

Interview with Pasquale Antonio Baldocci: the official signing ceremony in the Capitol (Scy-Chazelles, 4 April 2007)

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They were very pleasant times, because the only place that could provide a suitable historic backdrop for this event, one which was to be unique in the diplomatic history of our continent, was the Capitol. The Capitol symbolised the Roman tradition, but not only the Roman tradition, in so far as it had its source in the Greek and Jewish roots of Roman civilisation — Roman civilisation is in fact the continuation of the Greek, and in part, also the Jewish civilisations, so there is certainly a common basis. So it had to be the Capitol.

But what is the Capitol? It is a palace that was designed by one of the most famous Italians: Michelangelo Buonarroti. It was beautiful, and it was well suited. It also hosted a museum of ancient art, and I recall those days as a truly extraordinary event because in this museum, just by moving the statues and mosaics aside, desks, tables and all that was necessary for extensive negotiations had been put in their place. The negotiations, as is well known, had started in Val Duchesse, in the neighbourhood of Brussels, but later on, in the final phase, for convenience's sake and to be close to the country that was to be the Depositary State for the two treaties, these were transferred to Rome. Everyone was happy, because while they were working, they would look up and see copies of Praxiteles, or Miron, or Phidias; then from time to time they would also see the Greek originals, as well as beautiful copies made from Greek models by the Romans. I remember how marvellous it was to look up, and, instead of seeing photographs of current presidents or kings, see these wonderful statues. The atmosphere could not have been more 'Latin', and of course there was no problem with the English because there weren't any there... but the English are amateurs of Latin culture, great amateurs, so I think they would have regarded what was something of a diplomatic holiday — even if it involved intense work — as the crowning point of this adventure.

You will also recall that the negotiations went very well, very quickly, and that they were much shorter than those for the Constitutional Treaty, which was, above all, a compromise. In this case there were no compromises; and we always said that it would be easy to negotiate Euratom, because the nuclear industry was in its infancy; it carried with it no pre-established interests; no positions had to be abandoned — whereas this was not the case for industry, for trade or for customs duties... In spite of everything, the negotiations went ahead very quickly.

There were also figures who possessed gifts as mediators, but did so with great authority — I am thinking, for example, of Spaak: Spaak was one of these. We also had a group of Italian diplomats who were convinced Europeans, and later on were our guides; for example, I am thinking of Roberto Ducci, who was one of the founders... and, more recently, Renato Ruggiero, who, I hear, will be here shortly, for the laying of the foundation stone of the museum. Renato Ruggiero has spent nearly all his life in Brussels doing an extremely useful job, because members would arrive from the Italian Parliament or from the Senate who knew nothing about the European Union, and — with his verve and his Neapolitan loquaciousness — he managed to explain the issues in the simplest of terms, so that these people were left with the impression that they had always understood them. He was a truly extraordinary person. We are of the same generation. Although, on occasions, we have not always agreed, nonetheless, one cannot fail to recognise that he too has worked very hard for the European cause. There you are. Then, of course, there were others among the experts who are less well known and who also did a very good job.