What is the Kalergi plan?

The "Kalergi plan" is a conspiracy theory: the false claim that a 1920s pan-European writer drafted a secret scheme to replace Europe's population through immigration.

No such plan exists, and the man it is named after was persecuted by the movement whose heirs invented it.

What the theory claims

In its usual form, the story says that European elites, and in many versions Jewish ones, are carrying out a blueprint written by Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi to mix or replace the white population of Europe through mass migration, and that the European Union is the instrument. It circulates as quote collections, videos and PDFs titled "The Kalergi Plan". Conspiracy Watch describes it as "a baseless anti-foreigner and antisemitic conspiracy theory"; PolitiFact rated it false in 2022.

Where it comes from

The phrase has a short paper trail. Fact-checkers, the Anti-Defamation League and Italian journalists trace it to a book published in 2005 by Gerd Honsik, an Austrian neo-Nazi. Honsik had been convicted in Austria in 1992 for Holocaust denial and fled to Spain; he was extradited in 2007 and sentenced to five years in 2009. His book took sentences from Coudenhove-Kalergi's writings out of context and presented them as a program for the "genocide" of Europeans.

The hostility did not start with Honsik. Hitler insulted Coudenhove-Kalergi in his unpublished second book; the Nazis blacklisted and burned his books in 1933, and he fled Austria in 1938. The movement he founded in 1923 to unite Europe's states is the subject of What was Pan-Europa?

What Coudenhove-Kalergi actually wrote

The passage the theory quotes comes from a 1925 essay collection, **Praktischer Idealismus**. In a chapter on inbreeding and crossbreeding, written in the race theory common in the 1920s, he predicted that "the man of the distant future will be of mixed race", because travel and fading prejudice would mix the world's peoples over time. The same paragraph imagines a "Eurasian-Negroid" race of the future, in the vocabulary of that era's race theory; it describes what he expected, not anything he proposed. The book contains no immigration policy, and nothing in his political writing calls for engineering any population.

The same book also contains passages praising Jews as a spiritual elite of Europe. Honsik turned that praise around into a claim that Coudenhove-Kalergi wanted Europe dominated by Jews. That inversion ties the story to much older antisemitic myths. It also overlaps with the "Great Replacement" theory that the French writer Renaud Camus popularized in 2011.

How the distortion works

The distortion has four parts:

- **A real author.** Coudenhove-Kalergi existed and was influential, so the name lends credibility.
- **A real sentence.** The 1925 passage exists; it is quoted without the century-old context or the fact that it predicts instead of prescribing.
- **A false purpose.** The forecast is presented as a secret instruction, and a link to today's institutions is asserted without evidence.
- **An invisible author.** The modern origin, a convicted Holocaust denier's 2005 book, is left out.

His biographer, Martyn Bond, calls the theory a "gross misreading" of the work. In 2019 the British MEP Stuart Agnew asked the Commission whether EU immigration policy was part of the "Kalergi plan"; the Commission replied that it was not aware of any such plan.

What he left behind

Coudenhove-Kalergi received the first Charlemagne Prize, in 1950, and died in 1972. His idea of a union of free European states became, after 1950,

the community described in Why was the European Union created?. The real argument about how far that union should go is in What is a European federation?

All questions →

FREQUENTLY ASKED

What is the Kalergi plan?

A far-right conspiracy theory claiming that European elites follow a secret plan, supposedly written by Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, to replace white Europeans through mass immigration. No such plan exists. Fact-checkers and researchers trace it to a 2005 book by a convicted Austrian Holocaust denier.

Who was Coudenhove-Kalergi?

An Austrian-Japanese writer, born in Tokyo in 1894, who founded the Pan-European movement in 1923 to unite Europe's states after the First World War. The Nazis banned and burned his books; he fled Austria in 1938 and reached the United States in 1940. He received the first Charlemagne Prize in 1950.

What did Coudenhove-Kalergi actually write about race?

In a 1925 essay he predicted, in the race theory common at the time, that easier travel would eventually produce a mixed population. It is a forecast; the book proposes no immigration policy, and his political project was a union of European states.

Why is the Kalergi plan considered antisemitic?

Because it recasts a passage in which Coudenhove-Kalergi praised Jews as a spiritual elite into a claim that he wanted Europe dominated by Jews. It follows the old antisemitic pattern of a hidden Jewish hand. It also overlaps with the "Great Replacement" theory popularized in 2011.

Has the EU ever responded to the claim?

Yes. In 2019 the British MEP Stuart Agnew asked the Commission whether EU immigration policy was part of the "Kalergi plan". The Commission answered that it was not aware of any such plan.

SOURCES

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- Conspiracy Watch: Kalergi plan (1/2025) – "a baseless anti-foreigner and antisemitic conspiracy theory"; Honsik's 2005 book
- ADL: Hate beyond borders – the internationalization of white supremacy – Honsik took Kalergi's words out of context around 2005, claiming "the programmed 'genocide' of European peoples" and that Kalergi proclaimed Europe would be dominated by Jews; ADL: The Great Replacement – an explainer (4/2021) – Renaud Camus, Le Grand Remplacement, 2011; Camus's initial concept did not focus on Jews
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- Karlspreis: Richard Nikolaus Graf Coudenhove-Kalergi – first laureate, 1950
- European Parliament: Written question E-001516/2019 (3/2019) Answer given by Commissioner Avramopoulos (6/2019) – the Commission is "not aware of any 'plan'"
- Dublin Review of Books: The man from nowhere (12/2021) – review of Martyn Bond, Hitler's Cosmopolitan Bastard (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021)