

Protocol between France and Italy with a view to creating a Franco-Italian customs union (Turin, 20 March 1948)

Caption: On 20 March 1948, in Turin, representatives of the French and Italian Governments ratify a Protocol with a view to the gradual establishment of a Franco-Italian customs union.

Source: Groupe d'études pour l'Union douanière européenne: Premier Rapport, 10-14 novembre 1947, 2-6 février 1948, 18-23 mars 1948. Bruxelles: Groupe d'études pour l'Union douanière européenne, 1948. 110 p. p. 97-98.

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THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT AND THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT,

WISHING to increase the pace of reconstruction of the economies of France and Italy, and to ensure the soundness and stability of these economies,

WHEREAS they will be cooperating in this manner with a view to the reorganisation and development of the European economy and world trade,

GUIDED BY the work of the Committee for European Economic Cooperation which met in Paris in August and September 1947,

HAVING EXPRESSED their intention, in a Declaration dated 13 September 1947, to study the data in the light of which a customs union could be established between France and Italy; to this end, they entrusted to a committee of French and Italian representatives the task of conducting that study.

Having carefully considered all the relevant data, the committee drew up a report dated 22 December 1947. In its conclusions, it advocated the setting-up of a customs union which would have to be created in stages and involve various transitional periods in order to avoid damaging the interests of the two countries.

The French Government and the Italian Government have decided to adopt the conclusions of the committee's report and, consequently, declare their formal intention to set up a Franco-Italian customs union.

By setting up this union, they consider that it will be possible to develop consumer markets, increase the specialisation of production, cut production costs and achieve full employment of the workforce; it is also their view that the measures that they adopt will give a substantial boost to the European recovery effort, and, in the interest of this recovery, they declare their support for enlarging the Franco-Italian customs union to incorporate other countries in order to secure cooperation between a greater number of economic powers.

Since the conditions governing the operation of customs unions must be consistent with the provisions of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the two governments shall consult with the parties signatories to that Agreement and shall provide them with all the information — concerning the proposed union — required to enable them to make any appropriate recommendations and send any relevant reports to the French and Italian Governments.

The two governments have decided to set up a Joint Committee to be responsible of drafting — as soon as possible — an Agreement which will set out the details and timetable for the completion of the customs union, having regard to the recommendations set out in the report of 22 December 1947.

That Agreement shall be submitted for the approval of the French Parliament and Italian Parliament pursuant to the constitutional procedures in force in each of these two countries.