

# Jean Monnet: Father of the European Union

## Introduction:

Jean Monnet, considered the father of the European Union, worked tirelessly to promote common institutions for a new Europe. His work had a lasting impact on Europe through his relationships with key leaders in the United States, Europe, and the rest of the world. His career in international affairs extended from the frontier of Canada in the first decade of the Twentieth Century to personal relationships with heads of state from throughout the world during and beyond World War II. He is described as a technocrat, lacking direct political ambition, but capable of mobilizing his connections to promote goals of international cooperation.

## Objectives:

- Analyze the life and leadership style of a man dedicated to bringing peace to Europe.
- Explain the transition from Europe at war to a Europe at peace by learning about the life and work of Jean Monnet.

## Materials and Preparation:

- Make copies of the *Time* Magazine Cover Story on Jean Monnet and Timeline of Jean Monnet's Life handouts for all students.

**Teaching Time:** 2 class periods

## Procedure:

1. Tell students that, in 1961, *Time* magazine featured a story about Jean Monnet, father of the European Union. Ask: Has anyone heard of him? Provide students with the handout featuring the *Time* magazine picture, opening paragraph of the story and quote from a letter from John F. Kennedy written in 1963. Ask: If this man is so famous, why don't we know more about him? Given this data, what do you want to know?  
<http://www.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19611006,00.html>  
[http://www.ena.lu/letter\\_john\\_kennedy\\_jean\\_monnet\\_23\\_january\\_1963-020401667.html](http://www.ena.lu/letter_john_kennedy_jean_monnet_23_january_1963-020401667.html)
2. Distribute the Timeline of Monnet's Life handout. Have students research Monnet's life from the perspective of an editor of *Time* planning an article on Monnet, 50 years after the original story. Explain that the quotes on the time line are found in Jean Monnet's *Memoirs*. (Jean Monnet: *Memoirs*, Doubleday and Co. New York, 1978) Students should study the timeline and select five personal or

professional events from his life that they think explain his vision and his successes. Each student should also select five quotes that represent his philosophy about international and European cooperation.

3. Ask students to share the results of their analysis in small groups or in a whole-class discussion. Debrief student work with using some of these questions:
  - a) How would you describe Jean Monnet's method of solving problems?  
Leadership style?
  - b) What current international issues could benefit from a Jean Monnet approach?
  - c) Why do you think that Monnet preferred to work behind the scenes instead of running for public office?
4. Assign students to write an essay from the perspective of *Time's* editor, explaining why Monnet was chosen as the subject of a *Time* feature story.

## **Jean Monnet: Father of the European Union**

In October 1961, Jean Monnet appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine:  
<http://www.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19611006,00.html>.

### **Opening paragraph from Time Cover Story about Jean Monnet**

There lives today near Paris an ascetic, unobtrusive Frenchman who may ultimately succeed where others from Charlemagne to Napoleon, ultimately failed. He commands no armies or popular following, but his work is worth uncouth divisions to the West. He has neither title nor portfolio, but he has privileged access to every chancellery of Western Europe. He has no formal higher education, but the world's most brilliant economists regard him as their peer. He has never joined a political party, but parliamentarians across Europe flock to his summons. His name is Jean Monnet, and he is the practical apostle of European unity whose new, growing organizations—notably the Common Market—are remaking the scarred old face of Europe and changing the balance of power throughout the world.

### **Letter to Jean Monnet from John Kennedy Dated January 22, 1963**

Dear Mr. Monnet:

I am delighted to join my friends at Freedom House in doing honor to your great achievements. You come at a moment of high importance – and you come as the exemplar of disinterested service to Europe and to the Atlantic World. For centuries, emperors, kings and dictators have sought to impose unity on Europe by force. For better or worse, they have failed. But under your inspiration, Europe has moved closer to unity in less than twenty years than it had done before in a thousand. You and your associates have built with the mortar of reason and the brick of economic and political interest. You are transforming Europe by the power of a constructive idea. Ever since the war the reconstruction and the knitting together of Europe have been objectives of United States policy, for we have recognized with you that in unity lies strength. And we have also recognized with you that a strong Europe would be good not only for Europeans but for the world. America and a united Europe, working in full and effective partnership can find solutions to those urgent problems that confront all mankind in this crucial time.

Sincerely,

John F. Kennedy  
President of the United States