



PANEUROPA

History

Pan-Europa – The parent idea of a united Europe

The history of the Pan-Europa Union is closely associated with the names of two prominent personalities: with its founder Richard Graf Coudenhove-Kalergi (1894-1972) and his successor as International President (until 2004), Dr. Otto von Habsburg (born 1912).

Coudenhove-Kalergi was the son of the Austrian diplomat Heinrich Graf Coudenhove-Kalergi and his Japanese mother, Mitsuko Aoyama. He grew up to be multilingual and was educated multiculturally in his parents' castle in the small Czech town of Pobžovice (Ronsperg). His homeland is Europe.

Coudenhove first formulated the vision of a politically, economically and militarily united Europe in the article "Pan-Europa - a proposal" on 15 November 1922 in the "Vossische Zeitung" Berlin, and this appeared two days later in the Vienna-based "Neue Freie Presse". In 1923, he wrote his programmatic book "Pan-Europa", which he described as the starting signal for a "great political movement". Coudenhove envisaged the inter-war period of Europe as having an alternative "integration or collapse." Even in 1923, he vehemently warned against the "future war" and of the danger that Europe, after the war, would be "divided" by an artificial border "into a Soviet colony and an American protectorate."

Coudenhove's proposal quickly found support among admirers and supporters in the leading circles of European intellectuals, poets and philosophers: Paul Claudel, Paul Valéry, Heinrich and Thomas Mann, Stefan Zweig, Gerhart Hauptmann, Rainer Maria Rilke, Franz Werfel, Arthur Schnitzler, Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein and the philosophers Ortega y Gasset and Salvador de Madariaga supported the Pan-European idea as well as the composer Richard Strauss. The young mayor of Cologne, Konrad Adenauer who was later to become German Chancellor and the Viennese student and subsequent socialist Federal Chancellor of Austria, Bruno Kreisky were among the first members. Reactions in official political circles were however, lukewarm to negative.

Political support came from Austria's Federal Chancellor Ignaz Seipel, who himself adopted the Austrian presidency of the Pan-Europa Committee. Paul Loebe, the Social Democratic Reichstag President adopted the presidency of the German Pan-Europa group. In the same year, Coudenhove managed to win over the French minister president and foreign minister Edouard Herriot for the Pan-European idea in Paris. Thanks to the attraction of his ideas and his personality, the young private citizen who had neither power nor money, managed to open doors in all the capitals of Europe.

In 1926, the first Pan-Europa Congress took place in Vienna with 2000 participants from 24 nations as the public breakthrough for the young movement with the "Pan-European vision" becoming a synonym for the political unification of Europe. Coudenhove was elected the first International President of the Pan-European Union by acclamation. Europe's most respected statesman, the French foreign minister Aristide Briand, became honorary president of the movement in 1927. On 5 September 1929, in a speech before the League of Nations in Geneva, Briand proposed, the creation of a federation of European nations at the insistence of Coudenhove-Kalergi. The initiative of a single man became a real political option and the Pan-European movement became an influential organized association on a Pan-European basis.



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After the failure of the Briand initiative, Coudenhove led the struggle further - no longer in an offensive position, but defensively, against the growing tide of communism and fascism. At the 3rd Pan-Europa Congress in Basle 1932 Coudenhove warned "Stalin is preparing the civil war - Hitler the peoples war." Hitler saw Coudenhove and the Pan-Europa idea a dangerous adversary. Coudenhove held his last speech in Germany on the 30 January 1933 in Berlin, the same day as Hitler was appointed Chancellor of the Reich. In the same year, Paneuropean literature was banned in Germany and the German Paneuropean Union was dissolved. German industry stopped its financial support and backed the side of Hitler. Coudenhove also lost the support of most of the leftist intellectual supporters, who in the fight against Hitler, directed their hopes towards the Soviet Union. At the same time, the Pan-Europa Union tightened its rejection of communism. In 1938, Coudenhove fled from the Nazis, first to Switzerland in 1940 and then to the United States. In exile, Coudenhove met Otto von Habsburg, who lived in Washington from 1940 to 1944.

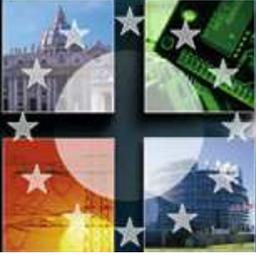
In the USA, Coudenhove developed the idea of a "European Constituent Assembly" for the post war period. After the Western Allies missed the chance, to set up a parliament as a cornerstone of the new order in Western Europe and initially to reorganize Western Europe Assembly on the basis of nation states, in 1947 Coudenhove set up the first congress of the European Parliamentary Union in the Swiss resort of Gstaad, which established that the Council of Europe, established in 1949, was not only to be a Council of Ministers but as a second body, was to contain a consultative parliamentary assembly. Through this, the history of European parliamentarism began.

In 1950, the city of Aachen awarded the father of the Pan-Europa idea the first international Charlemagne award (Karlspreis). Shortly thereafter, the European Parliamentary Union merged with the European Movement which was established by Winston Churchill's son-in-law, Duncan Sandys. The European Movement elected Coudenhove-Kalergi as its honorary president, who was the only private citizen alongside politicians such as Konrad Adenauer, Winston Churchill, Alcide de Gasperi, Robert Schuman and Henry Spaak.

Coudenhove focused on the revitalization of the Pan-Europa Union as the political vanguard of European patriots. The new constitution was launched at the 6th Pan-Europa Congress in Baden-Baden in 1954. Although in the fifties, the Pan-Europa Union welcomed the 1957 Treaty of Rome (establishing the EEC and Euratom) as an important step towards the realization of Pan-Europa, Coudenhove and his staff warned against joining up Europe in a way which was based on unilateral economic policy.

At the 8th Pan-Europa Congress in Bad Ragaz, Otto von Habsburg was elected to the Central Council of the Pan-Europa Union and soon afterwards, as the vice president of Coudenhove-Kalergi, proposed himself as the successor in the Office of President.

The question as to whether the plan by launched by the French President, Charles de Gaulle and the German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer for a European federation of states (the so-called Fouchet plan) would pave the way for or prevent the European federal state, split the European movements. In 1960, at their 9th international congress in Nice, the Pan-Europa Union clearly settled on the side de Gaulle, who had already been linked to the Pan-Europa idea of Coudenhove since 1941. De Gaulle's Europe policy finally caused a split between the Pan-Europa Movement and the 'Europa Union.' At the 1962 symbolic Franco-German reconciliation ceremony in which Konrad Adenauer and Charles de Gaulle came together in Reims, Coudenhove-Kalergi took part as the guest of the General.



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In France, the Pan-Europa Union was founded by the later president Georges Pompidou and, on the initiative of President de Gaulle himself, Louis Terrenoire, an active member of the résistance, deputy of the National Assembly and subsequent minister under de Gaulle. The Union achieved high prestige and political influence. Under the international Secretary-General Vittorio Pons, who supported Coudenhove-Kalergi in daily political operations, the Pan-Europa Union spread to all countries in Western Europe.

On 27 July 1972, Coudenhove-Kalergi died in Vorarlberg

On a proposal by the French President, George Pompidou in 1973, Otto von Habsburg was elected as the International President of the Pan-Europa Union and new aims were set for the movement: The idea of liberating Central and Eastern Europe from communist oppression - as a precondition of genuine European integration in the sense of a united Europe and the defence of Christian values / the spirit of Christian teaching in relation to how mankind is meant to be in an increasingly materialistic age. Concluded on 11 -12 May 1973, the Strasbourg Declaration of Basic Principles formulated the aims of the Pan-Europa Union which held sway for almost two decades until the victory of freedom in Central Europe. Here too, Otto von Habsburg, steered the Pan-Europa Union as a pan-european far reaching movement. Besides the French, Belgian and Luxembourg sections play the Pan-Europa Unions in Austria and Germany played an increasingly important role at the interface represented by the Iron Curtain. After 1975, numerous Pan-Europa youth organizations were created in Germany, Austria, Spain, Italy and Belgium under the direction of Walburga von Habsburg and the later MEP, Bernd Posselt.

The Pan-Europa Union used the first direct elections to the European Parliament to start an international campaign for a strong Europe which was to be Christian-oriented and politically / militarily united. Led by Otto von Habsburg, numerous leading Pan-Europeans took up their seats in the newly elected European Parliament in Strasbourg. In her opening speech, the French writer Louise Weiss, a former President of the Parliament and Pan-Europa member, welcomed Otto von Habsburg as the successor of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergis.

At the same time, under the leadership of Bernd Posselt and Walburga von Habsburg, Pan-Europa Union strengthened its work as a special representative of the international office beyond the Iron Curtain and established contacts with civil rights organizations in Poland such as the trade union "Solidarnosc", "Charter 77" and church institutions as well as in Hungary, in former Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia as well as in the Baltic states. The pan-European underground work received a boost through the strong support of the Polish Pope, John Paul II and Bishop of Augsburg Josef Stimpfle, who were connected throughout their lives to the Pan-Europa movement. On 24 November 1986, the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl and the Pan-Europa Union made a joint declaration for overcoming the division of Germany and Europe. At the "Pan-European Picnic" in August 1989 on the Austrian-Hungarian border near Sopron / Sopron, the first tears were made in the Iron Curtain and over 650 Germans from the GDR made it to the West. Mass demonstrations in the GDR and general strikes in other Central European countries followed and with the collapse of the communist regime in the autumn and winter of 1989, the goal of a reunified Pan-Europa was within reach. Central European leaders such as Vaclav Havel in the Czech Republic, Vitautas Landsbergis in Lithuania or France Bucar in Slovenia supported the Pan-Europa work which was done in their countries and took on leading functions. Pan-Europa organizations were set up in all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In December 1990, the International General



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Assembly of the Pan-Europa Union met in Prague, the first time this summit was held in a former Soviet bloc country. The Pan-Europa Union actively set about supporting the rapid accession of the liberated countries of Central and Eastern Europe to the European Union, which in a first phase, became reality on 1 May 2004, with the accession of Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia. The Pan-Europa Union also actively supported the accession of Romania, Bulgaria, on 1 January 2007 to the European Union as well as for the speedy accession of Croatia and Macedonia. Regarding the Convention on a draft European constitutional treaty, the Pan-Europa Union gave the President of the Convention, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing concrete proposals which have mainly been included in the treaty text of the European Constitution.

In December 2004, Otto von Habsburg retired as the International President of the Pan-Europa Union aged 92 and proposed as his successor, the French European politician Alain Terrenoire who was unanimously elected by gathered delegates from over 20 Pan-Europa member organizations in Strasbourg. Otto von Habsburg became honorary president of the international movement, which he led for over three decades. Alain Terrenoire, the third president in the history of the Pan-Europa Union also set ambitious future objectives for the movement: The completion of the geographical and political unification of all of Europe within the European Union and its development into an internationally-effective and powerful superpower of peace.

Today, members of the Pan-Europa Union are people from all age groups and social strata who are committed to a politically, economically and militarily united Europe as a community of law, peace of freedom and Christian values. The Pan-Europa Union supports the political integration of Europe in the areas of internal and external security, technology and research as well as a comprehensive European constitutional treaty for the European Union. It is committed to an independent European defence policy, in partnership with NATO. In light of continuous globalization, the Pan-Europa Union supports both collaborative and independent action of the European Union within the field of international politics.

Under leadership by the Austrian Member of the Parliament, Dr. Paul Rübzig the Pan-Europa Parliamentary Group in the European Parliament consists of over 120 members from nearly all of the EU Member States and meets regularly during the sessions of the Parliament in Strasbourg.