

The European Movement

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Given the success of the Hague Congress, the organising body – the International Committee of the Movements for European Unity – decided to take the experiment one stage further and became the European Movement (EM) in October 1948. It aimed to coordinate the activities of the various existing international organisations and represent them in their relations with governments. The EM is a private organisation comprising 26 national councils, including 11 national committees of exiles from Central Europe and Spain. All come under an international council, executive bureau and secretariat. The EM aimed to look at the political, economic, technical and cultural problems posed by European union and also to inform and mobilise public opinion in favour of European integration. Its first honorary presidents were Léon Blum, Winston Churchill, Alcide De Gasperi, Paul-Henri Spaak, Robert Schuman, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi and Konrad Adenauer.

The six founding movements were the European League for Economic Cooperation (ELEC), the Liberal Movement for a United Europe (MLEU), the Socialist Movement for the United States of Europe (MSEUE), the Nouvelles Équipes Internationales (New International Teams – NEI), the Union of European Federalists (UEF) and the Centre for Federalist Action (CAF). They were later joined by the European Parliamentary Union (EPU), the European Association of Teachers (AEDE), the European Union of Christian Democrats (EUCD), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), the Association of European Journalists (AEJ) and the International Federation of European Houses (FIME).

The European Movement was ideologically very active and organised many events on specific themes. In February 1949, the Brussels Political Congress defined individual, family and social rights which might be guaranteed in law by a European Charter of Human Rights. It also reviewed procedures for the appointment of delegates to the European Consultative Assembly and adopted the statute for a European Court. Two months later, the Westminster Economic Conference discussed monetary issues and laid the foundations for a future European Payments Union. Supporters of the pooling of basic industries, the Congress participants also discussed the setting up of a European Economic and Social Committee. In December 1949, the European Conference on Culture in Lausanne resulted in the establishment of the European Centre for Culture and the College of Europe in Bruges. In July 1950, the Rome Social Welfare Conference drew up a plan for the harmonisation of European social security systems and proposed the creation of a European Commissariat for Labour and Population, and a European fund for reconstruction and development. Other international conferences followed, successively considering the integration of Germany into a united Europe, the relations between the Europe being built and the Commonwealth, and the situation of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The EM pursued an intensive publicity campaign, particularly through the European Youth Campaign.