

Letter from Paul Finet to Victor Larock (19 June 1958)

Caption: Letter sent by the President of the High Authority of the European Coal and Steel Community, Paul Finet, on 19 June 1958, to the President of the Council of the European Economic Community, Victor Larock, on the occasion of the position taking of the presidents of the institutions of the European Communities concerning the choice of the seat of the Communities.

Source: Lettre de Monsieur Paul Finet, Président de la Haute Autorité, en date du 19 juin 1958, à Monsieur Victor Larock, Président du Conseil de la Communauté Economique Européenne, Objet: Avis des Présidents des Institutions des Communautés européennes concernant le choix du siège des Communautés. 614 f/58. Bruxelles: Conseil de la Communauté économique européenne; Conseil de la Communauté européenne de l'énergie atomique, 20.06.1958. 2 p.

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Last updated: 06/07/2016



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Luxembourg, 19 June 1958

Mr President,

In your letter dated 31 May 1958, you asked me for my opinion on the seat of the Communities, pursuant to the decision taken by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs on 7 January 1958. My position is as follows.

First of all, I welcome the decision of principle already taken by the governments of the Six in agreeing that all the organisations representing the six Member States should be located in the same place, as soon as it was possible to move them there.

I regard it as essential to uphold that decision of principle, especially as it is consistent with the wishes made known by the High Authority to the Member State governments in the letter which my predecessor, President René Mayer, forwarded to them on 11 December 1957.

As for my personal opinion, which I am asked to provide today, I believe that coordination of the work of the three European executive bodies, the rational creation of a European administration and economy of effort and resources all make it imperative that these executive bodies and their administrations should be based in one and the same place.

For the same reasons, I believe that the decisions taken by the Council of Ministers must eliminate all elements of the provisional and the uncertain and must be immediately applicable. The High Authority's experience proves, moreover, that any decision which lacks these features delays the resolution of the problem and so makes it worse. Temporary solutions turn out, in practice, to be unduly troublesome.

To enable all the European Community institutions to be located together in one place, it would be a good idea to create a European district. This district should not be isolated but should be close to a major city and able to make use of that city's resources.

In the light of these principles, and after studying the report of the urban planning experts, I conclude that, of all the applications under consideration, Brussels is the city which, more than the others, meets the criteria for a city able, without delay, to become the seat of all the European institutions. In fact, Brussels offers the best range of facilities, by virtue of its geographical location, access routes to it and the immediate availability of office premises and housing stock. I therefore propose Brussels as the single seat.

Until such time as the European district can be built close to Brussels, the three executive bodies *must* be housed together immediately in premises which have already been made available to the Communities. Efficiency and sound economic management make this imperative.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) Paul Finet