

The Interlaken Plan (September 1948)

Caption: In September 1948, during its second Congress in Interlaken, the European Parliamentary Union (EPU) adopts a detailed programme for the establishment of the United States of Europe and of a European Parliament, a federal executive body and a European supreme court.

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The Interlaken Plan

In each country, Members of Parliament – that is to say, men who have both the experience and responsibility of power – have created federalist national groups, then by collaboration between those groups, have founded THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION.

At its Congress at Interlaken in September 1948, this European Parliamentary Union established the manner which its ideal is to be carried into effect: THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE.

To this end, its program follows the lines of three guiding principles:

1. NO OSTRACISM WITH REGARD TO THE MEMBER STATES

The United States of Europe shall include the States which are members of the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation and accept the Declaration of Human Rights as drawn up by the UNO. All the other European States shall be free at all times to join the Federation after having agreed to accept its Constitution. The affiliation to the European Federation of certain overseas territories is envisaged, with due consideration for legitimate interests of the European Powers concerned, the population of such territories and Europe herself.

Member States of the Federation have equal rights and common obligations. The citizens of each member State of the Federation shall enjoy the same rights and privileges in the territories of all the other member States.

2. CONSTITUTION OF EUROPEAN POWERS

Three orders of powers are stipulated:

Firstly, a Legislative Power to be vested in a Parliament consisting of two Houses: a Senate and a Chamber of Deputies.

The Senate shall be composed for each country of an equal number of Senators, irrespective of the size of the country. The chamber of Deputies shall be composed, in proportion to each population, of delegates of the national Parliaments, in accordance with the political parties which make up those assemblies.

Secondly, an Executive Power: this shall be vested in a Federal Council which shall elect its President. The Federal Council shall be elected by both Houses of Parliament and shall be responsible to them.

Lastly, a Judicial Power. This shall be vested in a Supreme Court which shall be competent – in addition to certain matters which still remain to be specified – in all questions pertaining to the interpretation of the Constitution, and to all breaches or violations of the Declaration of Human Rights.

3. RATIONAL ALLOCATION OF COMPETENCE

With a view to maintaining peace, order and good government of the Federation, the Parliament of the Federation shall be vested, subject to the Constitution, with power to enact laws which are absolutely necessary to enable Parliament to legislate in respect of matters relating to the Federation.

On the establishment of the Federation, the collection and control of duties of customs and excise may pass to the Executive Power of the Federation. Uniform duties of customs shall be fixed as soon as practicable, with a view of preparing the way for complete freedom of trade between the States.

On the other hand, the States of Europe shall preserve sufficient autonomy to be able to manage their own affairs in the spheres which are not common to all States, or do not involve the general interests of Europe. Each State shall retain its Constitution, subject to such amendments as it agrees to accept, as a result of the

adoption by it of the Federal Constitution.

However, should the legislation of a federated State be inconsistent with the federal law, the federal law shall prevail to the extent of the inconsistency. Moreover, no federated State without the consent of the Parliament of the Federation, shall raise or maintain any air, naval or military force, impose any tax on property belonging to the Federation, coin any money or make anything legal tender in payment of debts not approved by the Federation.

It is with a view to achieving the above ends that the European Parliamentary Union urges the summoning of a CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, elected by the national Parliaments, for the purpose of drawing up a EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION.