

Europe Day Debate with the Delegation of the European Union in Rome

DIFFERENT MEMORIES, COMMON FUTURE

To celebrate Europe day, the EU delegation in Rome organised a debate to exchange views on the lost peace after the Great War, the different memories, and the creation and achievements of the European Union which paved the way for a common future. The purpose of this event was to confront History which is handed down from generation to generation to teach and explain past economic, political and social developments. Throughout the discussion, the panel and the public concurred that the diversity of minds contributes to the beauty of humankind and the European integration process offers an example of peaceful coexistence while acknowledging the full spectrum of national sensitivities and individual memories. The risk still exists for future generation to become victims of untreated wounds, old mistakes from the past and distorted utilizations of history and memories. It is therefore our responsibility and of paramount importance to increase global awareness about the memory of our history.

The debate allowed for in depth reflections over the importance of remembering our different history to help future generations build an ever stronger European Union.



H. E. Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi
Prefect of the Pontifical Council for Culture

It is worth dwelling on three important words. First, the word **Culture**, as the European Continent comprehends a multitude of languages and cultures which represent an invaluable treasure. Additionally, the Latin-Greek and Christian roots laid a common ground for the whole continent. The second word is **Memory**; memory makes us human. **Keeping track of our past is essential for humans, as it defines our identity**. The last word is **Dialogue**. Communication plays a key role in any society.

The recent fire that severely damaged the cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris offers an opportunity to delve into the common memory of monuments destroyed by conflicts and disasters in Europe. **When such tragic events occur, reconstruction and peace follow**. After hatred, anger and suffering from war and destruction, it is time for reconciliation. The Cathedral of Reims destroyed during World War I is the perfect historical example of how a common past can lead to a better future.



Prof. Jean-Dominique Durand
University of Lyon, Vice-President of the French Catholic Academy



Prof. Manos Papazoglou
Associate Professor, University of Peloponnese, Department of Political Science and International Relations

First-hand experience has an unequivocal impact on people, but the number of protagonists that witnessed and supported the creation of the EU is decreasing by the day. By creating institutions and strong rules to overcome disagreement, the Union initiated a new **era of peace and prosperity**. We must remember how the decades of **European integration** after WWII helped to **address divergent national interests**, thus preventing conflicts. We must remember why we needed the European Union then to understand why we still need it today.

We are focusing too much on memorizing short periods and events, instead of learning about history on a global and far-sighted context. This has an impact on our attitude and especially the perception of our identity. Memory is at the very core of our nature. Losing our memory means losing our identity.



Prof. Marek Cichocki
College of Europe, Natolin, Poland



Silvia Costa
Member of the European Parliament

Memories of our history are fundamental to develop and understand our identities, but also to determine common objectives and goals. We must therefore not forget that in the darkest moments of our modern history, political leaders were able to foresee a common future and **rebuild a new institutional structure** with collective values: the European Union.

The Schuman declaration ended a century of wars, creating a new structure that would ban the feeling of humiliation and revenge amongst the nations of the European continent. It established a new era of unification, in which nations are put together regardless of their past struggles.

The European Union is not a natural unification; it is the result of a long historical process and spiritual development that led to the longest period of peace its Member States have ever known.



Msgr Bernard Ardua
*President of the Pontifical
Committee for Historical Sciences*