only federal institution there is in Europe. Recently, there was a conference in Messina attended by the Foreign Ministers of the six governments, and they passed resolutions there on what has been described as the European revival. The final decisions have not yet been adopted, but we should realise how important it already is that six countries should have agreed on the objectives. I will come back shortly to the question of how these objectives are to be attained and whether this approach is leading us towards the United States of Europe. I think that the creation of a United States of Europe and a European Common Market as big as the American market is crucial for the prosperity of Europe's peoples, the well-being of our workers and the solution to our problems. I do not think we can solve our problems by a purely national effort, and the experience we have had with the Coal and Steel Community over the last two years proves it. And this applies to every country in Europe, whichever it may be. I do not think the United States of Europe should be limited to our six countries. Nor the Coal and Steel Community. But it is a start, and one which we want to extend to anyone willing to sign up to the same rules and institutions as our six countries have already accepted. Making further practical progress is, I think, the way we will find the technical solutions to the many problems still outstanding. The main thing is to be able to make a choice, to decide that we will not go back to the League of Nations and that we are moving towards a United States of Europe. It is very important that the general public should grasp the difference between these two options: one of them means the future and progress, the other means a return to the methods of the past, which we know from experience to be ineffectual and which led to war. I think that each of us, in our own surroundings, should do our best to persuade people of this idea. I believe that nothing is more important for the future of us all, for social progress, for guaranteeing peaceful coexistence between East and West, than to move rapidly towards a United States of Europe. In leaving Luxembourg, I am going back to France, where I am firmly resolved to pursue, outside the High Authority, the work I have done my best to carry on inside it.