



PROJET : L'ESPRIT DE ROME

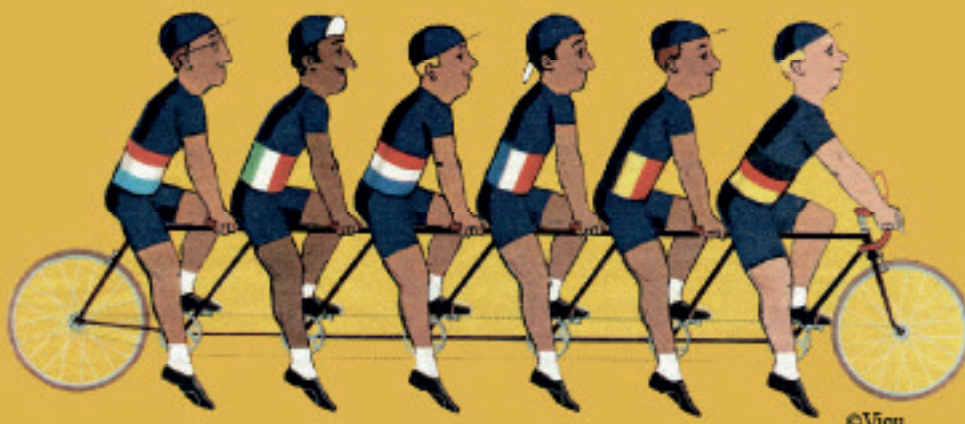
Story of the European adventure from a human perspective

On March 25, 1957, torrents of water poured down on the Eternal City. Under cover, in the Hall of the Horatii and Curatii, men have just signed the Treaties of Rome. The flashes are crackling. Their names will go down in history. But who are the men and women in the background on the pictures ? Who are those who will put the treaties to music ? What are their expectations, their hopes, their motivations ? Here is the account of their stories by the children.

(EM/jan.2023)

(Themes : European memory and history ; European construction and integration.)

Aside - In an article in a French newspaper (April 2019), a 94-year-old man revisits his past. This man is called Georges Berthoin. He was Jean Monnet's chief of staff at the European Coal and Steel Community. He recounts how he took up his post in Luxembourg on 1st of December 1952. When he walked through the door of his new office for the first time, the euphoria quickly faded. It was a German who came to welcome him. The memories of his encounters with the occupying forces and the Gestapo were still fresh. The Second World War is still a gaping wound. Georges Berthoin had fought during the Occupation in the Vercors, mourning comrades who were arrested, tortured and sometimes shot. Death lurked everywhere. « *But the war was over, I had to take it upon myself* », explains Georges Berthoin. He is now determined to open a dialogue with the German who became his office neighbour in Luxembourg. The latter was called Winrich Behr. He was hired by Jean Monnet. A former officer in the army of occupation, Winrich Behr had served under General Friedrich Paulus on the Eastern Front at the end of 1942. With the German forces surrounded by the Russians in Stalingrad, he was sent to Berlin to formally ask Hitler for permission to surrender. Winrich Behr was then assigned to General Rommel's service in the Netherlands to lead the final battles. Jean Monnet knew everything of Winrich Behr's past, as Georges Berthoin wrote in Le Parisien: « *This is the reality of the post-war period. In the 'great chaos' that is the construction of Europe, it was necessary to build bridges between yesterday's executioners and today's victors, not to harbour resentment, to renounce any idea of revenge. We were all [around Jean Monnet] driven by a common will : to implement the conditions for « never again ».* » « *I felt that I was in the process of overcoming my pain, without denying my values. I was making peace with myself* », he concluded. This was the « L'Esprit de Rome » (The Spirit of Rome) that hovered in the Hall of the Horatii and Curatii of the Capitol in Rome on 25th of March 1957: peace at all costs, reconciliation, a lasting peace.



I. SYNOPSIS

First meant to be an editorial project, L'Esprit de Rome has evolved to a more ambitious educational project on European memory. It is based on the stories of the first officials of the European institutions, the linchpins of the European construction.

The ambition of the project is to revive the spirit of the early days and to recall that it was men and women driven by an ideal ("peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, protection and prosperity for all") who defied the obstacles to make Europe. Improbable, Europe emerged from the ruins of the Second World War and the discovery of the concentration camps. These early men and women included Holocaust survivors, resistance fighters and former soldiers of the Wehrmacht. They managed to work side by side driven by the imperative for peace at all cost so that « never again » could happen.

On 10th of December 2012, the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its actions over sixty years in favor of "peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe". In 2022, the 10th anniversary of this award had a bitter taste. More than ever "we have a fundamental responsibility to maintain, whatever our differences, this peace which is probably the most precious asset for all Europeans" (Simone Veil, Auschwitz survivor, President of the European Parliament from 1979 to 1982).

Learning kits will be developed based on the testimonies of these pioneers or the children, most of whom are former pupils of the first European schools. In addition to European remembrance, the latter will inscribe the project in the transmission to give it a global impact. A special emphasis will be placed on women of the first days. Notably to repair an « injustice » : indeed, there is not a single woman on the historical photo of the signing of the Treaties of Rome at the Capitol. Although invisible, there were many women translators, typists, interpreters and assistants in the early days. But women will have to wait before they can climb the ladder of the European civil service, gain visibility and make their voices heard.

The kits will focus on the destinies of these pioneers in the history of the 20th century, as well as their contributions to European integration. The kits will be developed by a committee of experts and will be experimented in the network of European Schools, as well as in two European Parliament's volunteer ambassador schools.

The final goal is to offer new educational tools available around all schools in Europe.

Prior to the educational project (that is to be submitted to the call for proposals of the EU programme CERV for Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values), a pilot project intended for publication (supported by the Jean Monnet Foundation) was launched in April 2022. As part of this pilot project, about thirty testimonials were collected. Summaries were posted on the My House of European History platform created under the auspices of the European Parliament, which endorsed the pilot project. Conceived as a virtual library of European stories, the My House of European History (MyHEH) platform explores the concept of European identity (<https://my-european-history.ep.eu/myhouse/user/2910/stories>). Some of the summaries are also available on the Citizens' App.

THE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS :

• A collection of testimonies

The work here consists of :

- 1) Identify witnesses (children of former civil servants or civil servants themselves when they are still alive);
- 2) Accompany the witnesses in writing and formatting their story;
- 3) Conduct interviews/interviews (by phone or video) when writing is not possible;
- 4) Transcribe the interviews and have them validated;
- 5) Collect photographic archives (free of rights)

• **An educational component** with the creation of educational kits (based on the testimonies collected). These kits will focus on the destinies of their authors in the history of the 20th century, the European ideal that inspired them, as well as their contributions to European integration through professional achievements. They will be developed by a

committee of experts (which will meet regularly), including teachers and alumni of the European Schools, and will be tested in the network of European Schools, as well as in two European Parliament's volunteer ambassador schools.

A selection of testimonies collected during the pilot project as well as the educational project will be the subject of the book *L'Esprit de Rome*. In addition, all the testimonies and photos will be donated to the House of European History.

II. PARTNERS

1) PROJECT LEADER : ALUMNI EUROPÆ ASBL (an association under Belgian law) – (<https://alumnieuropae.org>)

[Designer and project coordinator : Emmanuelle Mourareau]

Alumni Europæ is a European network of more than 6,000 alumni of the European Schools across Europe (80%) and the United States (20%). The association provides information to European School students on university education in Europe. It also assists them in their entry into working life. It has recently been involved in welcoming Ukrainian children to the European Schools in Brussels.

As the project leader, the Alumni Europæ association will ensure, on the one hand, a role of relay in the identification of witnesses (direct witnesses or descendants), and on the other hand, it will sit on the committee of experts in charge of the realisation of the educational kits.

[Reinhold Ziegler, President]

2) GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF EUROPEAN SCHOOLS – (<https://www.eursec.eu/fr>)

Hosted by the European institutions in Brussels, the General Secretariat has an office that provides advice and assistance to the European Schools on pedagogical, administrative, financial and legal matters.

The Secretariat General of the European Schools will identify, through the College of Directors of the European Schools, teachers who volunteer to sit on the committee for the production of the teaching kits. It will also allow enable the testing of the teaching kits in the European Schools network.

3) EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AMBASSADOR SCHOOLS

1. VILKAVISKIO R. GRAZISKIU GIMNAZIJA (LITUANIE) – (<https://graziskiai.vilkaviskis.lm.lt>)

The Vilkauskio r. Gražiskiu gimnazija in Gražiškiai, Lithuania provides primary and secondary education. In 2015, three students accompanied by Daiva Snipaitienė, the correspondent for the Spirit of Rome project, represented Lithuania at the European Economic and Social Committee as part of the « Your Europe, Your Say 2015 » project.

2. JOSIP SLAVENSKI GRAMMAR SCHOOL ČAKOVEC (CROATIE) – (<https://gimnazija-cakovec.hr>)

Josip Slavenski High School is located in Čakovec, Croatia. Ethics and Politics teacher Ivancica Sklepčić, the correspondent for the Spirit of Rome project, is also supervising an elective course there entitled « Europe: yesterday, today, tomorrow » where the European Union and its values are presented.

III. AGENDA

PROJECT LAUNCHING : END OF 2023, BEGINNING OF 2024

IV. PRESENTATION OF THE DESIGNER OF THE PROJECT & AUTHOR OF THE UP-COMING BOOK



« My first words are Italian. My first steps were in Canada, my first classes on the benches of a small private school in Dorset. From the age of reason to the age of majority, I am Belgian by geography. And if education makes identity, mine is European without hesitation. My schooling at the European School of Uccle will be foundational. With a European baccalaureate and a law degree from the Sorbonne in hand, I experimented with several jobs before settling down. Founder and editor of Éditions du Pétrin and author of a delicious Dictionary of Italy, I revisit today what made me who I am: Europe. »

Emmanuelle Mourareau, editor and author - Alumni 84

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A selection of extracts and pictures from the book project :

Christian Calmes (Secretary General of the Council of the European Union from 1952 to 1973) by his daughter Elisabeth Calmes : *« My father, who miraculously came out of the Nazi concentration camps alive, had decided that Europe was the only solution to save the world and avoid another war. This meant integrating the Germans and not rejecting them as he had done at the Treaty of Versailles... ». [...] : About the first meetings of the Six... All of them were silent about their past, especially since they had shot each other during the war that had just ended ».*

Pierre Mathijsen (Director General at DG Regional Policy) by his daughter Claire Mathijsen : *« He will remember his first impressions in the emerging European institutions : «... what a turnaround for us compared to our recent past; to find ourselves, for example, in 1952, barely seven years after the end of the Second World War, sitting around the same table with yesterday's enemies, was not always obvious; how can we not wonder if the young German sitting opposite us was not wearing the much-hated «feldgrau» just a few years ago; in this area we had to make an effort, and we did, and it paid off».*

Joachim Erhentreich (official at DG Industry) by his daughter Annette Wheatley : *« In 1951, after studying nuclear engineering, my father joined the university in Dresden as a scientific assistant. In 1952 he married Eva, my mother, whom he had met on a train journey. In 1954, the young couple had a baby boy. My parents suffered under the East German communist regime, which controlled every aspect of their lives, both professional and private, not to mention its political police, the Stasi. They decided to plan their escape to West Berlin. In 1955, taking every risk, they left Dresden by train for West Berlin, with my little brother Uwe, who was only a few months old. They only took a bag with a few clothes so as not to attract attention. At the East Berlin station, the police patrol the platform. They hold their breath. After five minutes that seemed like hours, the train doors finally closed ».*

Pierre Oschinsky, translator, by his son Marc Oschinsky : *« My father was born in 1922 in Hanover. Shortly after his birth, the family moved back to Berlin where they were originally from. The Oschinskys belonged to the Berlin Jewish bourgeoisie. My father arrived in Brussels in 1933, at the age of eleven. During the war, he was arrested while trying to cross into Spain. He was twenty years old. He had false papers, given to him by a Belgian friend, which he doctored to include his photo. Sent back to Brussels, then to Dachau and Majdanek, he spent his entire captivity as a political prisoner, saved from the worst thanks to this false identity. In 1944, he escaped. And he was saved by Soviet soldiers. [...] Before leaving « the Communities », as it was still called, he had the right to a training course to prepare for his retirement. So he found himself with people of his own age, whom he did not necessarily know. One of them was a German. Curious about everything as always, he started talking to him. Asking him where he was in 1942, when he was in Dachau. « I was on the Eastern Front... ». And the survivor of the camps and the survivor of the Russian winter recognised each other as what they were : two survivors who had lost their twenties because of the madness of some ».*

Christian Calmes with Jean Monnet

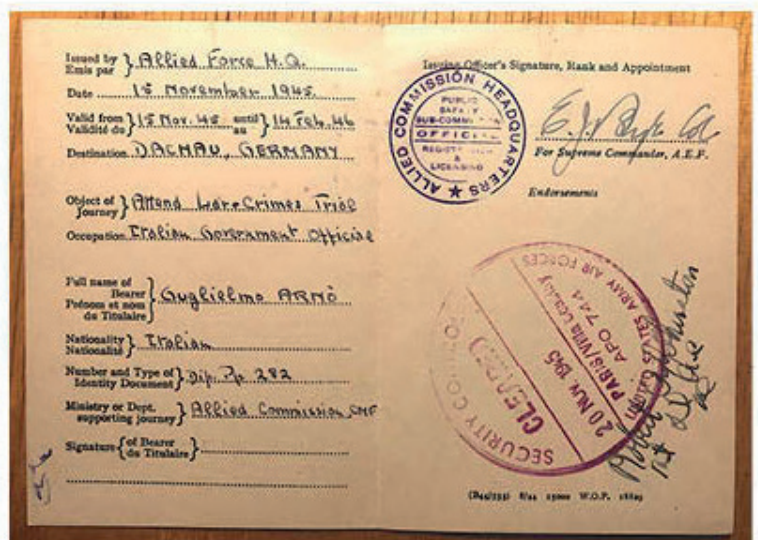
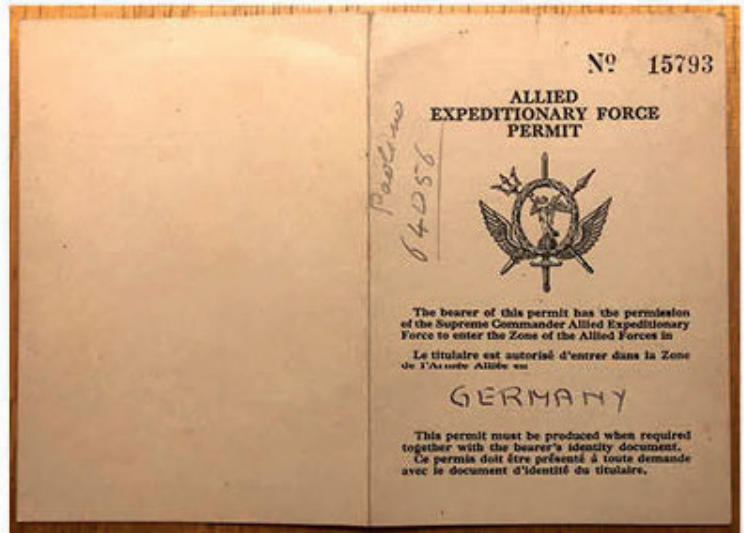


25th of March 1957, Treaty of Rome signature. Christian Calmes standing behind Joseph Bech (with the white moustache).



Farmers and their cows at the Council of Ministers in Brussels - February 1971.

Accreditation of Guglielmo Arnò at the Dachau trial



Beginning of the ECSC in Luxembourg (Hotel de ville), 1953: Robert Schumann (left) and Jean Monet (right). Franca Arnò is in the booth on the left.

Franca Arnò in the center of the translator booth in Luxembourg.