

The Union of European Federalists (UEF)

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The Union of European Federalists (UEF)

The Union of European Federalists (UEF) was officially founded on 15 and 16 December 1946 at the Paris headquarters of the French movement *La Fédération*. The UEF immediately set about coordinating the activities of some 50 national federalist movements already in existence: *Europeesche Actie*, Europa Union, Federal Union, *Movimento federalista europeo*, etc. Among the most prominent figures were Henry Frenay, Eugen Kogon, Henri Brugmans, Alexandre Marc and Altiero Spinelli. The UEF quickly attracted almost 100 000 members. However, between 1947 and 1949, growing ideological opposition split the movement. Loyal to the theory of a federal society, the integral Federalists believed that the creation of European institutions had to go hand in hand with constitutional reform, moving towards greater regional decentralisation and corporatism. In so doing, they clashed with those who refused to see the movement transformed into a political party and sought primarily to change public opinion in order to exert effective pressure on national parliaments and governments.

The UEF immediately launched several public campaigns in support of a constituent assembly mandated to draw up a European federal union pact. However, the failure of the European Defence Community (EDC) in August 1954 widened the doctrinal rifts within the movement. A more pragmatic group wanted to continue the policy of raising popular awareness, with the aim of forcing governments to relinquish even more of their sovereignty. In contrast, an all-or-nothing group questioned the legitimacy of national governments and refused to put their trust in them. Finding themselves in a minority, the pragmatists left the movement and founded *Action européenne des fédéralistes (AEF)* [European Federalist Action] in November 1956. The UEF then became the European Federalist Movement (EFM). Subsequently, the Federalists called consistently for the deepening of the European Communities. The development of the Gaullist arguments for intergovernmental cooperation during the 1960s led to the reunification of the Union of European Federalists in December 1971.