



EESC-Employers.Today

MARCH 2007

EDITORIAL ENTREPRENEURS CELEBRATE THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE EUROPEAN TREATIES



We can all be proud of what we in the business world have achieved, collectively, over the past 50 years in terms of creating a peaceful and prosperous Europe. We can say, without shame, that business circles have been the pioneers in all European campaigns, from the common market to the Euro and from

economic and social cohesion policy to the successive enlargements.

As employers, we take great satisfaction in the fact that we have been in the vanguard, and often even ahead of the politicians. In 1948, our predecessors were already taking part in the Hague Congress, which drew a line under the tragedy caused by nationalisms and the hatred they spawned.

From the very first steps in European integration, the employers' organisations in the founding countries organised themselves into European associations: including UNICE, now Businesseurope, Eurochambres, Eurocommerce, UEAPME and CEEP.

Jean Monnet never actually said that if Europe had to be rebuilt, he would start with culture. On the contrary, to the end of his life, he called for a Europe based on the convergence of concrete interests.

We should be proud today to belong to the unjustly criticised "Europe of merchants", which has made a crucial contribution to the re-establishment of peace and prosperity on our continent.

Today, we must think about what we can do, as employers, to meet the challenge of the much-needed revival of the idea and project of European integration, or in concrete terms: to make the internal market function more effectively, succeed with the enlargements, ensure healthy

competition between enterprises without State-induced distortions, give collective support to research and training, promote the mobility of the women and men who constitute our enterprises' essential wealth, promote the spirit of entrepreneurship in Europe and support new common policies in areas such as energy and the environment.

We are also well aware that integration of this kind will not be viable without a strong political dimension. To this end, we have supported and continue to support the Constitutional Treaty, which represents a major breakthrough in this regard.

In particular, we support the provisions in the Constitution that will enable the economic and social stakeholders to play a greater role in the legislative process, through participatory democracy. We also support anything that will enable citizens to be put back at the heart of the European project.

Let us remain in the vanguard of those fighting the good fight for the European idea.

Henri MALOSSE
Employers' Group Chairman



IN THIS ISSUE

EDITORIAL	Pg. 1
SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY	Pg. 2
A MAJOR POLITICAL IDEAL	Pg. 2
1957 A MILESTONE IN EUROPEAN HISTORY	Pg. 3
A REAL FEELING OF OPTIMISM	Pg. 3
A SENSE OF "BELONGING"	Pg. 4
A CERTAIN IDEA OF EUROPE	Pg. 4
THE HOUSE OF EUROPE	Pg. 5

SHAPING THE FUTURE WITH ONE SINGLE VOICE	Pg. 5
TESTING THE UNION'S MATURITY	Pg.6
LEARNING TO CARE ABOUT OTHERS	Pg. 6
UNITY MAKES US STRONGER	Pg. 7
LEGISLATIVE STABILITY	Pg. 7
MR DIMITRIADIS, EESC PRESIDENT	Pg. 8
MR SEPI, EMPLOYEES GROUP CHAIRMAN	Pg. 8
MR NILSSON, VARIOUS INTERESTS GROUP CHAIRMAN	Pg. 8

SOCIAL MARKET ECONOMY



The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which started operating on 1st January 1952, provided a joint administrative structure for the coal and steel industries of Belgium, Germany,

France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, was highly successful and served as an obvious impetus for the six Member States to extend cooperation to other sectors.

The "Rome Treaties" of 25 March 1957 founded the "European Economic Community" (EEC), which on 1 January 1958 launched a "Common Market", with free movement of persons, goods and services.

We had to adapt and familiarise ourselves with legal rules, but also to put our ideas into practice and take joint action, as entrepreneurs and employers. I was inspired – and still am - by the ideal of consistently implementing a socially responsible market economy. Dr. Ludwig Erhard, first German Federal Minister of Economic Affairs, referred to this ideal as a "social market economy" delivering "prosperity for all".

In the early years, we had to start "working bottom up":

- divergent concepts had to be clarified,
- discrepancies in the relevant statistics,
- major differences in industrial and commercial standards,
- a standardised European system for goods numbering,

- getting to grips with very diverse industrial relations systems and employment standards,
- tax systems, and VAT in particular,
- customs duties, charges and other administrative barriers to trade,
- checks at border crossing points and customs clearance stations,
- police and security measures, and passport checks,
- recognition of school certificates, college diplomas, university degrees and vocational qualifications,
- targeted support for youth exchanges and town twinning, and many more ...

This was a fascinating task, to which I have devoted all my energy.

As a citizen and town councillor (head of the CDU group) in Bad Godesberg, I concluded partnership agreements with St. Cloud (Paris/FR), Frascati (Rome/IT), Maidenhead (London/UK), and Kortrijk (Courtrai) (BE).

These agreements were very productive and resulted in active exchanges between individual citizens and their associations, some of which even led to cross-border marriages.

The Rome Treaties of 25 March 1957 also launched our Economic and Social Committee. Dr Heinrich Dohrendorf was appointed by Chancellor Adenauer to represent our organisation, as a Bureau member. I am the fourth to succeed him, and since 1990 I have been very happy to serve on the Committee. I was proposed by Michael Glos, German Minister of Economic Affairs.

Göke FRERICHS
Germany

A MAJOR POLITICAL IDEAL

For the citizens of the founding Member States of the European Union who were born just after the end of the Second World War, the Treaty of Rome and European integration were, and still are, a major political ideal.

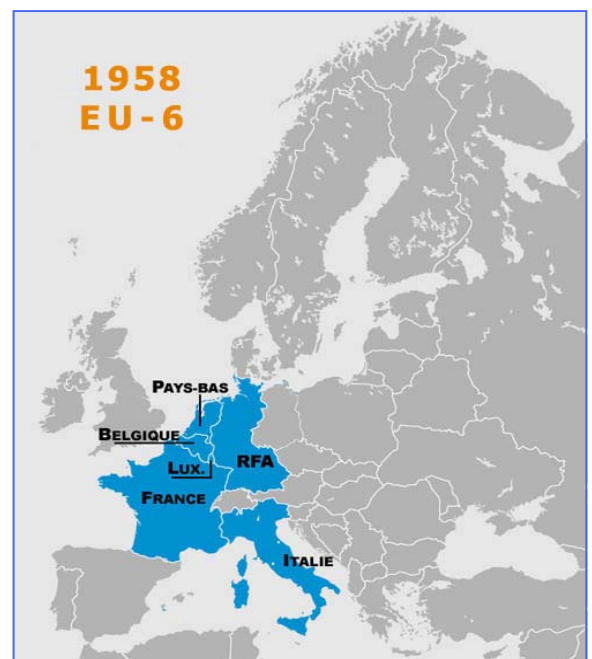


This ideal promised an end to war thanks to ever closer political integration, an improved standard of living, resulting from the full liberalisation of trade and our economies, and a common objective to achieve an efficient market with due regard for social issues.

Fifty years later, the outcome is mixed. Of course, peace has been secured, the well-being of European citizens has increased and the EU has greatly extended its borders. But the scepticism, or even ambivalence of some, the ever-present nationalism and the political inability to overhaul the rules of the decision-making process, are weakening the European giant.

We must make every effort to overcome such entrenched positions, fear and self-interest to ensure that the EU will represent for future generations the political ideal that it is and always has been for us.

Tony Vandeputte
Belgium



A REAL FEELING OF OPTIMISM

Viewpoint of an adolescent in 1957



Reading a paper by Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa, Italy's Minister of Economy and Finance, he spoke of his earliest adolescent recollections of Europe when the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957. These recollections were of war: the bombing of

Genoa and of the bridges along the Riviera, of the round-ups by the German troops and the passage of the American ones, of his reunion with his father, almost a stranger to him, on his return from the front and from imprisonment. The newly signed Treaty of Rome provided a political point of reference for him as he embarked upon his career when Europe, which lived under the shadow of destruction, was in the process of rebuilding. There was a real feeling of optimism!

25th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome 1982

This was the year that I started at university and my generation was fortunate, as there were a range of job possibilities for those of us still undecided about our career choice. My interests varied enormously and I knew I wanted to do something that was numerical and scientific but could also be easily applied within business, so my first degree was in statistics, computing and economics. Although considered a numbers geek, I always had a deep interest in foreign affairs. 1982 will be remembered as the year I started university, living away from my parents for the first time. It will also be the year – in my memory – that Poland outlawed

Solidarity as Europe was divided politically, Israel invaded Lebanon (in pursuit of Yasser Arafat) and the UK and Argentina went to war over the Falkland Islands. It makes me think what the predictions for 25 years ahead were? I am sure many would have predicted a resolution for the UK and Argentina dispute and a solution to the Israeli and Palestinian conflict. Did anyone predict a European Union including countries of the then current Eastern Bloc?

50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome 2007

Europe is no longer politically divided into East and West. Furthermore Poland, with 11 other former Eastern bloc countries, is part of the EU family. Europe today is peaceful and prosperous and Europeans - young and old - now have the possibility of exploring any part of the union without political concern for their safety or security.

Would anyone thought this possible in 1982? Yet the expected euphoria is missing from Europe as it debates the future of the Constitution, the demographic challenges, security of energy and how Europe can create more and better jobs. Europe's citizens are pessimistic about its future, so much so that it makes one wonder where will Europe be in 2032?



Well given the phenomena achievements in the last 50 years, I am very optimistic.

Brenda KING
United Kingdom

1957 A MILESTONE IN EUROPEAN HISTORY



After a war which set people against people, six of the

countries which had suffered the most, joined together to set up a community which, although in name was only "economic", clearly had a social and an underlying political element.

I recall our enthusiasm as European federalists. Our ambition of "no more wars" was allied with our hope – or rather faith – in a future of well-being, built on a union; not only of people but also of economies, although

the latter still bore the imprint of a long tradition of corporatism, protectionism and mutual rivalry.

That *Community* has now become a *Union* of 27 countries. The concepts and guidelines set out in the 1985 White Paper, heralding the creation in 1992 of a Single Market, are still relevant. This market may not yet be fully in place, but its successes are there for all of us to see: the free movement of capital, of people and of businesses are now largely secured. And then, a whole series of social gains, prompted by a greater awareness on the part of the social partners. How could we forget the introduction of the Euro, an undeniable victory, even if not totally exempt from criticism?

You might object that the record is not perfect, and you'd be absolutely

right that much remains to be done, but the path before us, although strewn with obstacles, is simply the culmination of the venture so far, which has overcome numerous difficulties.

What matters the most, is that we should find, with a renewed conviction, that European Spirit that inspired us at the very beginning, and which has lost some of its vigour over the years. We must forget selfish local and national concerns, not putting our own interests before the interests of all.

Are these just fine words?

We will certainly get no further as long as we continue to think so.

Umberto BURANI
Italy

A SENSE OF “BELONGING”

The 50 years Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome is a triple cause to celebrate:



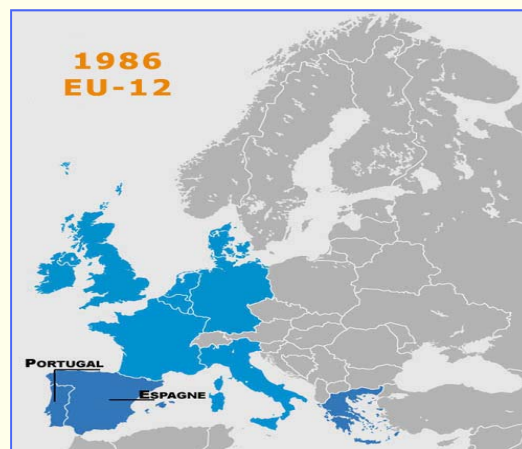
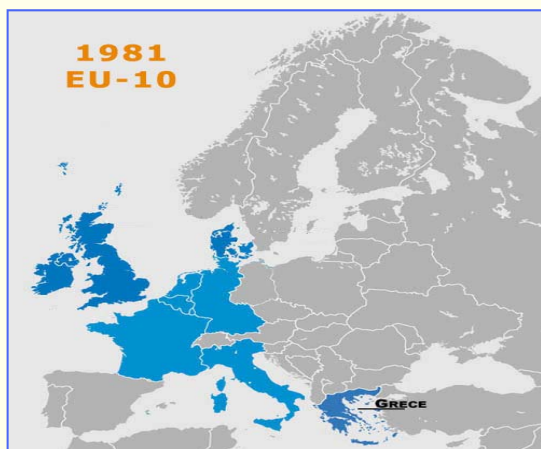
- as a citizen I rejoice that the EESC is now in a position to play its full role as the forum of the organized European Civil Society and the bridge with its counterparts all over Europe;

- as a representative of the Employers, I rejoice because Europe - through its renewed Lisbon Strategy - emphasizes the need for competitiveness of its industries internationally. Participation in the

Employers Group of the EESC creates a sense of “belonging” to representatives of Employers organizations all over Europe and of “contributing” to the building of Europe;

- as a convinced European, I rejoice that Europe managed to rise from its ashes, to unite, to enlargement, to face the challenges of Cold War and globalization, and to become an area of peace, freedom and prosperity. This irreversible process will contribute to more democratization whilst maintaining the cultural diversity of Europeans.

Anna BREDIMA-SAVOPOULOU
Greece



A CERTAIN IDEA OF EUROPE



Birthdays prompt some thoughts, especially when they mark a half-century of life. The Treaty of Rome was signed in the Eternal City's Palazzo Campidoglio on 25 March 1957 – the seed from which over time a European Union has grown.

As a child at the time, I couldn't of course know whether the signatories of the Treaty of Rome, in their most optimistic moments, guessed at what would happen 50 years on.

Even the best and most sophisticated forecasts cannot easily see so far into the future, especially from among the still-smouldering ashes of war. But those Europeans who signed the treaty did what they had to, and so it is only right to recognise the founders of the European integration project, above all, for the visionaries that they were.

If we go onto the world scene and ask what present-day, internationally significant project stands for the values of freedom, democracy and solidarity, the only answer will be European integration. This half-century has demonstrated Europe's ability to unite in diversity, while growing, generating well-being and prosperity and giving rise to the world's greatest international

economic and political body, its leading exporter and the developed world's biggest market.

Over the years since 1957, the united European "family" has also become a large one, expanding from the six founding nations to embrace the present 27. This policy of enlargement has enabled Europe not only to better its economic prospects, but also, and most crucially, to boost its capacity for action and influence in a globalised world.

Starting out from its considerable achievements and, above all, remembering – given the pace of change – that much remains to be done, Europe should look to the future with enthusiasm and hope. We should also be clear that only by working together can we achieve this. So, Happy Birthday – and let's hope that our children, and our children's children, will say the same. Another 50 years of peace and prosperity will have earned it in full, not only for Europeans but also, as an example for the rest of the world, a world in which problems and differences are overcome by dialogue and negotiation.

As the philosopher George Steiner says in his book, "The Idea of Europe", being a European means seeking to reconcile, morally, intellectually and existentially, the incompatible practices of the city of Socrates with those of the city of Isaiah.

José Isaías RODRÍGUEZE GARCÍA-CARO
Spain

THE HOUSE OF EUROPE



- A house where it has been decided to live by democratic rules.
- A house where one feels responsible as a community.
- A house where economic and social development is the by-word.
- A house with a rich variety of cultures and shared values.
- A house where there is a balance between the regions, a sense of responsibility for one's fellow man.
- A house where there is solidarity, human dignity and peace.

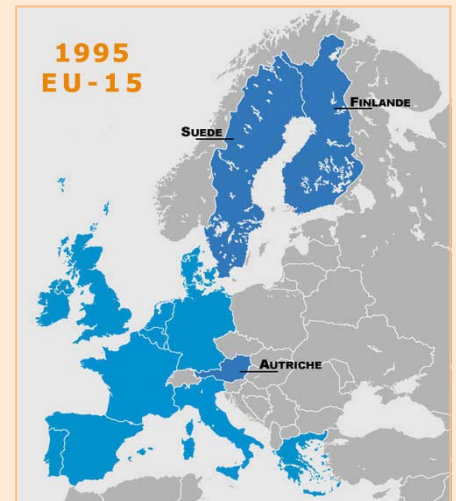
We live in this house and continue to work on it every day. We also want to face up to the big issues of our times, and indeed of the world as a whole.

In doing so we must not stand back from the specific concerns of the people. We have to recognise what problems, needs, wishes and hopes they have where they live, and provide guidance.

It is with this image of mankind in mind that I picture the beginning enshrined in the Rome Treaties 50 years ago. It is one that will hold true for the future.

I, myself, have many different roles and duties - as an EESC Member, as a coordinator of international aid projects, as a Mother and Grandmother, and as a Citizen of a Europe with a future in which I firmly believe.

Waltraud KLASNIC
Austria



SHAPING THE FUTURE WITH ONE SINGLE VOICE



On the 25th March 2007 we are celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, which aimed, among other things, to achieve prosperity through

competition without internal borders, a project which has made the European Union the largest market in the world in terms of national product.

Along the 50 years, the expansion of the EU has served to entrench European values across the continent and to spread further the economic benefits from participation in the Single Market.

At the same time, the lifting by new entrants of restrictions on trade with the rest of the economic union has brought about transitional difficulties that have contributed to slow economic growth. The early phase of this transition coincided with a slowdown in

world trade and more recently, with the increasing in the price of imported energy.

We might argue here whether we can really attribute a success story to what started with the Treaty of Rome. Nevertheless, long term social and economic prospects have been improved with membership, particularly in the context of the reaching of a broad domestic political consensus on both EU membership and the adoption of the single currency. Economic union has also brought about an upgrade in business regulations, even though these may involve costly implementation.

Meanwhile EU funds have improved the prospects for convergence in living standards by providing needed funds for improvements in the physical, educational and environmental infrastructure. All this is a scenario where, all European citizens collectively participate in shaping their future with one voice as the European Union.

Sylvia GAUCI
Malta

TESTING THE UNION'S MATURITY



I come from a country which joined the European Union less than three years ago. However, I now feel as if we have already been a member for ten years. Perhaps this is due to the fact that I live and work on the border with neighbouring Italy and feel the benefits of the Union with every step I take.

Much has already been achieved, but I still see many challenges ahead, as well as opportunities for us to shape the Union the way I would like. What are my expectations for the future?

As an Entrepreneur and representative of the

Employers, I have set my hopes on the further development of the Internal Market, especially in Services, and greater freedom of movement of people, knowledge and new technologies. This seems to me the only way to foster development and greater prosperity for the citizens of Europe.

In a globalised world, however, enhanced growth cannot be achieved without peace, political stability and equal opportunities for all. Therefore I expect the EU to play a greater role in resolving political conflicts, especially those in its own back yard. The Western Balkans and Kosovo represent an excellent opportunity for testing the Union's maturity and capacity for effective political action.

Cveto STANTIČ
Slovenia



LEARNING TO CARE ABOUT OTHERS

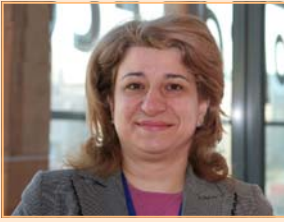


European Union means different things for different people. For some it is obvious to call themselves Europeans, for others their country, region or even city where they live is a something that they identify themselves with. One thing is clear – from outside Europeans seem to have much more in common than it feels being inside. Behind daily disputes taking place in European decision making process it is easy to forget the unified idea of Europe.

The Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome is just an excellent possibility to remind ourselves about the basic ideas of European Union – peace, stability and prosperity for the whole region. Part of being European for me has meant also learning to care about others, other regions and their people. Sometimes Europeans forget how fortunate they are living in Europe, taking into consideration their living conditions, environment around them and political stability. Europeans should not lose their openness, kindness and sensitivity for other people since this is something that gives Europe and Europeans a human face.

Christina TSHISTOVA
Estonia

UNITY MAKES US STRONGER



Europe, what does it mean for the newcomers?
As a Bulgarian citizen, the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Rome comes somewhat as part of the celebration about joining the EU.

The transition from a centralised planned economy to a market economy was developed in parallel with the preparation of the application for full membership. Both processes were influencing each other, for good or for bad. Many reforms were implemented under the external pressure of the EU, and in some instances the environment was not fully ready.

The perception of the European Union as a unity of well structured and arranged “house” of nations prevailed and the Euro-supporters were more than two-thirds of the population.

But in the first months of our membership of the EU, many hopes and opportunities are attached to the solidarity principle as a guiding light for the union’s development. Bulgaria has a lot to contribute to the future of Europe, gaining its rightful place among prosperous democratic nations. Unity makes us stronger and gives us chances and challenges to continue building Europe of peace and humanity.

Andriana SUKOVA – TOSHEVA
Bulgaria

LEGISLATIVE STABILITY



On 25 March 1957, when the Treaty of Rome was signed, I do not think anyone had any idea how important this document would be for the future of Europe. Successive waves of accessions resulted in

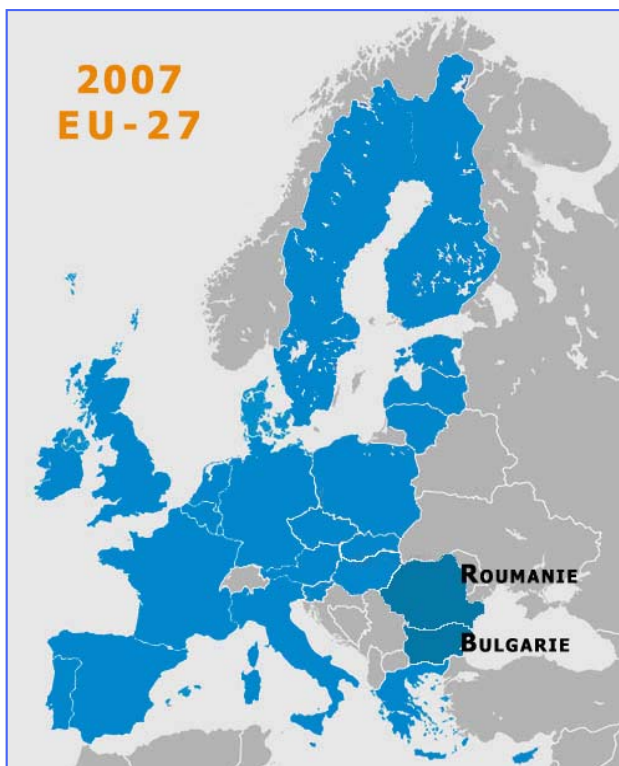
27 Member States which together make up the European Union, now the greatest economic power in the world.

For Employers, working in this highly competitive market means that they are certain to be able to work in any market in the world. Paradoxically, the bureaucracy of the European Union guarantees legislative stability, which is vital for us. Close cooperation between Member States guarantees the dissemination of best practices and future development.

Finally, the existence of a Europe without borders gives ordinary Europeans an opportunity to learn about each other which our predecessors could not even have imagined.

While many treaties have had an influence on our working lives, the Treaty of Rome is certainly one of the most important.

Ștefan VARFALVI
Romania





It is true that Europe is passing through a critical phase, but not in the sense that it is getting bogged down or deadlocked, but rather that a constituent factor has changed or, to be more precise, has come to the surface so that it can no longer be ignored by anyone.

This vital factor is the European citizen, who is looking for solutions to everyday problems and a decent quality of life, who seeks what he or she deserves.

Citizens represent the vital component in carrying forward the European venture for the past 50 years. They were and still are the raw material of Europe. They are the inspiration and the purpose of European action.

Dimitris DIMITRIADIS
President
European Economic and Social Committee



1957-2007 a 50th anniversary that comes at what many of its citizens consider to be a difficult time for the European Union – perhaps because this, the third generation of Europeans since the signing of the Treaty of Rome, takes its successes for granted.

Be that as it may, it is quite extraordinary that, over the course of these 50 years, one of the most conflict-ridden areas of the world has become a continent of peace and stability and now has the most effective institutional machinery to address and resolve the divisions between different countries and cultures that has ever existed in its long history.

The EU is also central to promoting a social model and a cohesive development project. It is thus in a position to provide a strong point of reference for human, civil and social rights throughout the world.

In a word, despite the political disagreements and social tensions, it offers great hope to its citizens, to civil society, and for the future of a world based on the rule of law. Thus, Europe can look back at fifty years well spent, which have laid the necessary foundations for its next fifty years.

Happy birthday, Europe!

Mario SEPI
Employees Group Chairman



The Celebration of 50 years of European Integration is for me to look for the future.

The historical reasons for peace are still valid. The European Union project is for cooperation and understanding between people, respect for differences and what unite. If we have been fighting for several hundreds of years, we can give it some time!

Staffan NILSSON
Various Interests Group Chairman

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF • HENRI MALOSSE

EDITOR • MARCO THYSSEN

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT & PICTURE EDITOR • PAULA CORREIA

ADDRESS

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

Jacques Delors Building

Rue Belliard 99, B-1040 Brussels

TEL - 32-2-546 95 53

FAX - 32-2-546 97 54

E-MAIL : gr1@eesc.europa.eu

WEBSITE: www.eesc.europa.eu/groups/1