

Interview with Jean-Pierre Gouzy: the journey to The Hague (Paris, 19 October 2007)

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[Jean-Michel Guieu] Can you tell us a little about your journey to The Hague? Did it turn out to be quite easy to get to The Hague in May 1948, or did you encounter any problems?

[Jean-Pierre Gouzy] Today, if you take the Thalys high-speed train from the Gare du Nord to The Hague, I should think that it'd take more or less three and a half hours. At that time, however, it took more than twice that. Plus, we stopped four times: the train stopped at the French border — French customs, French police. On the Belgian side: Belgian customs, Belgian police. The same happened again — despite the fact that Benelux was in the process of being established — on either side of the Belgian and Netherlands border. And I seem to recall that, at least once, we were made to get out onto the platform at a border control point. The police and customs officers searched all the compartments, and, after 30 minutes or so, we were allowed to get back on the train and get going again. I don't recall exactly, but I think it took more than one night to get there. And you had to have some French currency, some Dutch currency and, just in case, a small amount of Belgian currency. That went without saying — there was no other way round it, and so you always had to keep in mind that you needed to have several different currencies.