

Message to Europeans (The Hague, 10 May 1948)

Caption: During the final session of the Congress of Europe held in The Hague in May 1948, some 800 participants adopt the basic text, Message to Europeans, drawn up by the Swiss federalist, Denis de Rougemont.

Source: Congress of Europe: The Hague-May, 1948: Resolutions. London-Paris: International Committee of the Movements for European Unity, 1948. 16 p. p. 15-16.

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Message to Europeans

Europe is threatened, Europe is divided, and the greatest danger comes from her divisions.

Impoverished, overladen with barriers that prevent the circulation of her goods but are no longer able to afford her protection, our disunited Europe marches towards her end. Alone, no one of our countries can hope seriously to defend its independence. Alone, no one of our countries can solve the economic problems of today. Without a freely agreed union our present anarchy will expose us tomorrow to forcible unification whether by the intervention of a foreign empire or usurpation by a political party.

The hour has come to take action commensurate with the danger.

Together with the overseas peoples associated with our destinies, we can tomorrow build the greatest political formation and the greatest economic unit our age has seen. Never will the history of the world have known so powerful a gathering of free men. Never will war, fear and misery have been checked by a more formidable foe.

Between this great peril and this great hope, Europe's mission is clear. It is to unite her peoples in accordance with their genius of diversity and with the conditions of modern community life, and so open the way towards organised freedom for which the world is seeking. It is to revive her inventive powers for the greater protection and respect of the rights and duties of the individual of which, in spite of all her mistakes, Europe is still the greatest exponent.

Human dignity is Europe's finest achievement, freedom her true strength. Both are at stake in our struggle. The union of our continent is now needed not only for the salvation of the liberties we have won, but also for the extension of their benefits to all mankind.

Upon this union depend Europe's destiny and the world's peace.

Let all therefore take note that we Europeans, assembled to express the will of all the peoples of Europe, solemnly declare our common aims in the following five articles, which summarise the resolutions adopted by the Congress:

PLEDGE

- (1) We desire a United Europe, throughout whose area the free movement of persons, ideas and goods is restored;
- (2) We desire a Charter of Human Rights guaranteeing liberty of thought, assembly and expression as well as the right to form a political opposition;
- (3) We desire a Court of Justice with adequate sanctions for the implementation of this Charter;
- (4) We desire a European Assembly where the live forces of all our nations shall be represented;
- (5) And pledge ourselves in our homes and in public, in our political and religious life, in our professional and trade union circles, to give our fullest support to all persons and governments working for this lofty cause, which offers the last chance of peace and the one promise of a great future for this generation and those that will succeed it.