

Interview with Pasquale Antonio Baldocci: the ceremony held to mark the signing of the Rome Treaties (Scy-Chazelles, 4 April 2007)

Source: Interview de Pasquale Antonio Baldocci / PASQUALE ANTONIO BALDOCCI, Étienne Deschamps, prise de vue : François Fabert.- Scy-Chazelles: CVCE [Prod.], 04.04.2007. CVCE, Sanem. - VIDEO (00:03:24, Couleur, Son original).

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http://www.cvce.eu/obj/interview_with_pasquale_antonio_baldocci_the_ceremony_held_to_mark_the_signing_of_the_rome_treaties_scy_chazelles_4_april_2007-en-c716ffa7-bf6c-4cf4-89b0-f5f2311a1aaa.html



Last updated: 05/07/2016

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[Pasquale Antonio Baldocci] It is true that I was at the Capitol in Rome on that day, and we were all excited, especially the younger ones, because we felt we were witnessing, that we had been... that in some way we had contributed to this result. I was exactly 25 years old and I was in the Ministry; I had passed the diplomatic examination and taken up my duties three months earlier. I had been appointed to the Treaties Department. This was the name given to the office that was concerned with everything to do with the signing of international acts, agreements, conventions and so on, diplomatic instruments such as direct powers, instruments of ratification, instruments of accession, and so on. It was for this very reason that I was involved. It was for the fact that I had taken part, ten or so days before the signing, in working groups whose task was to make sure that the texts in the four languages — because there was Dutch as well, and there was no English, naturally — the texts had to be as close to one another as possible. There was no original text: the four texts were deemed equally authentic, and, which made things more difficult, it was essential that there be the fewest differences possible, even differences of nuance between the texts. I worked on the Italian text in parallel with the French text. Other colleagues who knew German well worked on the German text. The problem lay with the Dutch, since none of my colleagues knew Dutch. As a result we had asked the Court of Rome to recommend an interpreter-translator to us, who would therefore be neutral, because we could not ask the Dutch, at the Embassy, for help, because we were the depository Government. It all worked very well, but I came to realise how difficult it was, even for languages like Italian and French, which have common roots, to find similar terms. Sometimes there are certain differences that appear insignificant, but which may have repercussions in international law and legally in general.

It was, therefore, a fascinating start to my career, given that, regarding the process of European integration, I merely possessed some recollections from my university studies. I had been a student of political sciences; I had travelled, and I had been interested in Europe from the outset. But I had been also been interested in Marxism. My generation in Italy was very close to Marxism — from a philosophical rather than a political point of view perhaps — and Europe was something different, which seemed to have more of a future than Marxism. We already had the impression that Marxism had exhausted all its sources and all its resources, and that it had accomplished its historical role, whereas Europe was opening up, like some beautiful flower, and that attracted us greatly. We were still living with memories of De Gasperi, who was one of the founding fathers, and even Carlo Sforza, who belonged to the group of the founding grandfathers with Aristide Briand and Gustav Stresemann, and this is often forgotten. It is often forgotten that Stresemann, and above all Aristide Briand, were the initiators of Franco-German rapprochement — and thus of a first step made towards Europe.