

Letter from Georges Bidault concerning Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi (Paris, 31 January 1947)

Caption: On 31 January 1947, Georges Bidault, French Foreign Minister, informs Henri Hoppenot, French Ambassador to Switzerland, of the line to be taken regarding Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's proposals and of his plans for a united Europe.

Source: Ministère des Affaires étrangères; Commission de publication des DDF (sous la dir.). Documents diplomatiques français. Volume I: 1947, 1er janvier-30 juin. Bruxelles: PIE-Peter Lang, 2007. 246-247 p.

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Letter from Georges Bidault to Henri Hoppenot

Telegram No 130

Paris, 31 January 1947

In your letter (No 180) dated 21 January, you were kind enough to send me a copy of a note concerning the progress made in Switzerland and Germany by the various movements set up to promote the establishment of a European federation, as well as the forthcoming visit to Switzerland by one of the proponents of this idea, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi.

I have the honour of informing you that Count Coudenhove-Kalergi was welcomed by Mr Chauvel, Secretary-General of the Department, and Mr Goulet, Head of the Europe Directorate, during a recent visit to Paris in October 1946.

Their discussions focused on the relationship between Count Coudenhove-Kalergi and Winston Churchill, who he claimed was proposing to create a huge groundswell of opinion in favour of the establishment of a European Union. Mr Churchill's closest colleague was his own son-in-law, Duncan Sandys, and he had also brought on board Field Marshal Jan Smuts, who had been assigned the task of running a promotion campaign in New York.

Mr Churchill and Count Coudenhove-Kalergi have since had occasion to meet in London to discuss an organisation which, without being called 'Pan-Europe', would, nonetheless, have the same aim. Mr Churchill would act as president of this organisation, whilst Count Coudenhove-Kalergi would serve as its secretary-general.

It would be unreasonable to be too distrustful of Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, since he might provide us with an insight into various trends in international politics. It would be no less regrettable to attribute to him an importance that he may have had in the eyes of some before the war, but that he certainly no longer has today.

(Europe Directorate)