

EUROPE BETWEEN RENEWAL AND DECLINE

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Jacques Delors spoke on 6 May 2013 during a public session of the Class of letters and moral and political sciences of the Royal academy of sciences, letters and fine arts of Belgium. This Tribune points out the main elements of his speech: return to long-term memory, purpose of a Greater Europe and consolidation of the Economic and Monetary Union. It is followed by the introductory speech delivered by Philippe de Schoutete, member of our board of directors, and dealing with moral authority in politics.

More than three years after the beginning of the public debt crisis in the euro area, times are not good for Europe and the Europeans. Some of them even ask the question: will the European project survive? If so, in what form? There is no shortage of thoughts on this subject. The historian José Enrique Ruiz-Domènec asks the following question: will Europe be a museum managing its former glories, or, on the contrary, a laboratory capable of remaining at the forefront of modernisation in the fields of science, technology and health?

Europe is indeed today at a crossroads. Since 1950, the year of my militant commitment to Europe, I have always defended the idea that Europe should choose between survival and decline. It was thus pointed out to me that 'survival' was not a very stimulating goal. That is why I decided to modify it and propose the following title to you here today: **Europe between renewal** - which we all hope for - **and decline**.

I would like to begin this presentation by inviting you to **return to your long-term memory**. For no future is thinkable or thought about without returning to history and its teachings. The triumph of the 'immediate' in the media makes it extremely difficult today, for those who govern us - and whose difficult task I comprehend - to produce policies for the future. The long-term memory of the past and the long-term thoughts for the future are put aside, as though the fate of a society was not related to time. I would then like to propose two related subjects for our reflection on the future. On the one hand, the question of **the purpose of a Greater Europe**, that of 27 member countries (28 from 1 July, with Croatia's accession). This Greater Europe is, to a certain extent, obscured by the crisis and this leads to understandable frustration in non-euro area countries. On the other hand, I wish to address the subject of **consolidation of Economic**

and Monetary Union (EMU). The firemen have not yet completed their work of putting out the blaze of the crisis, but the architects must now reinforce the structure and consolidate it.

1. Returning to long-term memory

To speak to you of long-term memory, I was going to take the easy route and tell you that essentially, the history of Europe since Robert Schuman can be explained by willpower, chance, and necessity. In reality, Europe took place at the crossroads of willpower, necessity and external constraints. I will provide some examples to show you also how far we have come, and the sometimes lucky path that is ours.

The date of 9 May 1950 marks the call of Robert Schuman, which was a call of willpower and spiritual impetus. I do not know of any call with as much spiritual depth as this one, and I am speaking in a secular and non-Christian manner. Pardon and promise, as stated by Hannah Arendt. Pardon is not forgetting, and promise is the fact that yesterday's enemies and their children will be reintegrated into the human community, which is what has actually happened. It was a shock for conscience and memory, and a tentative phase where all contemporary subjects could be found: institutional voluntarism, the failure of the European Defence Community (EDC) but also the failure of a project for a political Europe. On the other hand, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), a much more practical, concrete and limited enterprise, was a success. Visionaries and master-builders were hard at work.

In 1957, the Treaty of Rome was signed. But what a laborious task it was to get all of these countries, who only saw a conflict of interests, to agree! At the time,

people wondered if it would ever happen. Then an institutional comparison was made with the ECSC, as this was a good example. The French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Christian Pineau, had a thought that initially intrigued me. You know that when the Treaty of Rome was being negotiated, France and Great Britain had entered into the Suez invasion, which ended in failure as the whole world was against them. The Minister for Foreign Affairs then felt that the game was up, that this treaty had to be concluded. Once again, external constraints had played a role.

I will now come to the creation of the European Monetary System, a symbol of willpower that overcame de facto disagreements between France and Germany. There were as many discordances at the time between Germany and France as there are today and this must never be forgotten. However, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and Helmut Schmidt overcame these. They put aside their disagreements to support a project linked to flexible exchange rates and to the uncertain future of the currencies, and laid the foundations for the convergence of economies. It can be said that without the European Monetary System, the euro would never have existed.

Next, willpower continued to play its role with the election of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage. Then, after several years of dispute, revival came with the '1992 Objective', the Single Market and the Single European Act. It was not so much willpower that convinced governments but rather necessity. Europe was experiencing a difficult economic period, unemployment was on the increase and the creation of the Single Market would perhaps boost our economies.

Lastly, there was the fall of the Berlin Wall. Although it may have frightened some heads of state and government in the beginning, it nevertheless paved the way for subsequent enlargements. Whatever difficulties or fears there might have been, enlargement has been a European project from the very outset. Europe could not have been limited to six or more members. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, priority was given once again to policy-making. Remember that at the time the Maastricht Treaty was being negotiated, the Yugoslav tragedy was occurring, and the French and the Germans were opposed on this issue. Opposed by their tradition, their nature, and I would almost say their guts, they once again pushed their disagreements aside to give priority to the Maastricht Treaty.

You can therefore see in this way how willpower, necessity and an external shock are always present. Of course, after the Maastricht Treaty, we returned to constitutional abstracts. That was the time of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's Constitution, which was the result of willpower, but also of a constitutional illusion that can be found today, including with the brilliant Habermas and his constitutional patriotism. There is even a French constitutionalist, Dominique Rousseau, who wrote: "The current crisis in Europe is a political one, a crisis for lack of a Constitution". Personally, I have never believed that having a Constitution would allow us to resolve, miraculously, the issues raised by coexistence and the seeking of common goals, and a shared satisfaction between EU member countries.

Then arrived the financial crisis that you know well and I still believe that it stems from a lack of willpower. The leap that the single currency represented was in fact, underestimated: it is not there simply to complete the Single Market but it is in the pocket of every citizen and it is an instrument of prestige. It is also an element of conflict between countries on foreign exchange markets. The political and psychological impact of the single currency was underestimated. Was it perhaps because of the crisis of the fall of the Berlin Wall and all that ensued? The fact remains that the political leap involved in a single currency was underestimated.

I will now move on to the flaws in the system introduced in 1997-99. Allow me to quote the Report on EMU, drafted by the committee that I chaired at the time. Recently on this subject, Chancellor Merkel pointed out that she had finally had the report in her hands and that if it had been applied, EMU would not be where it is today. Therefore, from the outset, the design flaw of the system was as follows: it had a well-designed monetary leg, but it was already suffering from the inadequacy or even the non-existence of its economic leg. That is what explains the imbalance between the economic, the social and the monetary today. Moreover, this also partly illustrated by our current difficulties and the fragility of the euro area in dealing with the international financial crisis. Lastly, this is the reason why during this crisis I have spoken of "the euro on the edge of the abyss". How is it possible that during these first 10 years of the single currency, which were quite brilliant with almost 10 million jobs created in the euro area, European leaders did not notice that, sheltered from the euro, some countries were engaged in major tomfoolery? How is it possible that neither the Eurogroup, nor the European Central Bank did not

notice? Due to this design flaw of EMU, I believe that the states of the euro area share moral responsibility in relation to those countries engaged in this tomfoolery and today must make amends.

To end this part, I would say that necessity gives us reasons to reflect and move forward, that willpower remains vital, even if it is not always well represented, and that external constraints force us to move. In several of our countries, there is the feeling that external constraints were not measured against their reality. It is for this reason that, although we have chosen “renewal or decline”, I continue to believe that Europe will be playing partly for its survival over the coming years

From there, it seems to me that we have two useful projects for the future: firstly, “giving a positive spin” to Greater Europe, giving it reasons to live and secondly, trying to find a solid Constitution for the euro area.

2. “Giving a positive spin” to Greater Europe

Where does Greater Europe stand? The euro crisis has, to a large extent, eclipsed European promises. Indeed, we are hardly moving forward in terms of foreign policy or defence. It may also be noted that the entry of new countries into the EU is more difficult in times of economic stagnation, even if, today, Europe has once again been successful in getting Serbia and Kosovo to agree, by giving them the hope that they will both join Europe. This confirms that Europe still is attractive, even in difficult times.

We still have a heritage, a treasure based on a certain conception of man, on relations between the individual and society, which is truly fundamental and which makes Europe what it is. We must save these values, because they can be useful to the world. There was a time, when European construction was going well, when the leaders of international organisations and others believed that the blueprint of Europe could apply to the rest of the world in the future, through a sort of marriage contract, a shared code, and by the supremacy of law. All of this existed, and even led some countries, such as those in South America, to create Mercosur.

Are we adequately drawing on this capital, in particular to inspire our relations with countries of Africa, the Middle East, South or Central America? I have

cited the example of Serbia and Kosovo, because I see in it an encouraging factor. And this does not include relations to be jointly defined with Russia, the United States and Brazil. For example, the reason I proposed a European Energy Community, was because I am saddened to see each head of state and of government go to Mr. Putin to try to find a more favourable agreement than the others. What must Mr. Putin think of Europe?

We can only bring ideas of cooperation to the world with measure and restraint. It is this belief in the fact that a united Europe still has something to offer to the world, that allows us to overcome today’s difficulties and transcend them. And while we are reflecting on a new world organisation, we should update the European project to this end.

The fundamental principles of the Charter of Human Rights are recalled in several European domains. The primacy of law on the most basic power relations, including on market rules, can be seen in this way. Within the UN there is an institutional game, unproductive of course, that however if improved, may allow dynamic compromise to be found, rather than getting bogged down in hypocrisy, sadly often inherent to democratic relations. I am therefore certain that on these grounds the EU can provide, and not just on the economic and trade fronts, agreements that stimulate and strengthen mutual recognition between peoples and show that strategies based on provocation and war are not the best.

In other terms, new frontiers must be given to this Greater Europe, but also a new development model must be found, one that respects the fundamentals of life and that takes man and the individual into consideration against the factors of imbalance and of war.

We are not ambitious enough in this area, whereas we have placed the environment at the forefront of our focus. The environment does not simply mean the protection of nature. It is also the creation of a model of togetherness, a model of development that uses nature’s resources more sparingly, and is more respectful of man’s cycles and rhythms. It is this model that Europe should give prominence to, and not simply that of environmental defence. I am sure that this new model would create even more employment, and if we adopt a new way of calculating, more growth.

And then, there is a lot to be drawn from the triptych of the Single European Act: competition, cooperation and

solidarity. There is no question of eliminating competition, which stimulates. Many people today would like to eliminate it by asking too much of Germany. There is solidarity, expressed particularly through the economic and social cohesion policy and, even though it came too late, through new financial assistance mechanisms adopted within EMU. I continue to believe that the weak link in European construction is cooperation, particularly in the fields of infrastructure, energy, the environment and many others. If we do not want cooperation, it is necessary to move to a higher level of integration and accept to share more fields of sovereignty at European level. One can only govern through policies or rules.

EMU management shows that governing through rules does not suffice, policies are also necessary. I have always insisted on cooperation, because I knew that EU member countries were more or less disposed to the idea of transferring further sovereignty or powers to European level. It is for this reason that I have always believed that cooperation was important. And yet it was practically absent from EMU management.

I will now turn to EMU, after this creed in favour of the EU, Europe's role, its model in the world today and tomorrow. What new dynamism now for EMU?

3. Strengthening Economic and Monetary Union

Let's begin with the system's flaws. Firstly, at a political level, we underestimate what a single currency represents. And yet it is the symbol of power, the reflection of a life condition, the essential tool to manage economic policy, as can be seen today in the strategy undertaken by Japan. Secondly, there was a refusal to coordinate national economic policies in order to focus only on the Stability Pact. This pact contains both the constraint of being judged by one's peers and the weight of sanctions, which is useful but insufficient.

We are currently under the weight of sanctions regime. I fear that people may say that deep down, the EU is like the Bogeyman, there to punish us, to take our money, and constrain us. But where is the hope? Where is the compensation? More growth, more new development, more employment, especially for young people.

As I am French, I will tell you that currently, many French people complain of EMU constraints and of the enforcement powers granted to the Commission. But would the French people accept further transfers

of sovereignty? Would they accept the idea that at European level, more sovereignty is shared and decisions are made that fall within the sphere of policy-making and the general interest? It seemed to me that a few months ago, Angela Merkel, tarnished by some, was thinking about this major reform of EMU.

The firemen are hard at work to save EMU, but the time has come for the architects to step in. Reform on such a large scale and with such transparency, knowing who is doing what, is a mammoth task, both from a political and a technical point of view. I will not overindulge in technical issues, but I will point out to you that it will not happen by slipping the firemen's elements of stability and work into the work of the architects. It will not be enough. If we return to the triptych that I had used for the Single European Act: "competition, cooperation, solidarity", we can immediately see that it is not simply a question of transfer. It is the fundamental issue of each country that must find its own development model in order to make its contribution to joint development. For example, in an often tragic manner, industry has decreased in many countries, except in Germany. In France, it represents no more than 11% of GNP. And yet, industry stimulates research and leads to invention. What can therefore be done? Is it inevitable? Or can it be hoped that we can have an EMU in which each country would find a reasonable balance between industry, services, agriculture and public services?

In this context, with full respect for the rules of Greater Europe, EMU should accept to move to a status of enhanced cooperation, as foreseen in the treaty. This would allow EMU to be able to act in all areas in a balanced manner. Of course, respect for common rules is necessary, including for a banking union, but also in the area of competition, with the abolition of all forms of dumping, fiscal or social. In the fiscal area, work has already begun and the task is easier than for the social area, given the differences in living standards between the member countries of EMU.

New instruments must be created to respond the EMU vulnerabilities. I am referring in particular to a macroeconomic stabilisation fund and to eurobonds. The first is necessary to fight cyclical variations within the euro area. As for eurobonds, they should become an instrument mainly to finance investments for the future. At a later stage, when EMU will have progressed, these can become a financial stability instrument. It is important to stress that the emission of eurobonds should not be

a means to conceal a shift in responsibility to some EU countries, i.e. Germany, Austria, Finland and the Netherlands in particular.

It will not be possible to rebuild EMU without applying the same principle as that which applies to all of Europe, at enhanced cooperation level, i.e. to the 17 euro area members. By this I mean that Spain, Greece, Portugal, and perhaps others, will need specific European aid in the future to allow them to rebuild the foundations of their development and create a balance between the various branches of activity. Consequently, urgent action is needed and it must be done in a clear way, while perhaps highlighting the transfers of sovereignty that this implies.

Furthermore, the issue of extending democratic responsibility remains. The situation remains blurry as regards the transfer of sovereignty and democratic responsibility, associated with the issue of the role of national parliaments. These are two key points. Traditionally, in our democracies, one of the main tasks of parliaments is budgetary control. It will not be possible to grant a sufficient democratic foundation to EMU if we satisfy ourselves with just the European Parliament, even if it is already extremely important, given the role it plays. National parliaments must be associated, in one way or another. I will not elaborate on the different possibilities in detail here, but I remain convinced that regarding the credibility of Europe, in the current climate, finding a place for national parliaments in EMU would politically strengthen the European project.

There remains of course the question of which model to choose: a Community model, or a non-Community model? The excellent paper written recently on this subject by Baron Philippe de Schoutheete greatly inspired me¹. Today, the importance of the Eurogroup and the euro area summits is clear. The fact that heads of state and government of the euro area meet periodically is a good thing. However, if we wish to remain in a system that works, the Commission must be guardian of the European interest. It cannot be restricted simply to a role of execution, especially when these powers of execution are those of a Bogeyman, as is currently the case. It is absolutely necessary that a means be found to give the Commission its proper role: that of being at the service of governments, but also of constantly focusing on the European interest. From this point of view, it must be the guardian of the values and promises of the Treaty. This also means that commissioners

are responsible and if this fails, they can resign. I nevertheless remain in favour of the Community model, including for EMU.

I would like to recall two inescapable realities in the crisis. Firstly, in the management of this crisis we have witnessed the indecision of European leaders, and a loss of control of the crisis, which led me to speak recently of “the euro on the edge of the abyss”, to sound alarm bells. Secondly, there are national mistakes that will inevitably always be paid by the people. It is useless to say that it is Europe’s fault, it is a constant in history. When governments act foolishly, those who succeed should make amends. But Europe cannot do this, through a sort of miracle cure.

In the current context, there is a dual urgency. It is first of all social: unemployment and its downward spiral. Let us not forget that the unemployed today, in particular young people, may be lost in terms of economic and social activity, and this may plummet them into despair. Long-term unemployment begins with short-term unemployment. If we speak in economic terms, it is therefore essential to save this human capital in one way or another, and to make proposals. No proposals made by the Commission of the European Union will be commensurate with the problem, but at least we will be able to say to our people that Europe is concerned about them, and has made proposals, however partial.

The second urgency is political. Europe has become a scapegoat in all countries. Can you imagine what the result of the upcoming elections for the European Parliament will be, as far as the level of abstention on one side, and the hostile anti-European or Euro-sceptic vote on the other is concerned? It will be a difficult time for Europe, even though I know that the media are not exactly passionate about European elections.

While the elements to resolve the crisis are starting to emerge, I would like to recall some words of my late lamented friend Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa, former President of our think tank *Notre Europe*: “Austerity for the states, growth for Europe”. We expect that Europe, in addition to the budget it has adopted, will show some signs of encouragement towards indebted countries. Without exempting them from rigour, it must help them to find a way for the future, the path to new growth and new activity. This appeal has not yet been heard and that is what worries me. From there, three questions need to be answered.

First question: what reasonable deadline is it possible to establish to consolidate our public finances? The budgetary treaty foresees that the implementation of budgetary rules should take exceptional circumstances into account - which includes recessionary periods - as well as the implementation of structural reforms. The fact that the Commission gave several additional years to some countries to bring their public debt to below 3% of GDP does not represent the non-respect of rules but rather their intelligent application. However, in the current context of recession or a slow-down in growth, what has been done up to now is perhaps insufficient.

Secondly: what stimulation can the European Union provide? There is first of all investment: anything that can stimulate it is not only useful but necessary. I could also mention targeted incentive programmes: the Commission's current intentions for youth employment appear to me as interesting. Of course they will have to be adapted to each country, but they could provide stimulation and show that Europe is indeed concerned about the future of its people. Lastly, cooperation must be developed in terms of infrastructure and energy.

Thirdly: which policy for the European Central Bank? For my part, I would like to express my satisfaction in that the Central Bank, through its credit measures, has managed to avoid the worst in Greece, Spain and Italy. But how far will the finance measures go? Will there not be a time when this accumulated money will create new bubbles and new difficulties for Europe? Those in charge of the Central Bank do not have an easy task. And how can the finance granted have a knock-on effect on the real economy? You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make him drink: are the investors absent or are the banks too drastic?

Lastly, I will conclude by highlighting how difficult the technical dimension of resolving the crisis is. We need a satisfactory solution in the short term, which would allow us to build a solid and consistent structure for Economic and Monetary Union. And while consolidation of EMU is essential for the success of Europe, it is not enough. In this context, it seems vital to me to "give a positive spin once again" to Greater Europe, that of 27 and soon 28 members. By thus establishing the terms of debate on the future, isn't the short-term grey sky brightened ever so slightly? That, in any case, is what I hope.

1. Philippe de Schoutheete, « L'impact de la crise de la zone euro sur les institutions de l'Union européenne », Conference at the Belgium College of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Letters and Fine Arts of Belgium, 7 March 2013.

Moral authority in politics

Introductory speech by Philippe de Schoutheete, former Belgian Ambassador to the EU, member of the Royal Academy of Belgium, Senior Fellow of the Europe Department of Egmont Institute and member of Notre Europe - Jacques Delors Institute's Board of directors.

I am perfectly aware of the fact that this assembly has come together to hear Jacques Delors, but the Academy hosting you today has its time-honoured traditions, and one of them is that when the Class of letters holds its public session in May (in other words, today), the class director delivers an address on a subject of his choosing.

That is what I now propose to do, as briefly as tradition allows.

The topic I have chosen to discuss is authority, moral authority in particular, and more especially moral authority in politics.

1. What is moral authority in politics?

That venerable institution *Collège de France*, with which this Academy entertains close and regular relations, devoted a conference to the theme of authority in 2007. In the course of that conference Mrs. Catherine Audard, professor of philosophy at the London School of Economics, devoted a paper to the question I wish to tackle today: "What is moral authority?".

She began by explaining that there is nothing more mysterious than moral authority, which is "capable of commanding without constraint". We know of numerous instances, yet we find them hard to justify. Indeed, she added that the process of justifying authority is not only endless but is always being called into question. She was probably thinking of 1968! In any event, the fact remains that she concluded that, while it is possible to comprehend moral authority, it is impossible to justify it.

It is that somewhat disenchanted conclusion that has prompted me to interrogate the past. Can we find any examples of moral authority in history that share certain features, certain characteristics which might explain what moral authority is?

We could of course look back through the centuries. In Western civilisation, the two figures who have

probably exercised the longest-lasting moral authority are Jesus and Socrates. St. Matthew says of Jesus: "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes", while Plato says of Socrates that he taught virtue without asking for money, unlike the Sophists. And yet it seems to me that, given that the core of their message is not political, these illustrious examples lie outside my chosen topic.

2. Bergeyck seen through the lens of Saint-Simon's *Memoirs*

For that reason I shall seek a more modest, less well-known and utterly political example which, while maybe not contemporary, is certainly more recent. I am referring to one of our compatriots, who died in 1725. The Comte de Bergeyck was Treasurer General and later Superintendent General of the Spanish Netherlands. He played a role of some importance in the political and economic activities of this region, to the point that several people have nicknamed him the "Low Countries' Colbert".

Historians hold differing opinions in regard to this figure, but I propose to examine Bergeyck from a very special angle: through the lens of Saint-Simon's *Memoirs*.

It is common knowledge that Saint-Simon was hard to please. He loved to highlight his contemporaries' shortcomings and weaknesses, including those of his King, Louis XIV, and those of the Regent, his childhood friend. He underscores people's character flaws, the ineptitude of some, the baseness and the corruption of others. It is the perspicacity of his sharp eye and the merciless tone of his words that continue even today to delight his readers. There are few glowing or charitable depictions in Saint-Simon's *Memoirs*.

Bergeyck, however, is an exception. Saint-Simon followed his career and met him when he came to Versailles. He discusses him at length on two separate occasions, painting a psychological portrait of the man, as was his wont.

I shall start with his conclusion. He says: "The King loved him, believed him and held him in high esteem". Now, everything we know about Louis XIV suggests that he loved, believed and held in high esteem only a handful of people. That he should have made an exception for a foreign dignitary who was not his subject seems to me to be an indication of moral authority.

This is confirmed by another remark that Saint-Simon makes. He tells us that even after Bergeyck retired to his chateau of Leefdael, a few kilometres from here, he *“continued to enjoy great consideration in Flanders, where he was universally loved, esteemed, honoured and much missed”*. The man clearly possessed immense moral authority in Saint-Simon’s view.

What are the qualities that justified this excellent reputation, in Saint-Simon’s opinion?

- *“He was perfectly conversant not only with finance but with all of the Low Countries’ affairs... the most educated man in the country by virtue both of the friends he frequented and of the intelligence in his possession”*. That is competence. We would say today that he was familiar with the issues!
- *“He was a man who never put himself forward, yet who was firm in his views and who aired them in full”*. He knew how to put his viewpoint across. We would say today that he was a skilled communicator.
- *“He was the most truthful man in the world, the boldest in speaking the truth... and indeed he never said other than what he truly thought”*. That kind of intellectual integrity, the integrity of a man who dares to say what he truly thinks, is characteristic of a man of conviction.
- And finally, Saint-Simon stresses that he was *“not self-seeking in the least... for he loved and sought out good for good’s sake, and he was the most stalwart defender of the King of Spain’s interests... there are few men more capable, more loyal or less self-seeking”*. The way Saint-Simon saw it, moral integrity was an ingredient in short supply at the court of Versailles.

It seems to me that in discussing Bergeyck, Saint-Simon provides us with a framework for analysis. The things that go to make up an individual’s moral authority are competence and familiarity with the issues, the ability to explain and to communicate, the self-assurance that allows that an individual to voice his true convictions, even boldly so, and the kind of selflessness and concern for the public weal that is moral integrity.

Competence, communication, conviction, integrity!

I would suggest that this analysis, identified by Saint-Simon in the context of Versailles, can also be applied to other contexts and other eras. I would like to discover whether it can be applied to the second half of

the last century, when the great European blueprint was born.

3. What moral authority was there in the 1950s?

Who possessed moral authority in the 1950s?

One’s thoughts naturally go to **General de Gaulle** who wielded strong moral authority, and not only in France. He himself wrote on the subject of authority, that: *“Authority doesn’t work without prestige, or prestige without distance.”* He wrote those words in his book *The Edge of the Sword* in the 1930s. I should imagine that in those days Commander de Gaulle was thinking more in terms of authority of position, like the military man that he was, than of the moral authority that he was to enjoy later in life. His moral authority was based on his knowledge of France (*“a certain idea of France”*), on a great public speaker’s ability to communicate, on his unparalleled boldness in saying exactly what he thought, and on a selflessness that no one has ever disputed.

The framework for analysis devised by Saint-Simon applies rather well to de Gaulle, but it applies even more stringently to another of the great moral authorities of the era: **Jean Monnet**.

His economic competence, displayed in his role as *Commissaire au plan* and then in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), was common knowledge. His skill in communicating was not that of a great public speaker so much as that of a man of influence using a vast network to get the whole of Europe’s leaders to listen to him. De Gaulle snidely nicknamed him *“the Instigator”*. His conviction and his vision were largely responsible for fashioning the institutional apparatus that the European Union still has today. His integrity and his unassuming life-style were proverbial.

I could quite easily extend this analysis to other figure sometimes given the title of Europe’s *“founding fathers”*, a title which by its very nature acknowledges their moral authority. I have chosen to do so for the two Belgian signatories to the Treaty of Rome, Paul-Henri Spaak and Jean-Charles Snoy.

For **Jean-Charles Snoy**, we have a biography published by Michel Dumoulin and Vincent Dujardin in 2010, which highlights his exceptional skills as a ranking civil servant, his broad and diversified network of contacts, his conviction as a militant and a member of

the Resistance, and his integrity. In the preface to the book I underscored the considerable moral authority that he wielded both in Belgium and abroad during the 1950s, and particularly during negotiations ahead of the Treaty of Rome.

For **Paul-Henri Spaak**, I shall quote Pierre d'Ydewalle, who was the prime minister's *chef de cabinet* in 1940. In his *Memoirs* he paints a psychological portrait of the members of the government at that crucial moment in history. He discusses the authority of its ministers, dwelling in particular on that of Paul-Henri Spaak. He says: "Mr. Spaak, who had never worn a uniform, did not command. He led". This eminently sensible remark goes right to the heart of my topic. Someone who commands people, who wears or has worn a uniform, wields an authority of position, while someone who does not command, who has never worn a uniform, wields moral authority.

Conclusion

Thus I think that history does allow us to shed a little light on the mysterious nature of moral authority of which Mrs. Audard spoke. It is undoubtedly true, as she asserts, that it is impossible to justify it, to provide a basis for it. But it is possible to list a certain number of qualities (I have mentioned competence, communication, conviction and integrity) that one finds, in varying combinations and at very different times in history, in people who at a given moment have wielded this kind of authority. I believed that those qualities could be found at the court of Versailles in the *Memoirs* of Saint-Simon, and I note that they can also be applied to the major players in the construction of Europe.

And that brings me to today's speaker. One hardly needs to introduce **Jacques Delors** in Brussels and to an audience of this kind. Everyone is familiar with his life and career, which stretches from the Bank of

France to the *Commissariat au Plan*, to his appointment as Finance and Economy Minister in the Mauroy governments and to his appointment as president of the European Commission for ten years, and what years they were! The internal market, membership for Spain and Portugal, cohesion policy and the Maastricht Treaty with the single currency. He has written several books, including: *Le nouveau concert européen*, *L'unité d'un homme* and more recently *L'Europe tragique et magnifique*. Founding president of the *Notre Europe* think tank which now bears his name, the *Jacques Delors Institute*, Jacques Delors has always wielded immense authority in European affairs.

And allow me to say that the analysis I have just applied to other players is extremely appropriate in his case.

- Several of us here today can testify to his familiarity with the issues. His mastery of them was formidable, even for Mrs. Thatcher.
- Every one of us can remember many of his speeches. To use his own words, he became an "artisan of simplicity" when presenting the immense complexity of our affairs in order the better to put them across.
- The strength of his convictions is so well-known as not to require an explanation.
- And nor, indeed, does his obvious and widely acknowledged integrity.

None of this is new to any of you, but what some of you may be unaware of is that Jacques Delors has also been a member of the Royal Academy of Belgium since 1995, when he was elected by the Class of letters which is hosting this gathering today.

We are happy to welcome him in that capacity.

Mr. Chairman, my dear Colleague, I yield the floor to you with pleasure.

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