

Letter from Carlo Sforza to Robert Schuman (24 August 1948)

Caption: On 24 August 1948, Carlo Sforza, Italian Foreign Minister, explains his Christian view of European unity to his French counterpart, Robert Schuman.

Source: BEYER, Henry. Robert Schuman, L'Europe par la réconciliation franco-allemande. Lausanne: Fondation Jean Monnet pour l'Europe, Centre de recherches européennes, 1986. 171 p. (Cahiers rouges). p. 90-91.

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Rome, 24 August 1948

Dear President and Colleague,

It is to you first and foremost that I would like to submit the Italian Government's ideas on the matter we both hold equally dear: European union.

I am sure you agree with me that Briand failed in his time because he was too ambitious, seeking to build the foundations and the roof all at once. We must begin at the beginning. Above all, those who see European union not only as the surest means of securing peace but also the best way to safeguard the prosperity and security of their countries must work together. That is what we are doing.

I feel that I will not have lived in vain if I succeed in contributing to a permanent and deep-rooted understanding between our two countries, which is the only way of preventing a return, some time in the future, of the aggressive madness of the Germans. My whole life has basically been devoted to that aim. Now, I feel for the first time that we have the means to cure the Germans, to prevent them triggering yet another catastrophe — the possibility of making them feel that one day they will be able to sit down at the same table with us as equals. To achieve this, however, a hundred million Latins must unite and face them together.

It is for these reasons alone that I have written the memorandum which Mr Quaroni will be submitting to you. Your predecessor, I believe, knew my most intimate thoughts. I do not think it a good idea for me to come to Paris; we must act without being seen to act.

I do, however, hope that I will one day have the opportunity to discuss all these matters with you freely and openly.

I spent 10 years between 1930 and 1940 in southern Provence, near Toulon, watching the build-up to the terrible tragedy and thinking only of this: how can our two countries eventually be united, to become once more the pioneers of peace in the Christian world. Now we have the answer, if we keep our heads. I am therefore sending you — through our Embassy — the memorandum to which I recommend you give your personal attention.

Your very devoted
Sforza