



Treaties of Nijmegen Medal
2010

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*Image left; Jacques Delors,
first laureate to receive the
Treaties of Nijmegen Medal*

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Foreword

On 15 March 2010 the first ever Treaties of Nijmegen Medal was awarded to Jacques Delors. The name of the award commemorates a series of Peace Treaties signed in Nijmegen in 1678 and 1679. This was a prestigious project - one of the first attempts to achieve peace on a European scale. The States General of the Republic of the Netherlands decided to mark the occasion by commissioning a number of stunning tapestries to decorate the city hall of Nijmegen.

The most important lesson the Treaties of Nijmegen can teach us is that discussion, dialogue and mutual respect – both fleeting and long-lasting – can lead to European peace and tolerance. This is what inspired the City of Nijmegen, the Radboud University Nijmegen and Royal Haskoning to collaborate with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in awarding a Treaties of Nijmegen Medal every two years. This Medal is awarded to an individual or organisation that has devoted special efforts towards the achievement of peace, prosperity and tolerance in Europe.

Jacques Delors was president of the European Commission from 1985 to 1995. On 15 March, in the St. Stephen's Church, Minister of Foreign Affairs Maxime Verhagen praised Mr Delors for his achievements in his Laudation. He pointed out that he was not alone in his commendations. Margaret Thatcher, for instance, called Delors “one of the cleverest people in European politics” and Helmut Kohl described him as “the Soul of Europe”.

You will find Minister Verhagen's speech in this collection, along with the addresses delivered by Prof. Peter Rietbergen and the Mayor of Nijmegen. Of course the Treaties of Nijmegen lecture by Jacques Delors himself, in which he unfolded his vision of Europe's future, is included. The collection also contains reproductions of the Gobelin tapestries that were commissioned at the time of the Treaties of Nijmegen, and which are now on display in the Museum Het Valkhof and the city hall in Nijmegen.

In this way, Nijmegen authorities, academics and business come together to honour an important European and to help shape the future of Europe.

Thom de Graaf
Mayor of Nijmegen

Roelof de Wijkerslooth
de Weerdesteyn
President,
Executive Board
Radboud University
Nijmegen

Jan Bout
Chairman,
Board of Management
Royal Haskoning

Image from left to right;
Roelof de Wijkerslooth de Weerdesteyn,
Jan Bout, Jacques Delors,
Thom de Graaf,
Maxime Verhagen,
Piet Hein Donner



Peter Rietbergen

Professor of Cultural History at Radboud University Nijmegen

Ladies and Gentlemen

Those of you who find themselves in agreement with the famous German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche should now make haste to leave this historical church. For I, for one, strongly disagree with Nietzsche's statement that remembering the past debilitates us, that our life will be the richer if we forget as much as possible. On the contrary. I do believe that History, understood as our consensual interpretation of the past, is essential to our thinking and acting in the present, and, therefore, to the shaping of our future.

Admittedly, the process through which memories - individual and collective ones - are turned into histories, or even into History with a capital H, is a complex one. For as we all know, our memories are defective. They mostly tell us what we, consciously or subconsciously, would like to remember. They reshape, or leave out altogether what we would rather forget. To put it differently: while each of us constantly produces and consumes views of the past, in the process we construct the past - not as it was, but as we would like it to have been.

That is, I would argue, where professional historians come in. They can help us, for example, to correctly interpret the past of Europe. I cannot but feel that all of you will agree that in this global world, with its hundreds of conflicting histories, in this Europe of 27 states, each with its own history, too, there is a definite need for historians to help us distinguish between what is European fiction, or: European wishful thinking, and what is European fact. In doing so, we also can better understand the patterns and trends that characterize that past, in our vision of it. Indeed, I'm certain that if anybody, today's laureate is convinced of that very need.

In 1993, Mr. Delors wrote the preface to a study titled: Citoyen d'Europe: comment le devenir? Obviously, we, who want to be responsible citizens of le nouveau concert européen - to again quote Mr. Delors, from a book he himself wrote in 1992 -, we must be reminded of our past, to help us find our way to our future.

Since History claims to be a scientific pursuit, it must per force debunk our private, unscholarly visions of the past. Therefore, notwithstanding the festive character of this occasion - or rather, precisely to honour this occasion and specifically the first recipient of the Peace of Nijmegen-medal - I will start with a bit of scholarly debunking.

Towns have their memories, their histories. Thus, in the early ninth century, Aachen became the capital of Charlemagne, and has been rightly proud of it ever since. Yet, the fact that since 1949 the Aachen town hall is the scene of the annual ceremony during which a prize bearing Charlemagne's name is awarded to someone deserving in the cause of Europe, implies we allow ourselves to continue a strange mystification that has no base in history. For whatever the great emperor may have wanted to accomplish, it certainly was not to create anything even remotely resembling Europe. To retrospectively ascribe to him any such notion, tells us more about today's political and cultural needs, than about the world he lived in, and his views of, and for that world.

Now let us take another town - this Nijmegen of ours. Admittedly, it has an impressive history, going back to the decades before the beginning of the Christian era. Indeed, it even has an imperial history. It was founded as a Roman city and given the name of the Emperor Trajan. It was a residence of Charlemagne's. And in its great castle, the Valkhof, in the year 980, the Byzantine-born princess Theophanu, who with her husband ruled the Holy Roman Empire, gave birth to the future Otto III. All that, and much more was well known even in the seventeenth century, at least to the members of Europe's political and cultural elite. Of course, local historians did their best to impress the world with their town's glorious past. But let us be frank: by the seventeenth century, all that glory indeed was a thing of the past. By the 1670s, Nijmegen was the poor, smallish capital of a poor region within one of the less important provinces of the Dutch Republic.

Nor had the town been the first, or even the second choice of the rulers of Europe when they decided that, after years of the bloodiest wars Europe

had ever seen, peace had to be negotiated. Indeed, the dozens of diplomats representing the dozens of states that constituted Europe, felt positively exiled to this outpost of civilization.

True, the States-general in The Hague, though generally sober, not to say stingy, yet took an expensive decision: the room in the Nijmegen town hall where the Dutch representatives proposed to mediate between the other parties was to be decorated with a series of exquisite tapestries, to be paid for by the Dutch Republic. But even so, the room never remotely resembled the great, marble-and-gilt halls of state of the European capitals.

Meanwhile, the town's authorities themselves did their best to provide the foreign envoys with suitable lodgings. But these were paltry as compared to the baroque palaces and castles these people were accustomed to. Nor did the festivities organized by the city live up to the refined tastes of so many cosmopolitan gentlemen and their ladies. The very fact that, after centuries, urban memory still proudly recalls a fountain spouting wine shows that such an event, a common element in the courtly culture as practiced in, e.g., Paris, Rome or Vienna, was unheard of in this provincial community. Not surprisingly, one of the keenest observers of the Nijmegen scene, whose letters I have studied in detail, repeatedly remarked: "Il n'y a rien de plus sterile qu'est, a ce moment, la Paix de Nimegue..."

He not only meant that for months on end nothing happened to bring peace any further. He also meant that, despite the occasional balls and hunting parties, he and his fellow ambassadors were bored to death.

And yet: for four years that uninteresting, dull town was the stage of events that, rightly, deserve to be mentioned in every history book addressing the complex story of the formation of modern Europe. For what is now known, collectively, as the Peace of Nijmegen - covering a number of separate treaties concluded between 1677 and the end of 1679 - marks an important stage in our common European history. It was the first time ever, that all parties engaged in an all-European war agreed to come together in one place

to negotiate. And though officially they talked through intermediaries, only, unofficially they now could talk with one another.

Nevertheless, when the treaties were finally ratified by the various governments, they did not ensure anything like a lasting peace. Nor did they result in greater tolerance, as some press reports have suggested. While the Protestant delegates publicly could use the great, former Roman Catholic church of St Stephen's - taken over by the Dutch Reformed community after the 1580s - the Catholic ambassadors and their suites had to attend mass in the private chapel of, e.g., the papal nuncio, Monsignore Luigi Bevilacqua, patriarch of Alessandria. While, privately, many of the diplomats residing in Nijmegen in those years did interact on amicable terms, whatever their religious background and persuasion, it is significant that, publicly, the various denominations did not tolerate one another.

In short, already by the end of the seventeenth century, new, and even more devastating wars were tearing Europe apart again. Both peace and tolerance remained elusive. One might even think that the "Te Deums" that were sung in various European capitals whenever yet another war did result in yet another victory, or, even, in peace, each lauded a different god...

Of course, wars had characterized the region we now call Europe ever since Charlemagne had divided the empire he had inherited and conquered amongst his heirs, fully conscious that, in doing so, he was risking warfare amongst them. He simply was following Germanic custom, in giving his male offspring what both he and they considered their due. Consequently, there was only one concept that, from the ninth century onwards, unified the increasing number of independent states: the concept of Christianity - both a religion and, in the wider sense, a culture. And the one community all these states felt to be part of, was the one everyone called Christendom - the word Europe was not even used. And the one person the Christian princes were willing to listen to was the Roman pontiff. But his repeated admonitions seldom prevented them from waging yet another war.

By the early sixteenth century, the introduction of the printing press enabled a number of religious thinkers to make themselves widely heard for the first time. From now on, conflicting interpretations of the Christian religion became as many arguments in the continuing warfare between states, increasing the violence and the bloodshed in the world that now became known as Europe - the notion of Christendom, after the great religious upheavals, had become obsolete.

What with the substantial population growth and the increased international trade that characterized the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, each state wanted to conquer new territories, in order to add tax-paying subjects and natural resources to its own domain. This resulted in a gruesome fact all too easily forgotten: all through the seventeenth century, there was not a single year when war was not waged someplace in Europe.

The longest war was, of course, the Thirty Year's War. It started in 1618. However, by the early 1630's, most European rulers realized that a "European concert" was necessary. For the first time ever, they felt that all warring nations should convene. Therefore, they decided to send their ambassadors to a neutral place where peace negotiations could be opened. But, significantly, they could not agree on one such place, so two towns were selected.

The person most vehemently arguing for peace was the then pope, Urban VIII - but since Christendom was divided, the Protestant nations were less than willing to accept his proposal that he should mediate between the nations, to end the devastation as soon as possible. Moreover, he, as most popes before him, was hampered by the very fact that, as the secular ruler of the Papal States, he was forced to also consider the geo-political interests of his own territory. Therefore, he was felt to be no independent mediator.

In retrospect, the treaties of Westphalia - concluded at Münster and at Osnabrück - only created the preconditions for new wars, the more so since these treaties confirmed the existence of states that, indeed, presented themselves as Protestant rather than Catholic. Nor did new wars wait long to occur.

For the ones that started in the 1670s, many historians are inclined to blame the then king of France: the fourteenth Louis, who loved to style himself "le Grand" but was, if anything, one of his country's most ruthless and intolerant rulers ever. Certainly, a less megalomaniac person would have thought twice before he started those wars. Certainly, a less megalomaniac person would not have continued them as long as he did. But yet, once Louis decided to attack the Dutch Republic in 1672, all Europe was at war. The pernicious system of interstate treaties of defence and offence made this inevitable.

Of course, it did not take long before many states perceived that the war effort was crippling their finances, reducing their peoples to poverty, and, from their perspective worst of all, weakening their governments.

Louis XIV knew that, too. Nevertheless, he went on. For strategic and propagandistic purposes, only, did he concede that negotiations for peace should be opened, while he continued to wage war, thus hoping to secure even better conditions when treaties were, after all, inevitable.

After very long and difficult preliminaries, a first decision was taken in 1675: not Cologne, nor any other town in the German states, not even London, but Nijmegen - in the Dutch Republic, that by now was considered 'neutral' enough in the eyes of most warring parties - would be the place to which all European states would send their representatives. Once they had finally gathered there - some governments took more than a year to actually assemble their embassies - negotiations did start in earnest, following a procedure that, to us, seems incredibly complex.

I will not go into details, here, since you'll all be sound asleep before I've finished to even sketch the grand lines. Let it be sufficient to say that the dozens of states represented in Nijmegen did not sit down at the same table to talk about the issues at stake and to try to resolve them through dialogue. Rather, all official proposals, counter-proposals, reactions, suggestions, new proposals, et cetera were given to mediators who, literally, went from one party to the other, day after day, week after week, month after month.

Basically, there were three mediating powers.

The first two, the English and the Dutch, operated in tandem, with the Dutch being the most ardent to work for peace - as they have been ever since. For it was at Nijmegen that we first see that view on Europe, that came to characterize Dutch foreign policy well into the twentieth century. If only for its own economic survival as a small state mainly dependent on international trade, the government of the Northern Netherlands felt that from now on, war was to be avoided at all cost.

The other mediator was, again, the Roman pontiff. In the 1670s, Innocent XI occupied the papal throne. He made clear he was not about to defend the territorial interests of the papacy. Nor did he try at all cost to deny the existence of states that considered themselves Protestant. He took a moral stance. A Europe that presented itself as Christian - whether Protestant or Catholic - and as civilized, could not, he wrote, accept the atrocities of interstate war. Since Innocent was respected even by some of the Protestant leaders, he was in fact able to mediate for peace alongside the Dutch and the English, the more so since some states did not trust these Protestant mediators.

Yet, when the last treaties were signed, in Fall 1679, it was obvious that “raison d’état” rather than idealistic motives had been the guiding principle behind every nation’s decision to accept or reject the proposals offered to them. Actually, a later, eighteenth-century observer cynically remarked that the Nijmegen peace treaties only had lasted as long as the signatories thought the conditions contained therein to be profitable to their own, national cause. Indeed, if anything, the hunger for power of Louis was not stilled. This, of course, meant that no real balance of power had been achieved. Nor did the policies of the Sun King’s great adversary, the then manager of both Dutch and British politics, the stadholder-king William III of Orange, result in such a balance.

Consequently, from the 1690s onwards, European history took two roads. The first, alas, was the one chosen by the various states - over and over again. It was the road that resulted, in the twentieth century, in two so-called “world wars” which, of course, were wars started for European interests, only.

The second road was taken by generation after generation of men who, without necessarily being convinced pacifists, yet felt that wars always would be the worst enemy of the common good of the peoples of Europe. However, to ensure stability, and to end warfare, the statesystem of Europe should overhaul itself. One of the first and, indeed, most visionary ideas came from the most famous member of England’s Quaker community, William Penn - whose mother was Dutch. In 1693, while trying to organize his ideal city of brotherhood, Philadelphia, in the American wilderness, Penn found time to write and publish an important text. Its title was: An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe. In it, Penn directly referred to the wars that, following the Nijmegen treaties, in the 1680s and 1690s more ravaged Europe again. To end this situation once and for all, he proposed to set up a law-making council in which all states of Europe were represented. The number of seats each state held was to be determined by the number of its citizens. Remarkably, Penn strongly urged to include the Ottoman Empire as well since, he felt, it was part of Europe. The Turks were to have as many seats in the council as France.

Following William Penn’s plan, dozens of other projects to bring about European unity were devised, and published - to no avail. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, many Europeans were horrified by the unprecedented carnage wrought by yet another series of bloody wars - the Napoleonic ones. And though we may now recognize that a great number of the little emperor’s ideas were far-sighted, indeed, that a series of them came to fruition precisely from the late 1940s onwards, few people at the time wanted a united Europe on Napoleon’s terms. However, when his reign was over, and the European states assembled again to make up the balance, many wondered what, if any, would be the lasting results of yet another Peace Congress - the one held



at Vienna 1814. After the euphoria of Waterloo, disappointment soon set in, for revolution had bred reaction, and the 'old' system of states struggling for power and preponderance once again prevailed.

Surveying the state of Europe in those years, a Danish legal scholar and statesman wrote not one but two remarkable tracts, which he published in 1820 and 1821. The first was titled: Europa und Amerika, oder die künftigen Verhältnisse der civilisirten Welt. It was soon translated in many European languages. In it, Conrad von Schmidt-Phiseldek prophesied that the United States, though still young, would soon be a great power, a world power, even. Consequently, if Europe wanted to retain its own political, cultural and economic position vis à vis the New World, it would have to strive after greater unity itself. If, on the contrary, the states of Europe continued to wage war amongst themselves, the American economy, and American power would be the first to profit.

To further the end of European unity, Schmidt-Phiseldek published his second paper: Der europäische Bund. He argued that, precisely for economic reasons, the European states had waged wars for many centuries, and thus had brought about ruin rather than prosperity. Economic reasons - the increasing interaction between the various European economies, and, indeed, the general desirability, nay even necessity of this interaction - should now bring those states to unite. Schmidt-Phiseldek even went so far as to predict that political union would then follow economic union. In such a union, the participating states would retain their internal jurisdiction, their sovereignty. They would, however, legislate together for all those purposes that would contribute to the welfare and equality of all Europeans. Also, this European Union would conduct a common foreign policy. And to put all this on a firm basis, a European constitution would be necessary.

Of course, we all know that these prophetic plans, and the many others proposed during the subsequent decades of the nineteenth century, did not alter European politics. Nor did they prevent the outbreak of new wars that necessitated new peace congresses.

Around the turn of the nineteenth century, the government of The Netherlands continued the policy that its predecessors had started in the 1670s: they worked for peace, joining political pragmatism to ethical idealism. Consequently, in The Hague, following the international peace conferences of 1899 and 1907, the international Peace Court was established in 1913, as a wise fusion of both strands of thought. But it took two more gruesome periods to bring the message finally home: no more war in Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen.

I have been asked to help you look back, to set today's grand occasion in its proper, historical perspective. So let me conclude.

It is, I feel, historically appropriate that this town of Nijmegen, where Dutch mediators first tried to end European wars, and to create conditions for a lasting peace, should now remember that moment.

It is, therefore, also appropriate that the Nijmegen town council has decided to create an occasion for honouring those who, in the present, have contributed to the slow process towards European unity that did, somehow, set in more than three centuries ago. In awarding the first Peace of Nijmegen medal to Jacques Delors, Nijmegen has shown that it does recognize the town's historical significance, and the role that knowledge of the past should play in the creation of the future.





Thom de Graaf

Mayor of Nijmegen

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,
Today the oldest city in the Netherlands shows its commitment to the future of Europe, with a tribute to a great statesman.

Monsieur Delors, Excellence.
Nous sommes très honorés de vous accueillir parmi nous. Vous avez joué un rôle clé dans l'histoire européenne récente. Aujourd'hui, au cours de cette première conférence de la Paix de Nimègue, nous vous remercions de nous accorder le privilège de bien vouloir partager avec nous votre vision de l'avenir de l'Europe.

I am delighted with the presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maxime Verhagen. The Ministry is a partner in the Treaties of Nijmegen Medal and I am grateful that the Minister will address us, and in particular Jacques Delors, this afternoon.

We are also honoured by the presence of the ambassadors of the countries who made peace here in 1678 and 1679.

The Treaties of Nijmegen have often not been accorded the importance they deserve. Yet, the Treaties of Nijmegen do deserve our attention. The negotiations brought economic and cultural activity to the city. They gave Nijmegen the allure of an international city that was for several years at the heart of Europe. The stories about discussions deep into the night, disputes about the rules of the road for coaches, and fountains spouting wine have gained their place in history.

But the Treaties of Nijmegen offer more. They offer an insight into the evolution of thinking about peace in Europe, and insights into international relations. The most important lesson that the Treaties of Nijmegen can teach us – and Europe – is that consultation, dialogue and mutual respect – immediately and in the long term – can lead to European peace and tolerance. You have to make the attempt if you are ever going to succeed. The Peace of Nijmegen was an early attempt at a continent-wide and therefore a European peace.

Ladies and gentlemen,
In recent years, Nijmegen has been reflecting deeply about its past. The Treaties of Nijmegen represent a special chapter in this 2000-year-old story. This has prompted us to award the Treaties of Nijmegen Medal once every two years, to be awarded to an organization or person who has made a unique contribution to peace, progress and tolerance in Europe. The worlds of business, science, and government support this initiative. I would like to thank our partners, Royal Haskoning, Radboud University Nijmegen and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their contributions.

We want to look ahead. Nijmegen is closely bound to Europe – economically, intellectually and administratively. The city is literally and figuratively at the heart of Europe. That is evident enough, just from the activities of the partners who initiated the Treaties of Nijmegen Medal.

The campus of Radboud University Nijmegen is becoming increasingly international: 16% of the academic staff now come from abroad as well as approximately 10% of its students. And internationalisation involves two-way traffic. The University's goal is that one third of its students should spend some time in another country. To make this possible, the university has established the International Research University Network, which brings together nine European universities from Barcelona to Glasgow, and from Siena to Budapest.

Royal Haskoning, the international engineering company with its base in Nijmegen, has 3,900 consultants, architects and engineers in 60 offices around the world. Developments in Europe have immediate implications for the company's future. In fact, Europe offers wonderful opportunities for cooperation, sharing knowledge, and recruiting staff.

Finally, the City Government has strong networks in Brussels and links with our German neighbours. And we work with other European cities in all kinds of projects and networks. Nijmegen is one of the key cities in the EU-region Rhine and Waal.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Our past and our present make the Treaties of Nijmegen Medal part of the DNA of our city.

Today's Europe is to a large extent managed from Brussels and capital cities. But Europe is more than Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Warsaw, Madrid or The Hague...

Europe is in fact shaped by all those other cities and towns that, like Nijmegen, have suffered war and poverty because of differences of opinion between states and peoples, and a lack of cooperation among leaders.

Europe is shaped by all those who have learned from the past and want to develop a democratic, humanitarian and cultural community that transcends international borders. With the past as a powerful lesson behind us and the ambition to continue along this path of closer cooperation and integration.

The Treaties of Nijmegen Medal is based on this ambition and has its roots in our city's European history. By awarding this medal and organising the lecture, we honour great Europeans and encourage debate on Europe's future. And we are meeting in an appropriate place. The negotiators attended services in this very church. (That is, the Protestants did – the Roman Catholic dignitaries had to make do with home chapels.) The city proved a good host. The faded curtains and carpets were replaced by green velvet and silk.

People have been praying for peace in this church for centuries. In 1944 the church was destroyed when Europe was torn apart by the Second World War. While Europe was recovering and thinking how such catastrophic suffering could be prevented in the future, this church was rebuilt. It took 25 years...

Today the flag of Europe flutters on the church tower beside the flag of Nijmegen. As a marker, for Nijmegen as an open city that stimulates thinking about Europe. I hope that this tribute to Jacques Delors, and the exchange of thoughts today, will inspire many of you.

Now I would like to turn to the person we have gathered to honour today: Jacques Delors.

Monsieur Delors,
La Médaille de la Paix de Nimègue vous est décernée pour tout ce que vous avez fait tant pour la paix que pour la prospérité et la tolérance en Europe. Monsieur le Ministre des Affaires étrangères nous fera dans quelques instants l'éloge de vos immense mérites.

Je vous demande à présent de bien vouloir vous avancer pour recevoir la Médaille de la Paix de Nimègue.





Maxime Verhagen

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ladies and gentlemen,

What can I say to the man whom Helmut Kohl referred to as “the Soul of Europe”?

What can I say to the man who described himself as an “orphan of French politics” but who, as the President of the European Commission, was just as well-known around the world as François Mitterrand?

What can I say to the man who Margaret Thatcher said was “one of the cleverest people in European politics”? And you know that coming from her, we can definitely take that as a compliment.

Mr Delors,

I congratulate you on receiving the Treaties of Nijmegen Medal. It is a privilege to speak in your honour.

Charles Grant, who was The Economist’s correspondent in Brussels for much of the decade that you presided over the European Commission, has argued that “no politician since the war has made a greater impact on Western Europe” than you did. ¹ That is no small feat.

If I had to sum up your contribution to the process of European integration in three words, they would be: market, solidarity and responsibility. You believed that the common market was the foundation of the European model, and you worked tirelessly to expand and perfect it. But in doing so, you also strove to promote social cohesion. You gave new meaning to the principle of solidarity, aiming to close the gap between richer and poorer parts of Europe. And along the way, you urged people to think responsibly about their future. You said, and I quote, “If each person thinks he has an inalienable right to welfare, no matter what happens to the world, that’s not equity, it’s just creating a society where you can’t ask anything of people”. That was not your vision of the European model, and I very much agree with those words.

In the ten years that you presided over the European Commission, your impact was immense. It was during your Presidency, in 1986, that the Single

European Act was adopted. In your second term, you masterminded the creation of Economic and Monetary Union. And you oversaw the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, including its Social Chapter, which you considered essential. Maastricht was not an easy Treaty to adopt, as we remember all too well in The Netherlands. As a Dutchman, and a Member of the European Parliament at the time, I have a vivid recollection of “Black Monday”, when the more federalist proposals were rejected.

This kind of process is never easy, and this time, too, there was hesitation – and even outright resistance – with regard to the direction in which European integration should be taken. Nevertheless, your “unidentified political object” was given a clearer identity with the creation of the European Union, a Union of citizens and member states – otherwise known as “the House that Jacques built”.

“Maastricht’ also paved the way for the introduction of the euro. The single currency, which is now used by some 329 million citizens in sixteen EU member states, is probably the most tangible aspect of your impressive legacy. It crowned your efforts to help shape the common market. It was a big and necessary step forward for the European Union and a great political adventure as well. Never before has there been a currency without a state. Monetary union presupposes political union, including economic union. For you, of course, this is just common sense. But the European project has obstinately followed its own course, as always.

Meanwhile, the euro has celebrated its tenth anniversary. And we can be proud of its success. But we must also admit that this success was made possible in part by the prevailing favourable economic conditions. As long as we had the wind in our sails, the criteria established under the Stability and Growth Pact sufficed to maintain countries’ budgetary discipline, under the political guidance of the Euro Group and with an authoritative European Central Bank. However, the current financial and economic crisis has also exposed our vulnerability. Yes, it is true that the euro prevented the freefall that other currencies underwent, which potentially put the eurozone

in a better position to overcome the crisis. But at the same time, we have witnessed tensions in a monetary union that is so diverse. The crisis in Greece has forced us to acknowledge that there are imperfections that we have yet to deal with. Ensuring better supervision and stricter adherence to the rules is part of the answer.

We must continue to perfect our Economic and Monetary Union, so that we will be able to maintain our global currency and our economic weight in the world. This is all the more important because the balance of power in the world is shifting – and not in our favour. The European Union is not yet the geopolitical force it has the potential to be, given its economic position and its moral reach as a community of values. I am convinced that it is in Europe's interest to join China and the United States as a major player on the international stage. We must aim to turn the G2 into the G3. That is certainly ambitious, but if there is one thing that you have taught us, Mr Delors, it is that we should not shy away from ambition, but welcome it with open arms.

For the EU to fulfil its potential as a global player, member states must commit to stronger – joint – external action. The Lisbon Treaty is in place. Now we must make sure that it starts working for us. We must ensure that the President of the European Council, Herman van Rompuy, and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, can indeed be the face of the EU in the wider world. That they can indeed speak for all the member states with one voice. And that the EU's new diplomatic arm, the European External Action Service, is a success. To achieve this, member states must exercise restraint and get behind the banner of the EU, instead of always wanting to see their own flags flying. It might sound as if by doing this we risk becoming invisible, but the opposite is true: by speaking with one voice we will increase our relative weight.

Of course, Mr Delors, you more than anyone have known all this for a long time. You more than anyone have stood for the principle of European

unity and concerted action. And you were able to make it work, too. To turn national interests into common interests. Because that is, first and foremost, what the European Union is: a community based on shared values and shared interests.

And in the end it is this principle which should increase public support for Europe: it should become apparent that unity and concerted action work to citizens' advantage. In your lifetime, you have never hesitated to make the connection between larger ideals and the fate of real people; to give abstractions a human face. That, too, is something that I will take from you: people should not feel that they are, as you put it, "nothing but a variable to be adjusted". You also said, and I quote, "Many Europeans feel lost in this world, in which they believe that neither they nor their leaders are in control of events that impact on their lives. They need their leaders to close this enormous gap that they find so maddening. They must be able to understand the world as it transforms itself and to voice their aspirations and needs... The general public want to be informed about the changes it must make in this world and wants to have the resources to cope with these changes." I agree: "La question ce n'est pas de leur demander plus, c'est de leur proposer des innovations qui s'imposent à eux." ²

That is the leadership you have shown us; that is the example you have given us; that is the inspiration we can draw from you.

Thank you.

¹ Charles Grant, *Inside the House that Jacques Built*, London, 1994

² Jacques Delors and Marcel Gauchet, "Comment réenchanter l'Europe?", *Libération*, 26 June 2009.





Address by Jacques Delors

With this Medal, the City of Nijmegen establishes a link between the Peace of Nijmegen and the construction of Europe. It is a symbol of dialogue, tolerance and peace. We do well to remember the past. Our lives are dominated by the moment and our past and our heritage are remote. Let us look to the past to remind ourselves that we must not lose faith in man. We must have faith in his ability to be receptive to others and yet hold firm to his values.

During the long negotiations that led to the Treaties of Nijmegen, fighting continued. It influenced the course of the talks. Yet the delegates continued their dialogue, listened to their adversaries and acted in a spirit of tolerance.

That period was similar to the early years of European construction. The world was again in turmoil. There was the Cold War between East and West, the Korean War, the ill-advised British-French action in Suez.

This ceremony offers an opportunity to pay tribute to the protagonists of the two historic periods. We honour the victory of common wisdom over the instinct of domination – or to put it more simply, over the fear of others.

In our time, we strive with difficulty to live up to the ideal of the founding fathers. The question put to Europeans is this: Is the project still the same? Has the geopolitical context not changed fundamentally?

Should Europe build on its past, its heritage and its values to respond to the challenges of History? Or should Europe resign itself to a golden decline?

If we do not choose to accept a golden decline, if we decide instead to be active participants in a globalising world, then we must recover the political momentum that is now lacking. Is this what we want? Can we do it? Never have these questions been put to Europeans in such stark terms.

The importance of memory

First, we should recognise the importance of memory. Let me illustrate this by turning to the active role played by illustrious figures from the Netherlands.

Let us first remember the Hague Congress in 1948, an enthusiastic gathering of leading Europeans who shared a common dream: the unity of Europe. Their aspiration was “to end, forever, war amongst us”. Very quickly, there was disagreement about the political and institutional framework. This disagreement is with us still today: federalists on one side and confederalists or unionists on the other.

But the process had been set in motion. A new European movement was created. Then came the European Cultural Centre. It was followed in turn by the College of Europe in Bruges, with your compatriot Hendrik Brugmans as its first rector.

The focus was on culture, on identity, on our heritage - on the character of Europe. Many people in the Netherlands worked to build Europe. I single out Hendrik Brugmans because he epitomised its very essence.

Let me quote from his address in The Hague: “Europe is the land of men continually fighting against one another, the place where no certainty is accepted as truth, if it is not continually rediscovered. Other continents boast about their efficiency, but it is the European climate which makes life dangerous, adventurous, magnificent, tragic and thus worth living.”

We see here the importance of memory: this statement speaks today to those who doubt Europe, who forget its wealth of experience and humanity and ignore what makes it distinctive.

Address by Jacques Delors

The proposal made by Robert Schuman 9 May 1950 is equally high-minded.

The spiritual value of this text is as impressive as its political value.

Post-war Europeans were plagued by tragic memories, bitterness and mistrust. They were now offered reconciliation, mutual recognition and tolerance. The words of the Jewish sociologist Hannah Arendt come to mind: pardon and promise. Pardon is not the same as forgetting. The promise was that the generations that came after the tragedies would be fully welcome in the human community. For the Dutch, who had suffered so much, and for the other European peoples, it was not easy to embark on this radically new phase in the History of Europe.

This was the start of a great move toward a united Europe. There were successes such as the European Coal and Steel Community; and there were setbacks such as the European Defence Community. And then came the idea of creating a common market. This touched off lengthy discussions and debate that resulted in agreement. The Dutch were very active in the vanguard of this movement, under the leadership of their two Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Joseph Luns and Willem Beyen. Beyen sketched out the features of a federal Europe in 1953:

“To reinforce the sense of European solidarity and unity, it is crucial that the concept of a common responsibility of European states for the common good be vested in an organisation designed to represent the general interest, with an executive body accountable not to national governments but to a supranational parliament.”

The bold approach taken by the Dutch and other founding fathers overcame sectoral disagreements and selfish interests. Ultimately, under the impetus of Paul Henri Spaak, a common vision was achieved and enshrined in the Treaty of Rome in 1957.

The Treaty contained everything, or virtually everything, that was needed: political will; the realism to start with the economy; and momentum

generated by new institutions in which decisions and action could be taken efficiently and effectively.

This look back takes us to 1957. I will stop there. The early history gives us all the references we need today to rekindle the spirit of the pioneers. When we are troubled by doubt and beset by the contingencies of the present, we should remember the past and the essential questions. What threatens man, if not his refusal to understand and accept others? What threatens peace and tolerance, if not our illusory attempt to protect ourselves from the risks inherent in living together by withdrawing into local or national identity?

In looking back over the past and the role played by the Netherlands, I believe I can safely say that the project remains the same. Are we prepared to recognise that fact? Are we prepared to act on it? We must make the effort to adjust to economic upheaval, environmental challenge, globalisation and shifting values. It is our political and intellectual duty to recognise these changes. But in doing so we must not abandon or weaken the European ideal. We have a moral and intellectual duty to reconcile permanence and change.

European construction was never smooth sailing. Europe experienced crises and always overcame them. It went through periods of stagnation. These coincided with periods of economic downturn or internal disagreement over issues such as financial contributions and the relative importance of economic, monetary and social issues. Compromises were worked out. Some of these impeded progress in the construction of Europe. Some of us regret the concessions that were made, here and there, to the Eurosceptics and to selfish vested interests.

But the essentials of what has been built over the last 60 years remain. It is up to you, the new generations, to bring that heritage to fruition. In doing so, do not listen to those who tell you that the world is now radically different. Do not heed those who say it has changed for the better with globalisation of information and expanded trade, or for the worse with the politics of identity and racism. Instead, focus on the fundamental questions: Is Europe stronger as a union

or is it not? Europeans now make up only 6% of the world’s population compared to 15% a century ago.

Is Europe’s core value, unity in diversity, still relevant, or is it not? Look around us. We see peoples aspiring to join the Union or come closer to it. They are not merely attracted by our prosperity, our standard of living and our consumer societies. They aspire to live in a society that embraces diversity as a way of living together.

These facts justify the successive enlargements of the EU. I need not belabor the successful Spanish and Portuguese accessions. I need not dwell on the inherently more difficult integration of the twelve nations to the east that joined the Union after emerging from the long night of totalitarianism. In welcoming them with open arms, the EU has shown its greatness. And we were able to discover the cultural heritage of these countries, similar to ours. As President of the European Commission, I of course alerted Member States to the need to pursue enlargement and deepening in parallel. But my colleague Frans Andriessen and I were not heeded at the European Council meeting in Lisbon in 1992.

Further enlargements are now being prepared. They are a challenge for the Union. In considering them, our leaders must not condone distrust and systematic rejection as the easy way out.

I do not see the construction of Europe as an end in itself. From the start, in my view, the goal has been for Europe to shoulder responsibility in the world as it is - full of promise but above all threatened by those who, in the name of ideology or religion, refuse others the very right to exist. We are waging a battle to uphold the unique value of each human being, freedom, tolerance and mutual understanding between individuals and peoples.

The need to revitalise the political momentum

We must admit that the new institutions created by the Lisbon Treaty have not yet proven themselves. The Union with 27 member states is difficult to steer. The financial crisis has compounded our difficulties and made Member States more cautious. In short, the spirit of Europe’s founding fathers is being eroded. There is a general sense of malaise.

Is the Union in danger? There are reasons to fear this. Attempts to reach compromise are hampered by increasingly dominant national agendas. The European Council attempts to gloss over these problems by announcing good news. But the good news unfortunately often proves to be untrue because it is based on false compromises rather than a real convergence of views. We worry about Europe when we see the EU kept out of the final discussions in Copenhagen, and when we see governments adopt national measures to deal with the financial crisis, rather than agreeing on joint action that would prove less costly and more effective. There are many such examples. Only when governments change their attitude, only when they are willing to look beyond their short-term interests and empower the EU to act, can political momentum be restored.

That said, I believe that part of the solution lies in improving the way the Union works. In other words, though it may be difficult for us to agree about what we should do, we should at least be able to improve the way we do it. To this end we must return to the community method enshrined in the European Coal and Steel Community and the Common Market. A European Council sets the general policy orientations and its work is carefully prepared by the Council of Ministers and the European Commission. The co-legislative bodies, the Parliament and the Council, take decisions by adopting European laws. Above all, an institution, the Commission, strengthened by its right of initiative, “thinks every day of Europe”.

Address by Jacques Delors

To some it may be a paradox, but for us it is self-evident: the greater the number of Member States, the more useful the community method and the more indispensable the work of the Commission. In this way, duly informed Member States are presented with well-prepared and streamlined proposals. They are given options and decide by a yes or no vote. This is why we should be concerned when we hear talk of the European Council with its 27 members meeting once a month and becoming a kind of economic government. This would take us back to the days of the structurally ineffectual pre-war League of Nations that Jean Monnet warned against. If we are to learn the lessons of the past ten years, the task of balancing economic policy coordination and monetary policy must first be handled within the Economic and Monetary Union.

When the Single European Act was adopted in 1986, marking a milestone in the construction of Europe, I proposed the following words to capture the spirit of the Treaty: competition to stimulate, cooperation to strengthen and solidarity to unite (through economic and social cohesion policies). Today what is most lacking is cooperation, or rather the spirit of cooperation.

To conclude I would like to return to the enlargement-deepening dilemma. When the Union seemed at an impasse, the only way to get beyond stalemate was to accept a differentiated approach. It allowed a limited number of countries to decide to move ahead in a given policy area, provided they complied with the E.U. rules.

This paved the way for progress, with the adoption of the Schengen Agreement on free movement of persons and the Maastricht Treaty on Economic and Monetary Union. I can assure you that if unanimity had been required, there would be no Schengen and no Euro today.

A differentiated integration process, along with a return to the community method, will help to restore the vital political momentum that Europe desperately needs today. This will make the options clearer to the citizens and leaders of Europe and enable them to decide on our objectives.

It is fitting that I should speak these blunt words here, in this city, in one of Europe's founding countries, where so many leaders distinguished themselves in the inception and construction of Europe.

I do so in token of the faith I have in the people and leaders of the Netherlands and their ability to rekindle the European spirit and political momentum of our common endeavour. In so doing, I also express my gratitude to the authorities of the city of Nijmegen for this recognition and for this opportunity to reaffirm, in these uncertain times, my faith in the future of Europe.





Witnesses to peace. An art treasure from Antwerp adorning Nijmegen walls

With the award of the Peace of Nijmegen Medal on 15 March 2010 and the opening of the Peace of Nijmegen Room at the Museum Het Valkhof on 29 April 2010, Nijmegen is putting the spotlight on the years 1678 and 1679 when the town was no less than the political centre of Europe. During this period, negotiations were held in Nijmegen for the purpose of bringing about an end to various European wars. A series of important treaties was signed between various European states and these are collectively known as the Treaties of the Peace of Nijmegen.

The peace brought an end to long-running conflicts relating to the division of power and territory in Europe and marked one of the principal moments in European history. At that time, Nijmegen was a small garrison town with approximately 20,000 inhabitants. It was chosen as the location for negotiations on account of its central location, being situated on neutral territory. The arrival of the representatives sent by the various rulers in Europe had an enormous influence on the small town. The ambassadors and their households were provided with lodgings within the town walls. They often expected the locations of their lodgings and negotiations to meet exacting requirements: they were expected to be befitting of the key powers that they held and the status that was afforded to the talks. The prosperous elite of Nijmegen made their houses available, artists from home and abroad set themselves up in the town (where interesting commissions were awarded for a while once more) and even the town council did themselves proud. So, in great haste, the States General ordered the purchase of two sets of splendid wall tapestries from the famous workshop of the brothers Michiel and Philippe Wauters in Antwerp which was the centre for tapestry

art at that time. The wall tapestries were purchased as “decoration for the chambers used for the peace negotiations in Nijmegen”. They were, in fact, intended to provide suitable decoration for two austere conference rooms at the Town Hall in Nijmegen. The first set is a series of seven scenes from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, produced in the 1670s to a design by Daniël Janssens and Pieter Spierinckx. The second series comprises six tableaux from Virgil’s *Aeneid*, after designs by Gian Francesco Romanelli from 1655-62. These sets of tapestries were extremely popular in the 17th century. The Nijmegen wall tapestries witnessed many discussions as well as the signing of a number of peace treaties in the years 1678-79. Following the departure of the ambassadors, they were kept as part of the historical interior of the Town Hall. For a long time, the wall tapestries were seen more as attractive wall hangings than as works of art. Some rather coarsely executed minor repairs were made to them here and there and the glue pot was also well-used. In 1939, it was decided that they would be thoroughly restored by a specialist workshop in Haarlem. As a result, the tapestries were saved from a sorry fate at the same time for when the attack on Nijmegen was carried out in September 1944, they were still in Haarlem. In contrast, the whole of the interior of the Town Hall in Nijmegen was destroyed by fire. After it was rebuilt in 1954, the tapestries were once again able to take their rightful place on the walls of the Town Hall. Because alterations made to the council chamber in 2004 meant that it was no longer possible to hang all the wall tapestries in the Town Hall, one of the two sets is currently on show at the Museum Het Valkhof while the other remains in place. The series will be swapped over every five years. Besides their exceptional quality, the main reason why the Nijmegen wall tapestries are so important is that they are the most complete collections to remain within Europe. That is why - along with the fact that they are the main direct witnesses to the Peace of Nijmegen - it is only right that they are now back taking centre stage again for all to see.

The Metamorphoses tapestries

1. Apollo and Daphne

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I, 452 ff.)

The god of love, Cupid, becomes angry with Apollo when he ridicules him for playing with bows and arrows. To get his revenge, Cupid shoots him with one of his arrows which causes Apollo to fall madly in love with the nymph Daphne. But Cupid shoots Daphne with another arrow which makes her spurn Apollo's love. Full of loathing, she flees, faster than the wind. Apollo goes after her in desperate pursuit.

Apollo chases the nymph Daphne for hours on end. He is tireless in his search. He has no other choice for he is besotted through infatuation and lust. Apollo can be identified by his bow. On the ground lies the lyre from which he is inseparable. Apollo gains on the fleeing nymph, drawing closer and closer to her. She has no strength left and is totally exhausted. Looking round at the water of the river, Daphne beseeches her father, the river god Peneus, to help her and to free her from her beautiful body which has brought her into such danger.

Her prayers are answered. Just at the moment when Apollo is almost upon Daphne, Peneus transforms her into a laurel tree. Her grace is all that remains. Apollo is still in love with her. Since Daphne can no longer become his wife, he vows to tend her as his tree. Henceforth, her leaves will be used as his crown and will decorate his lyre and quiver. Ever since, the laurel wreath has been used as a crown of honour for the victorious.



2. Arcas and the bear

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* II, 401 ff.)

The nymph Callisto was a friend of Diana, the goddess of hunting. Her name, Callisto, means 'the most beautiful' and her beauty had also come to the notice of the ruler of the gods, Jupiter. At the end of a hot day, Callisto lies resting in the woods. Alone. When Jupiter sees her lying there, languid and unguarded, he quickly disguises himself as Diana and wins her trust. It is not long before his lascivious desires betray him. Callisto's desperate attempts at resistance are unsuccessful. Jupiter always gets his way. He ravishes her and fathers a son, Arcas, by her. When Jupiter's wife, Juno, hears of this, she flies into a terrible rage and takes revenge by taking away Callisto's beauty.

Callisto's smooth arms suddenly become hairy, her nails become claws and she is transformed into a brown bear. In this form she wanders the area where she used to live, for years while her son is growing up. Fifteen years later, Arcas goes out hunting. Suddenly, he comes face to face with a bear. Not knowing who she is, Arcas draws his bow...

The imminent matricide is too much for Jupiter. He raises them both up, carrying them through the air and sets them next to each other in the firmament. Ever since, Callisto and Arcas can be seen in the sky as the constellations called the Great Bear (Ursa Major) and the Little Bear (Ursa Minor).



The Metamorphoses tapestries

3. Mercury, Herse and Aglauros

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* II, 708 ff.)

The three unmarried sisters Herse, Aglauros and Pandrosos are on their way to make a holy sacrifice to Minerva, goddess of the arts and crafts. They travel in procession, with the sisters carrying fire and baskets of flowers. They approach Minerva's shrine.

The messenger of the gods, Mercury, is flying overhead and sees the procession. He is so overcome by the beauty of Herse that he is literally consumed by fire and flame!

When he comes down to earth again, Mercury puts on his best behaviour and puts faith in his charms. He smooths down his locks, neatly presses his robe, takes up his decorative caduceus and polishes his elegant winged sandals.

However, Herse's sister Aglauros is eaten up with jealousy and tries to frustrate Mercury's love. She keeps watch at the front door and tries to stop Mercury from coming in. She should not have done that. He takes revenge against Aglauros' wicked impertinence and turns her into a stone statue. Not of white stone, but of black stone, after the colour of her soul.



4. Europa and the bull

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* II, 833 ff.)

On a certain day, the young Phoenician princess Europa is playing on the beach along with her friends. The ruler of the gods, Jupiter, is struck by the young woman's beauty and instantly becomes infatuated with her.

In order to avert the suspicions of his jealous wife, Juno, and also in order not to scare the young woman by appearing as a god, Jupiter takes on the shape of a white bull. Europa and her friends adorn the handsome animal with garlands of flowers and Europa climbs on its back. Then suddenly, Jupiter runs off with her. He leaps into the waves and swims without stopping to the island of Crete, his birthplace.

When they get there, he reveals himself to the young woman in his true form and makes love to her. Europa bears him three sons, Minos, Rhadamanthus and Sarpedon. Because Jupiter has to return to Olympus, Europa marries Asterion, the king of Crete, who is a worthy stepfather and helps her to bring up her three sons.



The Metamorphoses tapestries

5. The story of Narcissus

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* III, 339 ff.)

One day, Juno is looking for her husband Jupiter as she suspects that he is amusing himself again with one of the nymphs. However, the nymph Echo keeps Juno talking so that Jupiter can escape. But Juno finds out what she has done. As a punishment, she makes it impossible for Echo ever to start a conversation again. When Echo sees the handsome Narcissus, she instantly falls in love with him and follows him secretly. Her punishment prevents her from talking to him - all she can do is repeat everything that is said to her. When Echo runs to Narcissus to embrace him, he shuns her. Echo is heartbroken and flees to the caves. Only her voice remains, forever doomed to have the last word.

Echo asks the gods to let Narcissus also know what it feels like to love someone who does not return their love. When Narcissus sees his own reflection in a pool of clear water, he thinks that he is looking at a beautiful water spirit and is instantly enamoured. Each time he tries to touch the vision, it disappears. So he remains sitting there and eventually pines away completely. The only thing that remains is a flower, yellow in the middle and ringed with white petals.



6. Cephalus and Procris

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII, 661 ff.)

Eos, the goddess of dawn, is always in love but this love hardly ever ends happily. For Aphrodite, the goddess of love, does not like Eos and punishes her by giving her an unceasing desire for young men.

One of those young men is the great hunter Cephalus. Eos falls in love with him and wishes to seduce him. In order to get him away from his wife, Procris, Eos advises him to put her faithfulness to the test. Cephalus disguises himself as an eastern prince and he tries to lead his own wife into temptation. When he offers her jewels, she hesitates briefly. Cephalus then reveals himself and Procris flees, angry and humiliated. She seeks refuge on Crete for a while with the goddess of hunting, Diana, and is given a spear which can never miss its mark.

She returns, is reconciled with her husband and gives him the magic spear as a present. However when Cephalus is out hunting, Procris becomes suspicious again and she follows him. She is then accidentally killed with the infallible spear.

Cephalus has terrible feelings of guilt because he has betrayed Procris with Eos and kills himself.



The Metamorphoses tapestries

7. Meleager and the Calydonian boar

(Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII, 260 ff.)

Meleager is the son of king Oeneus of Calydon and his wife Althaea. He is a famous javelin-thrower and hunter. He will remain unassailable as long as no harm comes to a wooden brand that his parents are carefully guarding. At a harvest festival, Oeneus forgets to make a sacrifice to the goddess Diana. Enraged, Diana releases a monstrous wild boar which devastates the land farmed by the people of his kingdom of Calydon. The future of the kingdom is at risk. Meleager gathers together the best hunters from all over Greece who include the exquisite Atalanta. During the hunt for the boar, Meleager falls in love with this huntress who is a match for him in all respects.

Meleager kills the boar and gives it as a prize to his newfound friend. Envy over the boar causes an argument to break out but this time between the hunters themselves.

In the fighting which ensues, Meleager's uncles are also killed. His mother Althaea does not hesitate to take her revenge on her own child, the murderer of her brothers. She throws the brand into the fire and Meleager dies. His grieving sisters are turned into guinea-fowl.



The Aeneas and Dido tapestries

1. Aeneas meets his mother Venus

(Virgil, *Aeneid* I, 314 ff.)

The tragic love story of the Trojan hero Aeneas and Dido, the queen of Carthage, was extremely popular in the 17th century. Following the death of her husband, Dido herself had decided that she would never remarry. However, Aeneas then appears on the scene: now seven years after the fall of Troy, he and his companions are on their travels and he will be there at the birth of the mighty Roman empire. The gods have given him the task of founding a new empire in Italy but at the moment, he is stranded by a storm on the coast of North Africa.

There Aeneas meets his mother, Venus, who is disguised as a huntress. Venus advises him to seek out queen Dido who is busy founding a new empire and building a city: Carthage.



The Aeneas and Dido tapestries

2. The building of Carthage

(Virgil, Aeneid I, 494 ff.)

Aeneas and his friends receive a warm welcome from Dido who very quickly becomes enamoured with the stranger. She proudly shows him the city which the gods have allowed her to build on a piece of land no bigger than the size of an oxhide. That was of course not very generous of them but Dido had devised a clever plan. She cut an oxhide into thin strips so that she had enough to encircle a large piece of ground. On this land, the new city of Carthage was built.

While work on the new city is going on all around them, Dido shows Aeneas the plan of fortifications to be built.

Tired after all their travels, Aeneas and his Trojans decide to stay on a while longer in Carthage. Besides, Aeneas is also quite attracted to the queen of Carthage.



3. Dido's sacrifice to Juno

(Virgil, Aeneid IV, 54 ff.)

In the meantime, Dido has become so smitten with Aeneas that she is no longer able to fulfill her duties as queen. Her infatuation renders her powerless and her beloved is the only thing that she can think about. However, she also knows that it is by no means certain that Aeneas will be able to stay with her and she calls to the gods for help. A little bit of help from the gods in influencing fate cannot do any harm.

Queen Dido is waiting to pour a libation between the horns of a sacrificial beast which has been slaughtered, a young white ox. The priest in front of her is pointing to the image of Juno, the goddess of marriage, who is accompanied by her attribute, the peacock. Dido hopes that her sacrifice will lead Juno to help her to keep Aeneas in Carthage as her husband. Whether she will succeed has not been decided yet: the sacrificers prepare to cut open the ox in order to read the future by consulting its entrails.



The Aeneas and Dido tapestries

4. Aeneas and Dido take shelter from the storm

(Virgil, Aeneid IV, 160 ff.)

During a hunting party, Aeneas and Dido are caught in a terrible storm. They run to a cave in order to take shelter. There they confess their love for each other and exchange their first kiss. The two spirits of love look on from the clouds above and to the right of the cave, their work is done for that day.

Now that Dido's love for Aeneas has been requited, the whole story could have ended quite happily, were it not for the fact that Aeneas is sternly reminded by the gods of the higher tasks awaiting him.



5. Mercury reminds Aeneas of his duty to travel to Italy

(Virgil, Aeneid IV, 265 ff.)

Jupiter, the ruler of the gods, loses his patience with Aeneas who seems to have completely forgotten his task to travel to Italy in order to establish a new empire there. It is time for action. Mercury, the messenger of the gods, is sent to refresh Aeneas' memory.

Aeneas is frightened at the sudden appearance of Mercury and the realisation of what he has to do dawns upon him. It was true: his love for Dido had caused him to completely forget the task he had been given by the gods. However awful it would be if he had to leave her, there was no alternative. However, Aeneas does not dare to make his decision known to Dido yet and leaves in secret in order to make all the necessary preparations for his departure.



The Aeneas and Dido tapestries

6. The parting of Dido and Aeneas

(Virgil, Aeneid Aeneid IV, 304 ff.)

Of course, Dido finds out that Aeneas is planning to leave her and set sail again. She begs Aeneas to stay with her in Carthage. Aeneas explains to her that he is leaving because it is the will of the gods. Dido is enraged, she feels betrayed and humiliated. Aeneas feels wretched and guilty. In his heart, he knows that Dido is right but it is impossible for him to back out of the task which the gods have given him.

Weeping, Dido reproaches Aeneas for being faithless while in the background, the ships are ready to set sail.

Dido realises that she has lost Aeneas for good and devises a dreadful plan. She gives instructions for an enormous funeral pyre to be built in the courtyard of her palace and for the arms which Aeneas has carried and the clothes which he has worn in Carthage, everything which reminds her of him, to be placed upon it. When Aeneas and his Trojans set sail from the harbour in the dead of the night, the sky above Carthage is suddenly brightly lit up by high leaping flames. It appears that Dido has sought death in the flames. The wind carries her final words across the water: it is a curse laid upon Aeneas and his people. Ever since, Carthage and Rome would be doomed to be each other's arch-enemy.



*Image right; Brass section of
Het Gelders Orkest
(15 March 2010)*



Our past and our present make the Treaties of Nijmegen Medal part of the DNA of our city. In order to ensure lasting peace within Europe and tolerance between countries, we will need to keep the development of Europe as a topic of discussion. By awarding the Treaties of Nijmegen Medal, we want to make our own contribution towards that debate.



The City of Nijmegen has strong networks in Brussels and links with our German neighbours. The municipality is involved in various projects and networks with European cities. Roads, parks and squares are being given a facelift using European funds. We are working closely with our German neighbours on projects which include improving the accessibility of our city. Twinning has been arranged with towns in Europe to stimulate economic, social and cultural exchange. The whole population of Nijmegen is becoming more and more closely linked to Europe.



Royal Haskoning, established in Nijmegen 1881, now has around 3900 consultants, architects and engineers working in 60 offices all over the world. It has been operating from a strong European base in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Belgium for more than 125 years and activities are being developed further from this home front. Royal Haskoning is fully aware of the fact that this would not be possible without the opportunities offered by a strong Europe. Developments within Europe have direct consequences for the future of the company. For this offers unlimited opportunities for cooperation, sharing knowledge, acquisitions and recruiting staff. Royal Haskoning has already gained a leading position within the field of water and water management within and outside Europe, for example. This would not have been possible without a healthy European home market and base.



Radboud University's goal is to become one of the top universities in Europe. It has already gone a long way towards achieving this, as we can see from the numerous European grants which have been awarded to its researchers. One recent recipient was Spinoza prize-winner Prof. Theo Rasing who, as leader of a group of European researchers, was awarded a grant of 11.3 million euro to develop materials to make computers even faster. The Heyendaal campus is becoming increasingly international: 16% of the academic staff at Radboud University now come from abroad. In addition, more and more foreign students are coming to study in Nijmegen. Radboud University also encourages its own students to gain experience within Europe. The university's aim is for one third of its students to spend some time in another country. In order to make that possible, it has established the IRUN international network which brings together nine European universities.



The Treaties of Nijmegen Medal has been initiated in close collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands.

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