Building a 'Europe of Culture'

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In May 1948, in The Hague, the Cultural Committee of the Congress of Europe, chaired by the Spanish writer and former diplomat, Salvador de Madariaga, adopted a Resolution in which it emphasised the importance of culture in Europe as a catalyst for European unity. The intellectuals meeting in The Hague believed that European economic and political integration, as much as it was needed, could not be achieved without this 'spiritual supplement' that, to their mind, was provided by the cultural heritage of the Old Continent. For this reason, the Committee recommended the establishment of a European Centre for Culture and a European Childhood and Youth Institute. Under the leadership of the Swiss federalist writer, Denis de Rougemont, rapporteur for the Cultural Committee, and with the practical support of the European Movement's Cultural Committee, the proposed European Centre for Culture was established in 1950 in Geneva. Meanwhile, good progress was also being made in Bruges preparing for the establishment, also in 1950, of the College of Europe. With Henri Brugmans, former Dutch President of the Union of European Federalists (UEF), as Rector, the College's main role was to provide training for the staff of the future European institutions by offering graduates career prospects in all areas of European life.