

## Interview with Jean-Pierre Gouzy: the highlights of the Hague Congress (Paris, 19 October 2007)

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[Jean-Michel Guieu] What do you recall as being the highlights of this Congress? You mentioned this meeting held in Amsterdam, but what were the highlights of the discussions themselves?

[Jean-Pierre Gouzy] What were the highlights of the Congress? First of all, there was the inaugural session — the formal inaugural session, held in the presence of representatives of the Netherlands royal family and Government, and with an address delivered by Winston Churchill, immediately followed by a speech given by Henri Brugmans — that really was something special, and it was followed with the utmost attention, with a degree of emotion, that was clear. Then there was the closing session. The closing session was also an important event during the Hague Congress, for it was at this session that Denis de Rougemont delivered his message on behalf of the Cultural Affairs Committee that was chaired by the Spanish author, Salvador de Madariaga. This message was, to my mind, a very beautiful piece of European literature, and, at all events, it had a tremendous impact on the Congress.

There were also highlights in the sense that we reached unanimous agreement, although this was after marathon debates in committee that lasted, in the case of the Political Affairs Committee, until three o'clock in the morning, two nights in a row — one until 2 a.m. and the other until 3 a.m., and, in the case of the Economic and Social Affairs Committee, until 7 a.m. On the Monday morning, we had resumed the session and were still awaiting the outcome of this Committee's deliberations in order to keep to the schedule that had been laid down for the Congress. So there were extremely lengthy discussions, very intense, particularly between those who were leaning towards a more federal Europe and those who were being especially cautious and didn't want to go too far, and, of course, those that I called the unionists, but also between the Liberals and the trade unions — the trade unionists, more so than Labour Party members — and some members of the French Delegation, especially the federalists.

There was, therefore, a rather strange alliance that emerged: between the French and Belgian trade unionists and the French and Belgian federalists who were somewhat opposed to the French, but mainly British, traditional Liberals who were present. When I say 'Liberals', that goes beyond the boundaries of the British Liberal Party: it also includes Conservatives, etc. So yes, there were some truly great moments. I do recall that there were some displays of bad temper that were manifested by heckling from the floor or the frenzy of musical chairs.