

Interview with Pierre Pescatore: the leading figures in the national delegations (Luxembourg, 10 September 2003)

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[Étienne Deschamps] Mr Pescatore, we have already spoken about the composition of the delegations, but who were, in your opinion, the leading figures in the other national delegations?

[Pierre Pescatore] I would start with Mr Spaak, although I must add that I never met him personally. His influence was really ... it informed the entire negotiation process, but in my case I had no personal contact with him. Yet without Spaak, these negotiations would never have succeeded, and this has had repercussions to this very day, for example, on the search for a President of Europe, has it not? The debate remains open. Spaak exercised his Presidency in an exemplary fashion, but I did not rub shoulders with him.

At Head of Delegation level, I was able to observe and establish contacts that were nonetheless interesting with at least two Heads of Delegation, namely Baron Snoy, Head of the Belgian Delegation, who clearly trusted me and, at several difficult and delicate points in the negotiations, stopped me in the corridors, as if by accident, and struck up conversation with me, for example about the clause preserving the Belgo-Luxembourg Economic Union and the Benelux and also about other clauses on which he felt strongly. I felt that he trusted me, and this was made clear at the end of the negotiations when I got off my train upon arrival at the Termini station in Rome in order to attend the ceremonial signing and then to begin the negotiations that needed to be finished in Rome itself.

There was Baron Snoy, waiting for me on the station platform, which surprised me, and he said: 'Mr Pescatore, I have been waiting for you. We have a serious problem in the Belgian Delegation. Our delegate, Mr Devadder, fell sick on arrival and has been sent to hospital with viral hepatitis' — this was already around at that time — 'and it is too late to have someone come from Brussels.'

Then he added: 'Besides, nobody understands the issues sufficiently. Would you be prepared to replace the Belgian delegate and then to act as the Belgian delegate?' That is, during the remainder of the negotiations, because we were on our way to Rome just after completing the Treaty of Rome, the Treaty itself, but there still remained the annexed Protocols to negotiate, each of which was important. I replied: 'It is a great honour that you do me, and of course I am very happy to do so.' All the more so since at that time, I recall, I was already a professor at the University of Liège and therefore had a special link with Belgium.

There was also my relationship with the Head of the German Delegation, Ambassador Ophüls. Ophüls had been the German Delegation's lawyer at the ECSC negotiations and, I suppose, also at the EDC negotiations. Ophüls was a diplomat with such a high level of competence and skill that he had been promoted to Head of the German Delegation for these negotiations, which were vital and historic for Germany. Deep down, he somewhat regretted that he was no longer able to participate in the legal work.

There were three fellows there: one came from the Federal Foreign Office and did not know what was going on; the second one, Wohlfarth, was remarkable — he came from the Ministry of Justice but did not come under its authority — he was basically our main interlocutor; the third, from the Ministry of the Interior, was merely an observer. As a result, it was in his interest to know what was going on in our group and to exercise a degree of influence on the negotiations all the same; he too, like Baron Snoy, would occasionally just happen to meet me in the corridor or on the stairs at Val Duchesse, and he would ask me how the discussions in our group were progressing and let me know what the German objectives might be, the difficulties that they faced, as well as their difficulties in understanding the intentions of the French Delegation. That all took place essentially in French, so I had very frank conversations with him that helped me a great deal.

Then there was another person who figured in the negotiations, and that was my compatriot, Christian Calmes. Christian Calmes was Secretary throughout the negotiations, and he had observers in all the groups and subgroups that met at Val Duchesse. There was always someone there acting for the Secretariat. He was informed daily, and as a result of my contacts with him, he kept me in touch on a daily basis with what was going on in the other groups involved in the negotiations. As a result, I was, among the lawyers, probably

the best informed of all the national delegates and I was able to tailor my own activities to the general course of the conference. It was Christian Calmes too who, as a friend, one day drew my attention to the respect that the other delegations bore me. I was not aware of this. I was not aware of this; it made me feel that I could be really useful to the negotiations and that I should try to explain my standpoint clearly, knowing that I could count on a good reception.