

# European BACKGROUND INFORMATION Community

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BACKGROUND NOTE

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## SCHUMAN PLAN CELEBRATES 25TH YEAR

It was 25 years ago today that French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman made the declaration in Paris which foresaw the creation of the present European Community. The "Schuman Declaration" -- which called for the pooling of European coal and steel resources in a common market -- was designed to lay the foundations of a European federation and ensure peace in post-World War II Europe. The European Coal and Steel Community, organized in response to Schuman's call, was the first of the three European Communities.

Commission President Francois-Xavier Ortoli, speaking at the French Government's official commemoration of Schuman Day in Paris May 9, praised Schuman's efforts to put aside past national rivalries and begin the creation of a united Europe with a clean slate. Schuman saw European union as a non-ending struggle of reason, not violence, whereby Europeans would have to overcome stereotypes and prejudices which had caused wars. Ortoli stressed that the very adaptability encouraged by Schuman was being put to the test in present-day Europe as the Community seeks to establish relations with energy consuming and producing nations and respond to the challenges facing a "uniting Europe."

The French Government's celebration was attended by present and past dignitaries of various Community and member state bodies, as well as the signatories of the EC Treaties, and the ambassadors of the eight member states to Paris.

#### Monnet Retires From Public Life

Today also marked the retirement of Jean Monnet, another founding father of Europe, as chairman of the Action Committee for a United States of Europe. Although he never held public office, Monnet influenced and inspired European politicians. He was the "inventor" of the supranational method and drew up the Schuman Plan of May 9, 1950. Monnet negotiated the plan's implementation in the 1951 Treaty of Paris that created the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952 and was the first President of the ECSC's executive, the High Authority. Monnet played a vital role in Europe's recovery and in concluding the 1957 Treaties of Rome that created the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) in 1958.

Retiring at age 86, Monnet has stated that he will write a book and "think." Monnet's retirement marks the dissolution of the Action Committee for a United States of Europe. The Committee decided to disband in the belief that there is no one who could replace Monnet.