Commission en direct

#17 - Novembre 2014

Dossier

1989

The year of revolutions

EUROPE & BEYOND | President Barroso looks back
OUR STORIES | L'Europe et le cinéma
AU QUOTIDIEN | Dépression et burnout au travail
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As Vaira Viķe-Freiberga, former President of Latvia, once said: “When we were able to break down the walls separating the two parts of Europe, I remember vividly the feeling of relief, but mostly of hope, that flowed into so many hearts. The feeling that a Europe healed of its former divisions [...] could grow into one, using the strengths and the experience of each side to make something that was better, not just for the Eastern part, but for the Western part as well.”

Millions of Europeans shared this feeling in their hearts as a wave of unimaginable change swept across our continent 25 years ago, as one totalitarian regime after another fell like a series of dominos in Central and Eastern Europe before the power of the people. Many of us were also touched and involved in different ways – be it as young persons, students or even Commission officials.

So in this month’s dossier we take a look at the events of 1989 from different personal perspectives, including Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič (pages 34-35) and former European Parliament President Jerzy Buzek (pages 38-39). Our former Secretary-General Carlo Trojan also shares the story of the Commission’s involvement in German reunification (pages 40-43).

While the fall of the Berlin Wall was a particularly iconic moment that would lead to German reunification on 3 October 1990, the revolutions taking place elsewhere across the region – for the most part, peacefully – would bring down the Iron Curtain and usher in a new era of freedom and democratic change. This would be crowned in 2004 with the EU’s biggest enlargement ever, followed in 2007 by a second wave with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania – ending the divisions imposed after World War II and reuniting our continent.

Remembering is important to reconnect with our core values and to draw renewed inspiration and energy to move forward again – with a clear sense of purpose. What better time to do so than this 25th anniversary of the momentous events that changed Europe forever, which just happens to coincide with the new Commission taking office? ■
1989 – THE YEAR OF REVOLUTIONS

POST

REGARDS

EUROPE & BEYOND

The Barroso legacy
Brèves
Sustainable energy and the UN
Iraq’s internally displaced persons

PHOTOS

OUR STORIES

20  25 ans de soutien au cinéma
22  The Human Brain Project
24  Stakeholders on the Digital Agenda
26  DG REGIO’s change communication
28  ‘Europe in my Region’ in photos

AU QUOTIDIEN

50  Dépression et burnout au travail
53  Giving your waste a second life
54  Nominations
Dossier

32  Timeline
34  From Prague to Bratislava
36  Plötzlich am Ku’damm Schlange stehen
38  Poland’s pioneering people power
40  The Commission and German reunification
44  Your stories
46  Facts and figures
48  The language ‘Big Bang’

GENERATIONS
55  Reconstructing the European dream
57  Georges Bidault fête ses 100 ans
57  Accès à My IntraComm et ECAS

FREIZEIT
58  Rubens et son héritage
60  Jeux
62  Histoire en images
63  Annonces

José Luis
Gonzalez Vallvé

55
PDF version
I used to read the magazine from cover to cover as for me it was the internal «European Voice» of the Commission, but having struggled through a 64-page PDF now I can say I won’t read it again unless something seriously changes. Can you make an app or something else accessible cause it would be a shame not to have access to a prime source of information on the Commission.
Ruben Schellingerhout, DG TRADE

Flipping book
Talking about flipping, why not just putting it on a FlipBoard version? That’s standard, easy, good looking and manageable.
Fabio Zilberstein, DG CONNECT

Saving trees and links in the e-mails
I’m happy to see Commission en direct in digital format. We will hopefully save many trees like that 😊 Can I give some feedback? It would be really useful if the links to specific articles (e.g. the fight against Ebola below) would lead directly to the article in question. I noticed I currently can’t click on them.
Pauline Kranendonk, DGT

Sortir le nez de l’écran
Merci beaucoup Zach, mais justement l’idée est de sortir un peu le nez de l’écran et d’avoir un magazine convivial en mains.
Loïc Lallemand Zeller, DG ECHO

Reply
Thanks for your feedback and suggestions, especially the quick wins that can be implemented immediately, as they help us to further improve your magazine. Given differing preferences, it is not always possible to please everyone. Our intent is simply to provide you with various ways of reading Commission en direct – be it the paper magazine or on-line versions – at your convenience.
Zach Hester, Editor-in-Chief, CEND
The fall of the Berlin Wall makes for nice pictures. But it all started in the Gdańsk shipyards.
Lech Wałęsa

Nobody can change the past; only the future can be changed.
Vaira Viķe-Freiberga
▶ http://tinyurl.com/ov9xfhq

Humility, affability, kindness, respect for what we do not understand, a deep feeling of solidarity with others, respect for what is different, the willingness to make sacrifices or do good deeds which eternity alone can reward [...]. These are the values which could and should be on the agenda as we construct Europe.
Václav Havel
▶ http://tinyurl.com/o7t3uzb

Für mich ist dieser Augenblick einer der glücklichsten in meinem Leben.
Helmut Kohl
How would you describe your ten years as Commission President?

These have been extremely challenging years for the EU. Probably the most difficult times since the beginning of European integration in the 1950s. We not only had the constitutional crisis, with the ‘no’ vote in the referendum in France and the Netherlands. We also had the financial and sovereign debt crisis, causing the biggest economic crisis since the Great Depression, with high levels of unemployment and deprivation. And most recently the political and military crisis erupted between Russia and Ukraine – one of the most serious since the end of the Cold War. There was not one day of calm in my ten years as President of the European Commission. Jean Monnet once said: «L’Europe sera la succession de réponses à des crises.» And this has been, I think, confirmed over the last ten years.

But we have stuck together, enlarged successfully, and incorporated new ways of working after the Lisbon Treaty. During this decade, the EU has almost doubled its membership, from 15 to 28, and the euro area has grown from 12 to 18 and soon to 19. We have adapted to make ourselves stronger and better prepared to deal with the challenges and seize the opportunities that globalisation brings. Against the odds, and against the predictions of many, we have shown the EU’s extreme resilience and the need for political will and leadership as indispensable drivers of action in a more political EU.

In terms of economic governance, we have also introduced and strengthened the European Semester procedure. We have also reformed the EU budget, focusing it clearly on the Europe 2020 goals to invest in smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and jobs. And we have continued to address climate change, the climate and energy package we adopted providing an important strategic reorientation. All together, this has resulted in a stronger and more united Europe able to show global leadership. In such difficult circumstances, this is an enormous achievement.
How has the Commission helped Europe face these crises?

First of all, with the constitutional crisis, we had to be tenacious – and we were. Inspired by the 1955 Messina Declaration (which also came after a political crisis in Europe), I proposed having a declaration that could bring Member States together and create a consensus for a new treaty keeping the innovations proposed by the Constitutional Treaty. This declaration was signed in Berlin and paved the way for the eventual signing of the Lisbon Treaty.

Then came the financial crisis, and here I would like to dispel some of the many misconceptions. First of all, the crisis was not created by Europe. It started in the US with the Lehman Brothers collapse and it contaminated our financial sector. It was initially a crisis of the financial sector, and in Europe it also became a sovereign debt crisis, because of the high level of public debt in many of our countries, aggravated by pre-existing structural problems that led to a loss in competitiveness.

Some countries were hit especially hard by the crisis – not only those that had to request adjustment programmes. Spain, Italy and even France also came under heavy pressure at times from the markets. We had to respond to an emergency situation. Of course, I would have preferred a bolder response. But the Commission was always in the avant-garde, trying to create a consensus among our Member States. But let us not forget that the EU is a union of free, democratic countries. We cannot – and should not – take decisions by diktat! In Europe, the financial cultures are very diverse – the differences are not only between Finland and Greece but also between France and Germany. So you can imagine how difficult it was in those moments of panic to reach a consensus. However, in the end we were able to respond to the crisis through programmes supported by the EU – and to some extent the IMF. By mobilising unprecedented sums of money and showing European solidarity, we avoided Member State bankruptcies.

Before the crisis, we were speaking about millions or hundreds of millions of euros. The unit after the crisis is the billion. The response was a comprehensive one and has left a positive legacy. The Commission has more competences now than before the crisis and the European Central Bank has competences that would have been unimaginable some years ago. We also have a completely new set of regulations in the financial sector for banking stability, which now make us number one in the world in terms of financial market regulation and supervision. And despite the initial reactions to the idea, we have now basically established the banking union.

This cannot have been easy?

It was not. Fiscal consolidation was unavoidable, but we also stressed the need for investment and structural reforms. We have laid the ground for more robust economies and better employment prospects for the future. The Commission has used the tools we have to build consensus around three fundamentals – fiscal consolidation, serious structural reforms, and targeted investment for growth in things like research and training for the jobs of the future, interconnection and energy capacity. The building blocks to achieve this have been put in place. The key to growth today is to speed up structural reforms to regain our competitiveness.

What was your overriding priority?

Maintaining European unity and openness was absolutely crucial. In spite of the difficulties and divergences, more integration was the only way forward. European unity is essential if we are to face the challenges of today.

When the financial crisis turned into a sovereign debt crisis and then an economic crisis, the risk was that countries would pull back, and look to protect their own. The risk of fragmentation and disunity was a real and present danger. And that would have had a disastrous impact for all.
Had the Commission not been so firm in upholding our common rules on state aids, we would have entered a costly subsidies race. Had Greece left the euro, the financial damage would have spilled over throughout the Single Market. Politically, the euro and the EU would have been shaken to their very foundations. That is why I fought so hard for a united response – a balance of fiscal responsibility and deep structural reform in the countries concerned, and solidarity and a credible backstop from more prosperous countries. Countries like Ireland and Portugal have now successfully exited their programmes and are on the path to sustainable growth. And in January 2015 Lithuania will become the 19th country to adopt the euro.

If we are able to stand together, openness to the world is a unique asset. Because we resisted the pressure to think national at the height of the crisis, Europe was able to speak with authority globally. The G20 was a European initiative. Through it we obtained a global commitment to openness – avoiding a return to 1930s protectionism. We also got coordinated frameworks for sustainable growth and tough action on financial market irresponsibility and on tax evasion.

And despite the adverse economic conditions, the Commission has promoted open markets and tapped into the growth potential of global trade, concluding trade-barrier-busting deals with South Korea, Singapore, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, Central America and West, East and Southern Africa groups. We have also finalised a landmark agreement with Canada and launched negotiations with major partners such as Japan and the US. Together with the agreement we hope to reach with China on investment, these could add 2.2% to EU GDP.

This is not just about our economic wealth, but about our political relevance on the world stage. If the EU engages as a whole, we can be a shaper in international fora such as the UN, the WTO and the G20.

Any regrets?

Of course, not everything has gone to plan. We have seen the results of the European Parliament elections, and too many Europeans remain pessimistic regarding Europe. I take these signals very seriously. But for Europe to recover its enthusiasm, we need to do more at EU level, but also at national level. We need to understand that the EU is not a foreign power – it is the result of our collective will, and it is up to us to make sure that we make the best Europe we can.

This brings us to the idea of ownership of the European project. My appeal to all mainstream leaders – from the centre left to the centre right – is to get out of their comfort zone and fight for Europe with rational arguments, explaining our policies for today’s and future generations. This dream created by the Founding Fathers is not just about the past. I felt this keenly when together with my EU colleagues receiving the Nobel Peace Prize two years ago in Oslo. What a great moment that was! This showed how important the EU is as a peace project. We need to defend our values and
interests in the age of globalisation, but we also need to celebrate Europe’s achievements.

Even the biggest Member States alone do not have the leverage to discuss on an equal footing with the US or China. But together, we are the first economic power in the world. Why should we not be the first political power in the world? This is a question of having confidence in ourselves. We need a more coherent foreign policy and a more resolute defence policy, so that we can project our values and defend our interests.

What role do our common values play?
Europe is all about values. Of course, we need the internal market, our economic integration being our power base. But, as Jacques Delors once said, no one falls in love with an internal market. We need a passion for Europe, an emotional link to Europe, and to understand that Europe is the biggest-ever project in the joint exercise of sovereignty. By sharing sovereignty, we are more influential in economic, political and diplomatic terms. Our values are of human dignity, peace, freedom, and justice. And despite all our imperfections in the EU, it is in Europe that you probably find the most decent societies in the world. This is why so many people were out protesting and waving the European flag for months in Ukraine, because they believe in European values.

These same values are what reunited Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall! In 2004, we were 15 countries. Today we are 28. The EU now has a continental dimension, finally ending the artificial divisions created by force after the Second World War. Even in the deepest crisis we were able to almost double the membership of the EU. Some believed that wider and deeper were not mutually compatible, and perhaps even shaped their policies accordingly. But the consolidation of enlargement to the Central and Eastern European countries has been very successful. And the euro area, which all those prophets of doom – including many very important economists – were predicting would collapse, has not and is about to welcome Lithuania in January 2015!

So despite a decade of unprecedented difficulties, together we have shown incredible resilience and made lots of progress in many very important areas.

To achieve all of this has put staff under considerable pressure to produce very high-quality work under extremely tight and demanding deadlines. I fully recognise the incredible efforts made, demonstrating once again the qualities of the European Commission’s staff. I and the entire College would, therefore, truly like to thank all staff for helping to achieve results we can be really proud of.

European Commission 2004–2014. A testimony by the President with selected documents
► http://bit.ly/1rpAOxh
Le respect du droit européen à la loupe

La Commission a publié son 31e rapport annuel sur le contrôle de l’application du droit de l’Union. Ce rapport souligne une importante diminution des infractions ainsi qu’une hausse du nombre de cas résolus au cours de ces dernières années, illustrant ainsi la détermination de l’UE à travailler étroitement avec les États membres pour une meilleure application de la législation.

Comme en 2012, la plupart des infractions (62 % des cas) concernent les domaines de l’environnement, la fiscalité, les transports, et le marché intérieur et les services. Les pays ayant obtenu le plus faible score de conformité avec la législation sont l’Italie, l’Espagne et la Grèce, tandis que la Lettonie, Malte et l’Estonie se sont classés parmi les plus performants (la Croatie sera prise en compte dès 2014).

La mise en œuvre tardive des directives européennes, qui constituerait un défi majeur dans les précédents rapports, connaît également une nette amélioration: 390 cas ont été recensés fin 2013 contre 1 185 en 2011. Enfin, relais de la voix des citoyens européens, les 3 505 plaintes enregistrées ont une fois de plus contribué au bon suivi de l’application des lois.

Smart regulation saved €32.3 billion a year

President José Manuel Barroso and the Chairman of the High Level Group on Administrative Burdens, Dr Edmund Stoiber, called on Member States to step up efforts to improve smart regulation. On 19 September the President and the former Prime Minister of the German Bundesland Bavaria discussed ways of further cutting red tape at EU level. The High Level Group on Administrative Burdens advised the Commission for seven years on the administrative burdens placed on business. President Barroso said: “Within the past five years the Commission has initiated measures that reduce red tape for EU businesses by up to €32.3 billion a year. We need to cooperate closely with Member States to ensure that these savings bring real relief to businesses.” Expressing his satisfaction with the Commission’s initiative on administrative burden reduction, Edmund Stoiber stated: “It is a considerable success that the ambitious reduction target of 25% has been exceeded, reaching 26.1%.” Stoiber’s High Level Group presented its final report on smart regulation on 14 October 2014.
Contemporary architecture
A mirror of a region’s development

An exhibition on contemporary architecture in Lower Austria took place in October in the Berlaymont Piazza. Organised in cooperation with the Liaison Bureau of Lower Austria and the Department of Culture of the State Government of Lower Austria, and under the patronage of Commissioner Johannes Hahn, it included photographs by Bruno Klomfar and a 3D interactive installation entitled N(œ)cleus.

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain and Austria’s EU accession, Lower Austria was able to build a new image by investing in contemporary architecture. Following the idea of “more Europe through more culture”, Austria’s largest region has developed its rich cultural infrastructure. A very significant share of the investments in these projects came from EU funds, increasing the country’s cultural budget. Cultural heritage plays an important role in promoting European values such as peace, prosperity, economic and technological progress. Lower Austria’s success stories can provide a fruitful example for other European regions in building bridges and using culture as a universal language.

Contemporary Architecture – Mirror of the Development of a Region
An Exhibition on Lower Austria

http://bit.ly/1nJdsrS
EKIDEN 2014
Ensemble contre la pauvreté
Près de 600 coureurs, 15 bénévoles, du soleil, du plaisir, des sourires... Le samedi 18 octobre, EKIDEN 2014 a tenu une fois encore toutes ses promesses!
Merci aux 92 équipes des institutions européennes, aux donateurs et aux bénévoles pour leur amitié, leur dévouement et leur engagement. Merci à notre sponsor Afliatys et à la Représentation de la Commission européenne en Belgique pour leur aide.
Grâce à votre soutien, Give Eur-Hope asbl continuera, par des actes concrets, à promouvoir la solidarité du personnel avec celles et ceux qui vivent dans la pauvreté et l’exclusion sociale, au sein de l’UE.
Rendez-vous l’année prochaine pour EKIDEN 2015!

Give Eur-Hope
➤ www.giveeurhope.eu/fr.htm
EKIDEN 2014
➤ http://bit.ly/1rYuMY

Affiliatys
➤ www.afliatys.eu/
In an attempt to explore the question of ‘What brings us together?’, photographer Chris Terry went in search of the ingredients of the family meal. He visited families receiving food assistance under the partnership between the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) in five countries on three continents.

As well as telling stories about the challenges faced by the families affected by crises, the exhibition reveals some of the steps required to eradicate hunger.

Globally, roughly half of all child deaths can be attributed to undernutrition, with 3.1 million young children dying every year from related causes. All of this is preventable. The World Food Programme and the EU are committed to ensuring all children receive the nutrition they need. Last year, EU’s humanitarian aid helped the WFP provide special nutritional support to 4 million children under the age of two and 3 million women.

By portraying part of the essence of our humanity, this exhibition aims to reveal our empathy, perhaps the most essential ingredient – not only for the family meal, but also for a world without hunger.

The photo exhibition will go on show on 4-14 November in Brussels’ Gare du Midi, before travelling to other European cities over the next year.

**‘The Family Meal – What brings us together?’**

A photo exhibition by the UN World Food Programme and DG ECHO

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[Photos:](#)

**Niger**

The circumference of a baby’s upper arm is an important indicator of undernutrition.

**Myanmar**

This family lives in a camp for people displaced by fighting in the north of the country. The baby is eating ‘Super cereal plus’, a specialized product of blended wheat and soya reinforced with micronutrients, as a complement to breastfeeding.
Sustainability and climate change are global issues requiring a global focus and global action. They were very much the focus of attention for President Barroso and Commissioners Piebalgs and Hedegaard in late September, when they travelled to New York to attend a series of key international meetings, including the Climate Summit, during ministerial week at the 69th session of the UN General Assembly.

At the Climate Summit on 23 September, President Barroso called for a decisive push to global climate action. He referred to climate change as both a defining threat and an opportunity to reinvent our economies in a cleaner, leaner, greener and more efficient way. Grasping this opportunity, he warned, would require courage, vision and determination from the international community.

Mainstreaming climate action across EU policies
The EU is mainstreaming climate action across policy areas and has committed itself to making 20% of its 2014-20 budget climate-relevant. This will equate to €180 billion in spending inside and outside the Union.

Bringing sustainable energy to the most vulnerable parts of the global community is vital to making good on that commitment. The EU has been playing its part in this endeavour. Indeed, at the EU ‘Sustainable Energy for All’ summit in Brussels in 2012, President Barroso set the EU the task of helping developing countries provide 500 million people with access to sustainable energy services by 2030. This ambitious goal is the EU’s sizeable contribution to the UN’s bold ‘Sustainable Energy for All’ initiative, under which, by 2030, the world should deliver universal access to modern energy services, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency and double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.

To that end, in New York, President Barroso confirmed that, over the next seven years, the EU will aim to allocate more than €3.3 billion in grants to support sustainable energy projects in partner countries worldwide, with some €2 billion dedicated to Africa. This sum will leverage between €15 billion and €30 billion in loans and equity investments, to plug gaps in energy infrastructure and businesses and to power schools, homes and hospitals sustainably.

‘Blending’ sources of finances to produce results
This so-called blending of EU grants with other public and private sector resources such as loans and equity is already beginning to produce results on the ground. For instance, the EU’s €25 million in support for the Lake Turkana Wind Power project in Kenya will unlock a total investment of €625 million for a 310 megawatt wind farm to reduce Kenya’s import dependency and season-sensitive hydropower, increasing its energy security and improving economic activities in remote areas.

Blending is just one of five fronts on which we are taking our energy cooperation with partner countries forward. A second front is our Technical Assistance Facility, with €80 million in funding and designed to foster energy sector development, the right investment climate and healthy green growth in our partner countries.
Targeting the energy poor and building alliances

Thirdly, as Commissioner Piebalgs pointed out in his speech at the High-Level Event on implementing the ‘Sustainable Energy for All’ initiative, we have not forgotten the energy poor. Twenty-one EU-funded projects will bring better access to modern, affordable and sustainable energy services to some 3 million people in rural areas across Africa. They include an eco-electrification project to install solar panels in two rural areas in Burkina Faso, powering health centres and schools, and benefiting around 100,000 people.

The fourth front is about building alliances. Alliances with other sectors – from urban development and security to agriculture and water – to fashion a holistic approach to energy challenges. And alliances with fellow donors – for example, our partnership with New Zealand supports specific sustainable energy projects in the Pacific, including a new hydropower plant serving 188,000 people in Samoa.

Last but not least, the fifth front covers specific cooperation with partner countries and regions, where we want to see our funding promote policy reform, unlock investment in sustainable energy, contribute to energy security and boost sustainable growth.

Work with our partner countries to devise sustainable energy projects is a pivotal aspect of the joint declarations on energy cooperation that President Barroso co-signed in New York with five African countries – Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Togo, and Rwanda. These agreements should lead to better investment and funding conditions, more sustainable, reliable and cost-effective electricity, and greater access for all people to sustainable energy sources.

Next steps

Events like the UN General Assembly are important because they galvanise political support at the highest level for the goals of the ‘Sustainable Energy for All’ initiative and keep us focused on making them a real and lasting success – powering development and, in so doing, empowering people.

Energy is set to remain at the forefront of the development debate, as the international community comes together to agree on a post-2015 framework for poverty eradication and sustainable development. That framework will take over from the Millennium Development Goals, which expire at the end of next year.

So 2015 promises to be a very special year for development. Designated the European Year for Development – the first-ever European Year dealing with EU external action – it offers an unparalleled opportunity for the EU to engage with Europeans everywhere, showcasing our commitment to eradicating poverty worldwide and inspiring people to get involved. We all have a part to play.

Commission at the Climate Summit
» http://europa.eu/n876wJ

President Barroso’s speech
» http://europa.eu/nV34GM

UN Climate Summit
» www.un.org/climatechange/summit/
Over a year ago Suha married her cousin, Husam, and now has a baby son with him. Back in Mosul, the couple lived with Suha’s in-laws. As the militant group the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and other armed opposition groups gained control over parts of the country earlier this year, Husam and his family pledged their allegiance to ISIL, and he went off to the front line, leaving Suha and the rest of her family in limbo.

When Husam and his family threatened to take her baby son away from her in July, fear-stricken Suha lost her breast milk and pleaded with her parents to leave Mosul to save the fate of her new born. Before the conflict broke out in her hometown in northern Iraq, the 14-year-old was starting a family with Husam. Now his political association is threatening her family.

“For as long as I am alive, my mission is to protect this little boy,” said Suha’s father about his grandson, who was clearly disheartened by the betrayal of his son-in-law. Today, Suha, her son, brothers and parents live in a tent in Baharka camp on the outskirts of Erbil.

The internal conflict in Iraq is fuelling a major humanitarian crisis, with the number of internally displaced persons in need of assistance continuing to rise. And it is not just minority groups such as the Yazidis having to flee the violence. (Names in this article have been changed for security reasons.)
A crisis affecting all communities
While most international media attention has focused on the plight of minority groups like the Yazidis trapped on Mount Sinjar earlier this year, Suha’s story – a story of a Sunni Arab family from Mosul – stands out as a testament to the threat facing all displaced families in Iraq, regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds.

“This crisis certainly has sectarian undertones, but it is not one that discriminates when it comes to its victims,” states Javier Rio Navarro, head of DG ECHO’s office in Erbil. “In fact, families who have been displaced since December 2013, who also happen to largely be Sunni Arabs, have exhausted their resources and are in ever-urgent need of assistance.”

For the third time since June 2014, the United Nations has updated its figures on the number of people who have been internally displaced as a result of the conflict. The total now stands at 1.8 million across the country since the beginning of this year. Due to the fluidity of the fighting, the majority of these families have moved more than once, seeking refuge in safer areas. At present, it is estimated that more than 70% of displaced families are staying in mosques, schools, abandoned buildings, camps and informal settlements.

The highest number of displaced
ECHO’s partners are delivering lifesaving emergency assistance to these vulnerable families, including food and essential non-food items. Since January 2014, the Commission has contributed €17 million in emergency humanitarian aid.

Yet, the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate. According to most recent assessments, the month of August saw the highest number of displaced, at around 728,700 people – 42% of the estimated total of internally displaced persons since January. In places where active fighting is taking place, namely in Ninewa, Salah al-Din, Diyala, Kirkuk, Al-Anbar, and Baghdad, access to those in need is hampered by the fighting groups’ disregard for international humanitarian law and human rights.

“We are facing a crisis of epic proportions,” says Navarro. “In addition to providing financial support, the European Commission will continue to advocate for the respect of humanitarian principles. Neutral and impartial aid delivery to all populations in need is not a luxury of principle, but an absolute and urgent necessity.”

What are the needs in Iraq?
» http://europa.eu/!UF49DH

Facts & figures
» http://europa.eu/!Ng84yt

Facts and figures
• 5.2 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance
• 1.8 million internally displaced persons between January and September 2014
• 215,387 Syrian refugees and 40-43,000 other refugees
• Humanitarian needs
  • protection of civilians
  • displacement
  • food security
  • shelter and winterisation
  • essential services
• Nearly €150 million in Commission humanitarian funding for the Iraqi crisis since 2007.
• ECHO has increased its humanitarian assistance to Iraq by €5 million, bringing the total 2014 humanitarian assistance for Iraq to €17 million.
• The European Emergency Response Coordination Centre has ensured a coordinated response following a request from the Government of Iraq. More than 45 cargo flights have arrived in Erbil carrying 6,700 metric tons of relief aid.

Comment avez-vous sélectionné les 25 films des 25 chapitres de votre livre?
Dans ce livre, j’ai souhaité aborder 25 ans de cinéma. Je ne suis pas parti des films mais plutôt des sujets que je voulais traiter, comme le financement, les salles, les scénarii, Hollywood... Ce ne sont donc pas «mes» 25 films, mais des prétextes pour attirer le lecteur vers des sujets d’économie, de statistiques, des analyses et plus généralement, pour l’inviter à comprendre l’économie du cinéma à travers des approches différentes.

Si le «cinéma européen» en tant que tel n’existe pas, les cinémas d’Europe font face à des défis communs. Quels sont-ils?
Le morcellement et la surproduction constituent le premier défi de tous nos cinémas nationaux. Le morcellement des pays et des langues rend toute exportation – si on parle économie – ou toute circulation – si on parle culture – très difficile en Europe face aux obstacles linguistiques et légaux. Si l’on ajoute la surproduction de films – à savoir plus de 1 200 longs métrages par an pour seulement 800 diffusés en salles – cela n’est plus un défi, mais un handicap. La sélection est un réel problème qui contraint de nombreux films à rester dans des boîtes.

Le deuxième défi concerne le nombre de salles: très peu de pays possèdent un parc suffisant. À quoi sert-il de faire du bon pain s’il n’existe pas de boulangeries pour le vendre? Des salles se créent tous les jours dans le monde, mais en Europe, nous en perdons.
Enfin, le troisième défi est de créer le public de demain et, de ce fait, éveiller l’intérêt des enfants et des adolescents pour notre cinéma. L’éducation cinématographique est à vrai dire le seul défi qui se doit d’être européen. Le cursus scolaire européen qui verra le jour demain ne peut pas faire l’impasse sur le monde des images.

Par quels moyens l’UE s’engage-t-elle en faveur de la création cinématographique?
L’aide européenne a émergé dans les années 1990 face au déclin constant du public du cinéma. Il faut noter...
qu’entre 1950 et 1985, c’est plus d’un milliard de tickets en moins qui ont été vendus en Europe. A la suite de la mise en place des aides nationales, régionales puis du programme « Eurimages » du Conseil de l’Europe, l’UE a instauré MEDIA, son programme de soutien à l’audiovisuel.

L’UE répartit plus de 100 millions d’euros par an et ce qui est intéressant, c’est qu’elle ne porte pas son action sur la production de films – la surproduction étant, comme je l’expliquais précédemment, un des défis majeurs du cinéma en Europe –, mais fournit une aide pour le développement, la formation, la distribution, les festivals… Elle se penche sur ce qui est structurellement faible en Europe, ce qui manque en amont et ce qui fait défaut en aval.

Que peut faire l’UE pour améliorer la distribution et la promotion des films européens? La coproduction européenne peut-elle être un modèle à suivre?

J’ai illustré la coproduction avec Breaking the Waves de Lars von Trier, film danois rentable de par ses seules recettes en salles et pour lequel sept pays ont travaillé ensemble. Mais, en réalité, coproduire n’est pas un modèle indiqué. C’est le talent de l’auteur qui peut permettre de s’imposer malgré le multilinguisme de l’équipe et des acteurs. De plus, nous avons besoin de films profondément enracinés en Calabre, en Bretagne ou en Wallonie. C’est la diffusion, la distribution, la circulation de ces films qui devraient être européennes. Le talent doit rester local, mais le public, lui, doit être « continental ».

L’UE pourrait donc plutôt se pencher sur un modèle de codistribution. Cependant, il faut garder en tête que l’UE est déjà très performante dans l’usage de ses moyens. À titre de comparaison, le budget européen pour l’aide au cinéma représente un peu plus de 100 millions d’euros par an, quand, en France, le CNC (Centre national du cinéma et de l’image animée) possède 840 millions.

Comment expliquer le quasi-monopole du cinéma américain en Europe?

Ce quasi-monopole est dû à une multitude de facteurs. Tout d’abord, Hollywood reste la plus grande « pépinière » de talents et son melting-pot culturel attire les acteurs et réalisateurs du monde entier. De plus, le cinéma américain a pour habitude d’investir autant dans la promotion que dans le « produit »; il est difficile de passer à côté des bandes annonces omniprésentes des « blockbusters ». Il faut aussi ajouter que la technique est cruciale dans ce domaine et qu’elle peut être source de créativité. Par exemple, le succès d’Avatar illustre bien l’excellence technique de l’Amérique et son impact sur le secteur cinématographique. Enfin, un autre facteur parmi d’autres, les États-Unis savent répondre au désir de tous les publics. Leur éventail de films est complètement ouvert: films d’action, films d’auteur, films politiques, comédies et bien d’autres…

Comment voyez-vous l’avenir du cinéma en Europe?

En noir et rose. Noir, car la crise va assécher le financement public dont le cinéma européen a tant besoin et je ne vois pas, à l’horizon proche, de fonds privés pour se substituer à eux. Il faut rappeler que le cinéma n’est toujours pas rentable. Cependant, je dirais rose car, en Europe, la volonté de faire des films est intacte, la passion de les voir se perpétue de génération en génération et notre tissu industriel reste performant.

Je pense que l’on s’intéressera plus à la circulation qu’à la production; en d’autres termes, nous produirons moins de films, mais nous les verrons davantage. Comme le théâtre ou l’opéra, le cinéma est amené à rester un art à part entière.

Europe Créative

» http://europa.eu/!WY49GD

Our brain is the most complex organ we know of. It contains around 100 billion neurons dynamically interconnected by approximately 150 trillion links. Understanding how it works will allow us to better diagnose and treat brain diseases like dementia or Alzheimer’s and build new brain-inspired computers and robots.

To achieve its ambitious goals, the ‘Human Brain Project’ (HBP) will build a realistic model of the human brain in a supercomputer. The project brings together the brightest minds in Europe in the fields of neuroscience, medicine and information technology, coming from 112 research organisations in 24 countries. Launched in October 2013 as one of the two Future and Emerging Technologies (FET) Flagship projects (the other one being ‘Graphene’) for a ten-year period, it has a budget of over €1 billion. The Commission will provide half of that budget, while the other half is expected to come mainly from the Member States.

DG CONNECT manages the project inside the Commission. Commission en direct met with the HBP team to find out more about the project and how they are pushing things forward. Valentina Perrotta, Bianca Senatore-Jansen, Carla Moris, Isabelle Senden, José-Luis Fernández-Villacañas, François Junique and Daniel Pasini work in DG CONNECT’s ‘Flagships’ unit (C.4) headed by Thomas Skordas.

What is managing this project like?
Managing HBP is different from managing ordinary research projects. It is not just about managing contractual relations between the involved parties but more about building a long-term partnering approach that is based on commitments from the involved stakeholders – the participating scientists and research institutions, committing to establish, maintain and implement the HBP’s research roadmap, and the Commission, which in turn commits to support its implementation.

We work closely with the HBP Consortium to address together problems they may face in implementing their research roadmap. We help them develop strategies for best engaging industry and boosting the project’s innovation potential, communicating effectively with the scientific communities and the general public, and collaborating with other related European and international initiatives. But we also have a monitoring role – we regularly review HBP’s progress against its contract.

Finally, managing HBP also means putting in place an efficient cooperation with the Member States that are to provide half of the project’s budget. This means for us establishing and managing a governance structure where all funders and the HBP Consortium are properly represented and which allows for carefully planning and coordinating the efforts and monitoring achievements.

What are the main challenges in managing such a huge project? What are the lessons learnt so far?
This is not business as usual. We are continuously facing challenges and learning from them. The Future and Emerging Technologies Flagship projects are ambitious endeavours – both the scientific community and the public have a strong interest in these initiatives, as well as high expectations.

At the very beginning, it took us almost four years to define and select the two Flagships – the Human Brain Project and Graphene, out of the 21 original proposals received following broad consultations.

Since the Commission has no means of providing a one-off funding commitment for a project of this magnitude and for the entire ten-year duration of the
Flagship, we had to come up with another solution. We had to start with a first phase of funding, €54 million for 30 months, under FP7 (Seventh Framework Programme). Now, with the help of our Legal Unit, we are putting in place the next phases of HBP funding, which will run until the end of Horizon 2020.

Building up collaboration and co-funding opportunities with the Member States is not straightforward. This is a major work in progress right now.

We also need to react carefully whenever there is a serious disagreement, like in the open letter published last summer and signed by more than 700 neuroscientists. It is important to listen to all the parties involved, discuss the best solutions, and make sure that the Flagships are managed in an open and transparent way.

How many people are involved overall, inside and outside the Commission?

Inside the Commission, we are seven, plus our Head of Unit. We also benefit from very strong support from many parts of our DG (for administration, legal issues and communication) up to the highest political level. We are also working closely with DGs RTD, SANCO, and EAC.

Outside the Commission, HBP involves more than 400 researchers. It will soon expand to include further partners to be funded by the Member States. We are now working with 37 funding agencies from 26 European countries. In addition, we are beginning to interact with colleagues from funding agencies of other industrialised countries, in particular from the United States’ BRAIN initiative, to build the framework for global collaboration on brain research.

When do you expect the first results?

In its first year, the project has made significant progress on all fronts, with more than 50 papers in major scientific journals and plans to deliver six platforms for collecting and sharing brain-related data and models to be simulated in supercomputers. These platforms will be made available for public use by the scientific community in spring 2016. The extent to which these platforms will be used is one of the major measures of success for HBP.

Our researchers have also released the highest resolution 3D map of the human brain that is now a reference in neuroscience. They have started using patients’ data to diagnose brain diseases like Alzheimer’s and developed the first brain-inspired chips to do things our brain is good at, like learning sequences.

HBP has also launched an outreach ‘Museums’ programme to make the public aware of the challenges the project is facing and its achievements.

www.humanbrainproject.eu

The HBP team in DG CONNECT – front row from left to right: Carla Moris, Valentina Perrotta, Isabelle Senden, Bianca Senatore-Jansen; back row from left to right: Daniel Pasini, François Junique, Thomas Skordas, José Fernández-Villacañas.
On 24 September 2014, a seminar on ‘Aligning Regional Investment to Digital Enablers for Future Growth’ took place with stakeholders – organised by the Commission (DG CONNECT), the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The seminar was a collaborative effort to bring together the key stakeholders and to listen to their needs and experiences when developing digital infrastructures. Attended by more than 100 representatives of research institutions, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), telecom operators, trade union associations and other regional actors actively involved in the digital sphere, the seminar participants were pro-actively asked to contribute using ‘participatory leadership’ techniques. Neelie Kroes, Commission Vice-President for the Digital Agenda, invited the stakeholders to identify obstacles and propose possible solutions, as the time of a change of mandate was particularly ripe for such a debate.

Still difficulties and challenges ahead
Participants raised the difficulties in applying for European funds – and sometimes the lack of financing – as a common barrier, especially for SMEs. Soft loans were suggested as a solution, enabling communities to proceed with initiatives of local interest, such as the rolling out of broadband.

Earlier this year, Member States started to submit their Operational Programmes for the ESIF (European Structural and Investment Funds) programming period 2014-20. While the amounts are still subject to negotiations in most regions, digital infrastructure and projects for information and communications technology (ICT) services and skills risk not receiving a major boost from Europe during that period, as, at present, the investments envisaged are not sufficiently aligned to the ICT’s impact on the economy. However, studies, statistics and other regional feedback have shown that even with limited public funds, many actions can be carried out locally to engage ‘digital enablers’ (digital capacities, forces and resources pulled together to contribute to the success of a project) and maximise benefits to the European citizens and businesses.

Local success stories
The project B4RN is a good example of a successful local digital enabler (see link below). B4RN is a community-wide, cooperative, and collaborative initiative to put in fibre broadband connections in rural North England.
The farmers themselves dug the ducts to provide the necessary infrastructures in areas where there was no market interest. Such community-driven, public-private cooperation projects are among the avenues being explored to deliver on the Europe 2020 flagship goal of making every European digital.

Opening the event, Henri Malosse, President of the European Economic and Social Committee, talked about ICT investments in his native Corsica as an example of best practice in strengthening regional economies. Young Corsicans have, for example, set up the first on-line music school, creating so far 17 jobs.

Jiří Buriánek, Secretary-General of the Committee of the Regions, stressed that access to broadband at affordable prices throughout the EU is a basic prerequisite for guaranteeing the quality of public services, promoting competitiveness and productivity in the areas concerned, and enabling extensive development of the information society and knowledge. He also highlighted the necessary cross-fertilisation of the telecom, energy and transport sectors as laid down in the Connecting Europe Facility.

Digital – a key success factor for the new Commission

“If I had a headline it would be five words and one number – ‘do more digital locally please!’ And the number is €16 billion that is roughly 5% of what’s out there in Structural Funds,” stated Robert Madelin, Director-General of DG CONNECT. Expressing the spirit of the seminar, he added: “If we compare the aims of the Juncker Commission to the Barroso II Commission, it is clear that digital has moved from being a relatively strong vertical activity to being conceived as a key success factor in all the portfolios of all the Commissioners – a big horizontal platform for jobs, growth, better society, everything that Europe wants to do.”

Subsequent speakers in the two panels dealing with ‘Digital enablers for SMEs’ and ‘Digital Urban and Rural Development’ agreed that the way to create growth and jobs in the EU is to understand that infrastructure is not the enemy of digital applications, but rather they go hand in hand. SMEs in the Member States need to be injected with public funds to upgrade and expand their tools and activities. They also need to be reached easily – voucher schemes being presented as a smart way to do this – and to be protected, not least from cybercrime at a time of growing opportunities in cloud computing. Public funds are also seen as necessary to curb the brain drain across the Atlantic where funding for start-ups is readily available.

Participants highlight broadband’s importance

In their conclusions, participants highlighted the enabling role of ICTs and identified four important themes – Broadband Everywhere, Think Digital, Follow Business Evolution and Digital Culture (see link below). ‘Broadband Everywhere’ was the most voted of the four statements, underlining the urgency of the Digital Single Market and the need for high-speed connectivity as the main vehicle for Europe’s digital transformation. ‘Don’t ask what it will cost for FTTH (Fibre to the Home), ask what it will cost if we don’t have FTTH!’ sums up the essence of broadband rollout.

Regarding Digital Culture, the second most voted statement, participants stressed the need to ensure skills and competences for all to ensure an integrated digital society. Dedicated mechanisms to finance e-skills training are one of the solutions proposed. The ‘Follow Business Evolution’ discussion emphasised the need for new solutions like experimentation and prototyping. Participants considered that the Smart Specialisation target will be achieved only by making regions attractive for open innovation. The EU should also provide economical support for developing new security mechanisms for their connected systems. Finally, the ‘Think Digital’ discussions underlined the need for policymakers to listen to all stakeholders and look for integrated digital tools. ■

B4RN
http://b4rn.org.uk
Seminar
http://europa.eu/luW88wR

“If I had a headline it would be ‘do more digital locally please!’”
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION
AND THEN DG REGIO CHANGED...
by Morena Termini, DG REGIO

DG REGIO was recently awarded the prize for the ‘Best change communication’ initiative in the 2014 edition of the Commission’s Internal Communication & Staff Engagement Awards (CEND #15, pages 22-24).

When DG REGIO was faced with some tough challenges and choices nearly two years ago, it became clear that something had to change. The DG could not deliver quality and effectiveness without improving its working methods and structure.

There was one clear goal – to make DG REGIO a rewarding place to work, where it’s possible to make full use of colleagues’ commitment and expertise. Director-General Walter Deffaa, supported by a team of colleagues from different parts of the DG, different grades and nationalities, embarked on “avenues for actions” – to find new ways of working together to deliver better results and make the DG a more effective and motivating place for all staff.

Ideas were gathered through a wide-open consultation, initiating a process of change that resulted in a more collaborative and networked organisational structure with a renewed atmosphere of openness.

By strengthening internal collaboration and a sense of belonging between geographical and policy units, the ‘Change REGIO’ initiative made, and is still making, a real difference.

Certainly, staff engagement, participation and involvement were crucial in the whole process – only through a strengthened participatory culture in DG REGIO was it possible to turn ideas into a reality.

Hien Huy Bui
Policy development, strategic management and inter-institutional relations

“I was proud to be able to contribute to ‘Change REGIO’, from the knowledge management side. As a series of weaknesses had been identified in the DG REGIO blueprint, like the “difficulty of demonstrating results”, the “geographical/horizontal divide”, the “need for better connecting our policy”, I was very motivated to contribute to design a solution that would capture and centralise our rich knowledge, favour its re-use, allow transparent and easy access for all, and empower any individual to enrich our knowledge base, from wherever they are in the organisation.

Knowledge is there to be shared, access to it should be free, and collaboration with your peers is the fuel for a greater sense of purpose.

Ivanka Lakova
Human resources and professional development

“Do I wish that ‘Change REGIO’ managed to enhance more aspects of our work than it has succeeded in doing so far? Yes, I do. Do I wish that it rallied broader active support among colleagues than it did? Yes, I do.

But institutions change slowly, even when we know that change is unavoidable (except only from a vending machine, as the old saying goes…)

What ‘Change REGIO’ has helped transform – through its broad thematic outreach and participatory techniques used – is how we deploy effort and how we approach our work at all levels.
The organisation of matrixes within DG REGIO is a real innovation. These are organised as a one-stop-shop for thematic knowledge, e.g. smart growth, sustainable growth, etc. This means that thematic knowledge is not concentrated uniquely in the competence centres. Geographic colleagues working on a particular country gain insight into policy development issues and develop knowledge of other Member States and regions. Desks are afforded the opportunity to deepen their thematic knowledge, to help colleagues in other units and to invest the acquired knowledge in the ‘home’ unit.

I have found the task challenging, interesting and exciting. Even if it required extra time and effort in an already busy work environment, I have learned a lot, I have enjoyed working with wonderful colleagues in the competence centre in a pleasant and motivating environment. So all in all, I am having a challenging year, but also one of the most interesting and exciting during my career at the Commission.

Claudio Nichele
Communication Unit

The name ‘Change REGIO’ doesn’t reflect enough that the aim of the change was more about people’s behaviours and culture than about procedures. My contribution to the initiative, therefore, always focused on people first. When tools were asked, like webchats on Yammer, Sharepoint forums, my point was always how these can support the emergence of new behaviours among us – trust, openness, sharing, transparency, creativity.

The initiative itself requested such behaviours from all colleagues directly involved into it, from the Director-General down to ordinary staff. This was not always easy, of course. But achievements already – and those to come – prove that it is not impossible, and we can do it. The beauty is that the change, since it is rolling on, is no longer perceived as such. It is more and more part of our daily life. In that sense, change is not a target to reach. It is more a mindset to acquire to continuously be able to adapt ourselves in order to always provide the best answers to the challenges we are facing.

Joanne Knight
Policy, performance and compliance

Since the ‘Change REGIO’ process is all about changing our work culture, using participatory leadership techniques seemed to be a good way of getting ideas and inspiration about what needed to change for our ASTs, to help them work more efficiently and effectively. We wanted to explore the talent and expertise we have amongst our AST colleagues. We have a lot of unused and under-used potential!

To this end, we planned and designed an awayday for the AST colleagues in September 2013, with valuable contributions from DGs BUDG, HR and ENV. We walked the talk – making real use of the internal expertise and the collective intelligence to come up with an interesting and successful experience. That was the first step – having the courage and confidence to organise this ourselves.

Webinar on change communication with Walter Deffaa

The Yammer conversation on Walter Deffaa’s webinar
> http://bit.ly/1puqzrJ
COMPETITION ‘EUROPE IN MY REGION’
CITIZENS DISCOVER EU FUNDED PROJECTS

by Peter Fischer and Matteo Salvai, DG REGIO

The EU is present in all of the EU’s regions with hundreds of thousands of projects supported by EU Regional Policy. DG REGIO encourages citizens to take notice and, for the third year, it organised the ‘Europe in my Region’ photo competition on Facebook to raise awareness of the EU’s achievements.

This summer, citizens were invited to upload up to three photos depicting an EU-funded project provided that the EU flag and funding information is visible somewhere in the picture. An independent jury formed of photography and social media professionals chose three winners from the first 100 photos which received the most votes by Facebook users and a selection of 50 ‘wildcards’.

The three winners of the ‘Europe in my Region’ photo competition 2014 are Kristina Griguolė from Lithuania, Adela Nistora from Romania, residing in Portugal, and Ieva Viķne from Latvia. Each won €1,000 of camera equipment and a trip for two to Brussels. Commissioner Johannes Hahn awarded the prizes during the European Week of Regions and Cities (‘Open Days’) on 8 October.

The photo competition aimed at raising awareness about the wide diversity of projects supported by EU funds (this year, projects funded by any EU fund were eligible). A recent ‘Eurobarometer’ study (see link below) shows that if citizens are aware of EU regional projects in their region or city, more than three-quarters have a favourable opinion of them. The continuously increasing number of entries in the competition over the last three years is also due to the good collaboration between DG REGIO, other DGs, and Europe Direct Centres. In total, there were over 100,000 unique visits to the Facebook application, over 1,000 eligible photos were submitted (850 in 2013), and more than 14,000 votes were cast (11,000 last year). For next year it is planned to broaden the eligibility to EU co-funded projects also outside the EU.

Kristina participated as a project beneficiary, as she works for the Geological Survey in Vilnius. The photo is entitled ‘Evolution’ because the EU funded project helped to reduce paperwork and made systems more efficient and user-friendly. The Geological Survey of Lithuania actively seeks to contribute to sustainable development and the guiding objectives of applied research, by providing timely information to the public about the depths of the earth, and investigating and predicting geologic processes.
Adela moved from Romania to the Azores for a Eurodyssey traineeship, where she heard about the photo competition. The Azores region, the westernmost point of Europe, situated in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, is known as one of the world’s top sustainable tourism destinations. Most visitors come from mainland Europe, but also from North America. In Ponta Delgada, the capital of the Azores, the seafront has been converted, thanks to EU funding, into a space of leisure and comfort, and has significantly contributed to the job creation and economic revitalisation of São Miguel, today being the liveliest place on the island. The marina has the capacity to host hundreds of boats of all types. The new harbour construction has an attractive seaside promenade with exhibitions and cultural events, boat moorings, tourists strolling, lovers kissing. Locals say “the world goes through here”.

The new train connection in the Latvian capital of Riga, also co-financed by the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF), takes passengers from one bank of the Daugava river to the other, passing over the railroad bridge. “Carriage windows give passengers a chance to catch a glimpse of the Old Town spread out before them in a picture postcard panorama. Most of us still remember the old ones with wooden seats and the guessing of stations along the way,” said Ieva during the award ceremony. During the programming period 2007-13 over €1 billion of the total Structural Funds budget for Latvia was invested in transport infrastructure, with considerable investments flowing into trans-European transport network (TEN-T) projects.
Commission en direct celebrates the 25th anniversary of the wave of revolutions that swept across Central and Eastern in 1989 – a year that changed the face of Europe forever. This started with such events as the ultimate victory of the Solidarność Trade Union movement in Poland, the dismantling of the Iron Curtain along the Austrian-Hungarian border, and the Baltic Chain. By 9 November, this led to the fall of the Berlin Wall – an iconic moment, signalling the end of Communist rule. But the domino effect continued, notably with the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, and, by Christmas, the violent end of the Romanian Revolution.
March – Illegal protest for multi-party system in Hungary, police violence against protesters.

3 June – Lithuanian intellectuals form the reform movement Sajudis.

April-May – A wave of strikes hit Poland.

27 July – Mass demonstrations in Ljubljana against the prison sentence pronounced against opposition journalists.

11 September – Estonians gather in Tallinn for ‘Eestimaa Laul’ (Song of Estonia), independence is demanded.

27 June – Austrian and Hungarian foreign ministers (2) cut through the Iron Curtain between Austria and Hungary.

17 May – Solidarność (1) is legalised and can participate in Poland’s upcoming semi-free elections.

13 June – Gorbachev and Kohl sign a declaration on the right of every state to choose its own social and political system.

27 June – ‘Baltic Chain’ (3). Two million people join hands to form a 600 km long human chain across Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

23 August – ‘Baltic Chain’ (3). Two million people join hands to form a 600 km long human chain across Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

11 September – 13,000 East German refugees gathered in Hungary leave to Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany.

24 August – Tadeusz Mazowiecki from Solidarność becomes Poland’s first post-Communist Prime Minister.

9 October – At its inaugural congress, the Latvian Popular Front demands the right of self-determination.

7 October – The Hungarian Communist Party officially ceases to exist, as the first in the Communist bloc.

9 October – Demonstration in Leipzig, 70,000 people gather, singing the famous ‘We are the people’.

4 November – Over 1 million people gather for a demonstration on East Berlin’s Alexanderplatz.

27 November – A two-hour general strike takes place through Czechoslovakia, supported by a reported 75% of the population.

10 November – After 35 years in power, the Bulgarian Communist leader Todor Zhivkov is replaced. Social unrest continues to grow.

17 November – The ‘Velvet Revolution’ (5) begins. Police break up violently a demonstration of students and youth activists in Prague.

27 November – Over 1 million people gather for a demonstration on East Berlin’s Alexanderplatz.

9 November – The Berlin Wall falls (4).

23 August – Tadeusz Mazowiecki from Solidarność becomes Poland’s first post-Communist Prime Minister.

4 November – Over 1 million people gather for a demonstration on East Berlin’s Alexanderplatz.

9 November – The Berlin Wall falls (4).

23 August – Tadeusz Mazowiecki from Solidarność becomes Poland’s first post-Communist Prime Minister.

4 November – Over 1 million people gather for a demonstration on East Berlin’s Alexanderplatz.

9 November – The Berlin Wall falls (4).

23 August – Tadeusz Mazowiecki from Solidarność becomes Poland’s first post-Communist Prime Minister.
3 October – East Germany merges with West Germany to form the Federal Republic of Germany. Soviet troops evacuate East Germany.

11 March – Lithuania regains independence from USSR.

16 December – Nicolae Ceauşescu’s Securitate orders the exile of a local Hungarian Calvinist minister for sermons offending the regime. Timişoara is the first city to react, and civil unrest continues for 5 days.

21 December – During a broadcast speech by Ceauşescu, anti-Communist demonstrators flood the centre of Bucharest. The crowds are shot at, resulting in violent street confrontations. In the following days, the army switches sides, joining the protesters (6).


12 June – Boris Yeltsin is elected President of the Russian Federation.

19-21 August – Communist putsch against Mikhail Gorbachev.

26 August – Estonia regains independence.

20 August – Latvia regains independence.

6 September – USSR recognises Baltic States’ independence.

25 December – Mikhail Gorbachev ends his duties as President of the USSR. At midnight, the red flag at the top of the Kremlin is replaced by the Russian flag.

26 December – The USSR is dissolved into 15 post-Soviet states.
A student and Foreign Ministry trainee at the time of Czechoslovakia’s Velvet Revolution, Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič shares his memories of these historic changes and of Slovakia after independence.

Where were you when the Berlin Wall came down?
I was a trainee at the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry in Prague, living in a student hostel in Strahov, which became the centre of the student movement. At that time, Prague was full of East Germans trying to get into the West German embassy compound. The Communist authorities didn’t know what to do, and the Foreign Ministry was in hectic overdrive. But it was clear from meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev that the Soviets would not intervene. Ultimately, the East Germans would be allowed to leave for West Germany, but on buses through Hungary and Austria. In the morning I was in the Ministry, and in the afternoon I was a student interested to know what was going on. When the Germans boarded the buses there was such applause from the crowd, it seemed to me things would soon be over.

On 17 November, the student protests were heavily repressed. News that one had been killed (which later turned out to be false) was the last straw. There were strikes in the factories and actors turned theatres into discussion platforms. After some ten days of protests, you had Alexander Dubček and Václav Havel on the balcony in Wenceslas Square. Every night there were hundreds of thousands of people in the squares, and the atmosphere in Prague was overwhelming.

I will never forget people jangling their keys like an alarm clock signalling the regime’s time was over. Soon negotiations with the students led to a very quick transition. The feeling was one of a new beginning, with total enthusiasm among the young. But my father, like many who remembered 1968, feared it would end in a similar nightmare.

How did the events of 1989 change your life?
Things changed completely. I grew up living 3 km from the Austrian border – we could see the bright lights, but could never go there. I wanted to work in international relations, as one of the rare ways to see somewhere else in the world.

By the end of the year, Havel was President and Dubček was President of the Federal Parliament. And in 1990 the country changed radically, with a complete reorientation of mindset taking place. My new boss as
Federal Foreign Minister was the famous dissident Jiří Dienstbier, who had been punished by making him a janitor. He was the first to put on the table the idea of joining the EU and NATO. There was enormous interest from the US and Western European countries to help retrain and reorient us. I was very privileged to get a special scholarship to go and study at Stanford University, and then in Paris. At Stanford’s Hoover Institution, we were something of a curiosity, with lots of Rotary Club invitations. Condoleezza Rice was my research advisor, and Milton Friedman had lots of fun explaining economics to us.

What effects did this have?

This opening led to all sorts of debates that had been suppressed under the Communist regime – on the quality of the federal system and the relationship between the Czech and Slovak Republics.

My first assignments were in Zimbabwe and South Africa, where I experienced the transition from apartheid to democracy. When the Velvet Divorce came, we got a telex asking which country we wanted to work for after 1 January 1993. I opted for Slovakia, even if it would be much more difficult, as the Czechs were much better organised. A week later I got a phone call telling me to report to Ottawa in 3 weeks.

The new country had a very difficult start, particularly under Vladimír Mečiar’s government. But a new government in 1998 – a grand coalition of Socialists and Christian Democrats – led to a complete change. Slovaks felt they had touched rock-bottom and were enthusiastic about joining the EU as part of our ‘catch-up’ policy.

Why do you think the process in Czechoslovakia was peaceful?

People were so tired of the system. While our living standards were better than in many other Communist countries, there were all the restrictions on travelling abroad and on freedom of religion. Being able to tune into German and Austrian TV, we could see how we were lagging behind. Everyone wanted to see the country transformed, even many members of the Communist Party – and by peaceful means.

What role did the EU play in this transformation?

An absolutely crucial role. Kids today cannot imagine what it was like – now we can cross the border to go to a swimming pool or to travel or study elsewhere in the EU.

The EU provided the needed support and encouragement during the transition period. From one year to another, we adopted the very modern and developed body of EU laws. Along with financial assistance, this led to an enormous acceleration of the modernisation process. While there are still pockets of poverty in central and eastern Slovakia, the country has been transformed. Between 2003 and 2013, Slovakia’s GDP grew by 49%, and we also closed the gap with the Czech Republic! Now people ask when they will reach Austrian levels of income! This would never have happened without the EU and the prospect of membership.

Any lessons for Europe’s challenges today?

In difficult times, you need the overwhelming support of people – along with charismatic leadership. The paradox is that the EU has been so successful in bringing about enormous positive changes smoothly that people take them for granted.

But people still expect action. And the Commission must use all the means we now have at our disposal to produce results in terms of growth and jobs, preserving social standards, protecting the environment, and enabling Europe to meet global competition. This must be our focus from day one of the new mandate.

Wie ist Ihre persönliche Erinnerung an die Tage, als die Mauer fiel?


**Torsten Wöllert:** Ich habe damals Ingenieurwesen studiert und war in Dresden, im sogenannten Tal der Ahnungslosen. Ich konnte kein West-Fernsehen empfangen. Am nächsten Morgen kamen dann ganz seltsame Meldungen im DDR-Radio. Da rief es, laut Beschluss des Politbüros seien Ausreisebeschränkungen erleichtert worden, jeder DDR-Bürger, der sich einen entsprechenden Stempel im Pass besorgt, könne ausreisen. So ganz verstanden und erkannt habe ich zunächst noch nicht, was dies zu bedeuten hatte. Also bin ich mit dem erstbesten Zug in die Hauptstadt gefahren. Ich hatte Familie in West-Berlin und wollte herausfinden, was denn eigentlich los war.

Ich wusste, wo man hin muss, wenn es Richtung Westen ging. Zum Bahnhof Friedrichstraße, wo ich früher oft meine Verwandten verabschiedet hatte. Dort war der Teufel los. Es war ein Sog wie nach einem Fußballspiel. Der Durchgang, eine Metallwand, war offen, die Grenzer waren völlig überfordert und wurden dem Ansturm der Massen gar


Was hat Sie dann bewogen nach Brüssel zu gehen und für die Kommission zu arbeiten?


Ich bin dann erst nach Bonn zum Auswärtigen Amt und nach 4 Jahren, 1997, endgültig in die Kommission gewechselt.


Warum gibt es bis heute relativ wenige Ostdeutsche, die in der Kommission arbeiten?

T.W.: Es gab nie eine besondere Vorbereitung für ostdeutsche Bewerber. Niemand hat für sie spezielle Vorbereitungskurse oder Concours gemacht, die später für Bewerber aus anderen mittel – und osteuropäischen Mitgliedstaaten üblich waren. Daher sind die früheren DDR-Bewohner wahrscheinlich noch heute die am meisten unterrepräsentierte Gruppe in der Kommission. Das spiegelt die Geschichte der deutschen Einheit wieder. Anders als im Baltikum, wo die nachwachsende Generation nach dem Ende des Kommunismus sofort in Führungspositionen drängte, wurde in Deutschland erstmal für viele Jahre die zweite oder dritte Riege aus Westdeutschland gefördert, nicht aber die jungen Leute aus der ehemaligen DDR.

In 1989, Jerzy Buzek was an active member of Solidarność, and eight years later he became the Prime Minister of Poland. Under his government, Poland joined NATO and started preparations for accession to the EU. In 2009, he was elected President of the European Parliament – which was seen by many as a symbol of Europe’s reunification. Now Chairman of Parliament’s Industry, Research and Energy Committee, Jerzy Buzek talks about Poland’s role in the events of 1989 and the country’s transformation.

What do you remember of 9 November 1989?
That very day West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl was visiting Poland. During his visit, the Berlin Wall fell, and he interrupted his visit for a few hours, personally participated in dismantling the Wall, and then came back. It was a turning point for us Poles also, since, until then, Tadeusz Mazowiecki’s government had been the only democratic government in the Central and Eastern Europe. After that, we were no longer alone.

What was the reaction of Solidarność?
We were overwhelmed with joy, because the dream we had been pursuing for so many years had finally come true. But we also felt an overwhelming responsibility having so many urgent tasks ahead of us. We didn’t have a market economy, democracy or press freedom – we had to introduce basically everything from scratch. These major changes hit us hard. Unemployment appeared. We suffered from hyperinflation and a huge foreign debt. Many families were stricken by poverty. We had to minimise the negative consequences of these changes. It was a difficult process, but we succeeded by undergoing painful economic, judiciary and social reforms, joining NATO and the EU. We now live in a completely different world.

We should not forget that Helmut Kohl played a very important role in this process. The reconciliation mass that took place in Krzyżowa in November 1989, with Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the Prime Minister of free Poland, and Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor of free Germany, was a grand and very meaningful gesture of reconciliation. We also benefited from constant support from US President Bush, French President Mitterrand and UK Prime Minister Thatcher. These great figures supported Solidarność and the drive towards Poland’s liberation and revival.

What was the driving force behind all those changes?
There were many factors. The old regime’s ugly face was continuously exposed by expatriate Poles, who were a living proof to us that it was possible to live better. We associated that other world with Poland of the interwar period. Those memories served as a point of reference to a much happier period in our history. This was the source of numerous attempts to change our reality – in 1956, 1968, 1970 and 1976. They did not bring us lib-
Enmity toward the Communist system deepened, however. The creation of Solidarność was very important. We were 10 million people acting together and we quickly realised that thanks to this solidarity it would be hard to defeat us. Gorbachev’s opening of the system was also important. In 1988, PZPR Communist party leaders started negotiations with us – the opposition. The dismantling of the Berlin Wall was the ‘last act’ towards free Europe.

Does the Wall still exist in our minds? If it does, it becomes thinner and wobblier with every year that passes. The Communist regimes’ collapse opened door for a new wave of reconciliation and integration between the countries that once were ‘on the other side’ of the Iron Curtain. Certainly, this process is not over, it continues. But together we have managed to overcome the possibility of the nightmare of war recurring. What is happening on our eastern border today ironically serves as a timely reminder of all that we have achieved in the EU.

How do we tackle euroscepticism? It is true that in times of crisis many overlook what integration has achieved, but the facts and numbers speak for themselves. We all benefit from being in the EU and we should not downplay our common achievements. The vast majority in Central and Eastern Europe support EU membership. On the other hand, it is completely normal that there are people sceptical about the idea of integration. We should not demonise such voices, but rather listen to them carefully and answer their doubts. This can help us make the EU a better, stronger and more just place to live.

What have been the biggest changes in Poland over the last 25 years? The continuous efforts of millions of Poles and groundbreaking reforms have turned Poland into a fully democratic country, given it the foundations of a free market economy, and allowed it to grow since the collapse of Communism more than any other EU country. Thanks to this stability, we managed to ride out the global crisis better than any other EU Member State. As a member of NATO, we are safer than ever before. We have used our EU membership effectively, and have mastered the art of enabling EU funds to trigger growth.

During the last decade, Warsaw has become one of the leading political capitals. Five years after our accession, I was elected President of the European Parliament and another five years later Poland’s Prime Minister is taking over the steering wheel of the European Council.

What more needs doing? Despite the enormous success achieved thanks to the transformation, many areas still require special attention. We need to strengthen the role of research and innovation, modernise our industries and continue revitalising our cities. We need to enhance the production sector to minimise its negative impact on the environment and public health. Finally, we need to tackle the great demographic crisis and convince the young who emigrated over the past years that it is worth returning home, because I am deeply convinced it is! The past 25 years have made Poland one of the most dynamic, promising places in Europe.
THE COMMISSION’S ROLE IN GERMAN REUNIFICATION

by Carlo Trojan, FORMER SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Carlo Trojan, former Secretary-General of the European Commission, tells the amazing story of the Commission’s role in German reunification and its effects on European integration.

The fall of the Berlin Wall 25 years ago was the beginning of a rollercoaster to German reunification, a major transformation of Europe, and further European integration.

Privileged to be personally involved in the process, I consider it the highlight of my career. As Deputy Secretary-General, I was also the Commission’s Berlin-beauftragter (Berlin Envoy) and had close contacts with the authorities of West Berlin.

Jacques Delors’ early leadership role
The Commission was quick to formulate a strategy, and was in some aspects well ahead of Member States. As early as 17 October 1989 in his Bruges speech, shortly after the Monday demonstrations in Leipzig, Jacques Delors recognised that the German right of self-determination and foresaw German unification taking place together with a form of strengthened federalism within the European Community binding the Germans permanently through European integration.

On 10 November, the day after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Commission stated that relations between the Commission and the GDR were a “special case” possibly requiring a special enlargement via Article 23 of West Germany’s Constitution. The reception of the prospect of German unification at the European Council dinner on 18 November in Paris was much cooler – from Thatcher, Mitterand, Lubbers, Martens... The European Council in Strasbourg on 8-9 December included a carefully worded passage in its conclusions reaffirming the commitment to German unification through self-determination “in a context of dialogue and East-West cooperation” and “in the perspective of European integration”. The European Parliament passed a Resolution on 23 November supporting the right of the East Germans to become part of a united Germany. On 28
November, Helmut Kohl launched his 10-point plan – a step-by-step approach with as long-term objective the establishment of a unified state. But by the end of 1989 this objective seemed still pretty far away.

The nitty-gritty work to make it happen
From early 1990, three different dimensions to the unification debate emerged: the external or security, internal German, and the Community dimensions. Each dimension had its own process, but the internal German dimension set the pace for the others.

By February 1990, the Cabinet Committee for German Unification decided to create an economic and currency union with the GDR. The elections in the GDR soon afterwards were seen as a vote for speedy unification, introduction of the Deutschmark, and acceptance of the West German economic and social order. This paved the way for a Währungsunion, Wirtschafts- und Sozialgemeinschaft (Monetary Union and Community of Economic and Social Policy) to be embedded in a Staatsvertrag (State treaty) to enter into force by 1 July 1990. The pace of events accelerated with agreement on the conversion rate for the Ostmark on 2 May and the signing of the Staatsvertrag on 18 May 1990. The internal German dimension was wholly orchestrated by Bonn, though the European Commission was involved in the preparation of the Staatsvertrag. On 23 March, Helmut Kohl briefed the full College, and there were regular contacts with Hans Tietmeyer, the chief-negotiator for the Staatsvertrag.

Looking after the Community dimension
In parallel, the Community dimension took shape, the Commission being instrumental in the overall process. In a speech on 17 January 1990, Jacques Delors already anticipated an enlargement without accession via Article 23. Three working groups – led by Commissioners Bangemann, Andriessen and Christophersen – were established on 9 February 1990, along with a Task Force on German Unification, which I chaired. In parallel, the European Parliament established an ad hoc Committee on German Unification chaired by Alan Donnelly. Shortly afterwards the Commission obtained a Council mandate to prepare a communication for a special European Council.

The resulting Communication of 19 April 1990 on ‘The Community and German Unification’ foresaw German unification in three stages – an interim adjustment stage beginning with the internal German Währungsunion, Wirtschafts- und Socialgemeinschaft, a transitional stage beginning with formal unification of the two Germanies, and a final stage with full application of the acquis communautaire. The Commission stated that this could be accomplished without Treaty change, and the European Council in Dublin adopted the strategy on 28 April. This paved the way for the signing and ratification of the Staatsvertrag, which the European Council endorsed in Dublin on 25-26 June, following a further Commission Communication on the implications of the Staatsvertrag.

Towards further European integration
A Franco-German letter of 14 April proposed that 1990 would not only become the year of German Unification but also of European Union. (“We want a European Germany and not a German Europe” was the Leitmotiv of West German Foreign Minister Hans Dieter Genscher.)

The European Council convened two Intergovernmental Conferences on monetary and political union. German unification thus paved the way for the Maastricht Treaty and the euro’s subsequent establishment.

The external or security aspects of German unification were obviously of paramount importance for the whole process, greatly influencing the timetable. The Commission, and the European Community as such, were hardly involved in the process, although some commitments clearly had a Community dimension, such as trade agreements between the GDR and the USSR becoming part of Community trade policy upon accession.
Negotiations took place in the so-called 2+4 format (two Germanies and US, USSR, UK and France) and bilaterally between Bonn and Moscow. Gorbachev’s constructive attitude was a decisive factor in the breakthrough in Moscow mid-July 1990. The Treaty on the Final Settlement with respect to Germany was signed in Moscow by the 2+4 on 12 September, paving the way for the emergence of a new German State, fully sovereign and firmly anchored in Western institutions.

Accommodating East German adjustment to the acquis

My principal job as leader of the Task Force on German Unification was preparing the integration of the new German Länder into the legal framework of the European Community. Enlargement without accession implied that integration would be effective as soon as unification was legally established. In other words, the Treaties would apply immediately and secondary legislation would be applicable as from the date of unification unless technical adjustments and transitional measures were incorporated beforehand in the respective legal instruments.

The entire acquis had to be systemically reviewed to assess which adjustments and transitional measures were required. This review served as the basis for preparing legislative proposals amending existing legislation to be decided by the Council and Parliament (in consultation or cooperation procedure). This preparatory work involving all Commission departments required a huge effort on all sides and close contacts in Bonn with the Foreign and Economic Affairs Ministries.

The Commission had to make its own enquiries with the GDR authorities, notably in areas of primary Community competence such as agriculture and trade. The workload was enormous. For example, we had to list all the GDR’s external trade agreements as their commitments would become part of the Community’s commercial policy as a whole (exclusive competence). Eventually a whole truckload of some 3,000 agreements, mainly with Comecon (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) countries, was sent from East Berlin to Brussels. But as it happened, most agreements were linked to the 5-year plans, which expired at the end of 1990!

Coping with an accelerated timetable for reunification

A complicating factor was the timetable’s acceleration due to the rapid collapse of the GDR’s political and economic structures and the threat of increasing migration.

The Einigungsvertrag (Unification Treaty) negotiations started on 6 July and were concluded on 31 August 1990 with the signature of Minister Schäuble and GDR State Secretary Krause. I took part in the ne-
gotiations from the start. To be on board of the first Bundeswehr flight to land in Schönefeld Airport and at the negotiating table alongside Schäuble was quite an experience!

In the Task Force, we had been working on the assumption that unification would occur on 1 January 1991. The decision taken in Bonn to bring unification forward to 3 October 1990 placed the Commission and the other Institutions in a dilemma, as there was no way to complete the procedures at such short notice and failure to do so would have created a legal vacuum. So, on 17 July, the Council adopted a proposal conferring greater powers to the Commission for three months to implement the legislation. For its part, the European Parliament agreed to handle the legislation rapidly by holding two readings during the same week in the beginning of September. Exceptionally, the Parliament was consulted on all legislative measure independent of the legal basis.

On 21 August, the Commission presented to the Council a package of 22 measures adapting Community secondary legislation to accommodate adjustment in East Germany, with transitional arrangements in such areas as safety and quality standards, environmental legislation, and regional policy. In principle, such transitional arrangements were to expire by the end of 1992, but interim measures were foreseen on the basis of the exceptional powers conferred to the Commission in July. The Council adopted the whole package on 4 December, and 3 billion ECUs in additional funds were set aside for structural support to the five new German Länder. Our task was facilitated by the fact that by virtue of the Staatsvertrag and Einigungsvertrag some 80% of existing Community law applied in the new Länder as from 3 October 1990.

Kohl’s Bauchgefühl, US leadership and Gorbachev’s decisive role

German unification took place at an incredible speed. The US offered leadership, deciding early on that it was committed to German unity. One cannot underestimate the role of Gorbachev in the final settlement. German unity was above all the product of Helmut Kohl and his Bauchgefühl (gut feeling) for the mood of the German people. One of the few people in the European Community who shared this feeling from an early stage was Jacques Delors, who was one of the few non-Germans to be invited to the Nikolaikirche in East Berlin on 3 October 1990. I had the privilege to be there next to him.

German unification transformed Europe. Who would have imagined in 1990 the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union. Who would have imagined that 25 years later the European Union would have 28 Member States and that NATO territory would extend to the Russian borders.

With the re-emergence of Cold War rhetoric following the events in Ukraine, one should not forget this historic context and settle differences through negotiations, as was done 25 years ago.
Divided by the Wall

Our family was divided by the Wall. Over the years, we kept in contact and visited them in the GDR whenever we could. In 1989 I was studying in Heidelberg. On 9 November I went out to buy a small, second-hand, black-and-white TV set to practice interpretation. That evening, back in my room, I started pushing and turning buttons to find a channel. After a long search, a distorted image with no sound suddenly appeared behind a snow curtain: people dancing on the Berlin Wall! My first thought was: “Whoever made that film has a wild imagination!” As I did not manage to get a clearer picture, I switched the TV off. Not much later, my grandmother, a retired EC official, called me from Brussels and broke the news to me – the Wall is falling and people on the other side will be free again!

Still today, in my family, when we think of that time and ask ourselves who would have thought that this could happen one day, we shake our heads and wonder. Since then, I do believe that miracles happen.

Cristina Capaccioli, DG CONNECT

A Romanian story from Christmas 1989

I was almost 10 in December 1989, and it was going to be my first flight! I would spend Christmas with some relatives in Bucharest, our capital city. I paid little attention to the hot discussions my parents had, in our candle-lit kitchen, listening to a small battery-powered radio (no electricity was just part of day-to-day life back then). They were talking about Timișoara, about some riots… I was busy packing my things. Only when my mom mentioned it might be dangerous and I shouldn’t go, I started to listen and hope my dad would change her mind – and he did! Next day I was on the plane, anxious to see the world from above.

Little did I know I was on my way to spending Christmas with no tree, no presents and no dinner, tucked under a heavy pillow in the bathtub together with my cousin – there were shootings on the streets of Bucharest, there was turmoil and shouting and honking. After two days of worried faces and whispering voices, finally there was laughter – Ceaușescu, the dictator ruling our country for many years, was gone! Even a little child like me could sense the importance of the moment, could feel the wind of freedom, could understand there were big changes coming in our lives…

The first tangible result of that freedom was our first trip to Berlin, the following summer, where my father had some friends he hadn’t been able to see for almost a decade. It was my first trip outside the country, the first time we were able to obtain passports… and I got to see the torn-down Berlin Wall and we bought souvenirs from the rubble…

Now we can move freely within the borders of many European countries, my two-year-old son already saw more of Europe than my parents will ever see and nobody can imagine a life in which the government would cut the power, heating, and sometimes running water – to make savings, they said. But I hope we will remember. I hope our children will hear our stories and understand the power of the United Europe, the gift they were given and the benefits it brings. And I hope they will know how to carry it on.

Nora Molnar, DG DIGIT

What a young East Berliner remembers

I don’t remember the evening of the 9 November, after all I was only seven and probably in bed by 8 pm. My parents would have tucked me in as usual and there
were no big fireworks or people in the streets in Hohen- 
schoenhausen, one of the newest districts built by
the East German government on the east end of Berlin.
However, I still remember the next day at school: as
usual, attendance was taken by the teacher and because
we all lived very close, usually if someone fell sick,
another pupil would tell the teacher. There was one
boy missing, but rather than ask, our teacher nodded
and said she knew where he was. She knew? It stuck
in my head, as it impressed me deeply at the time. She
lived on the other side of the metro line, how could
she possibly know?

Over the next weeks, things started to change: we
no longer had the handicraft lessons in the afternoon
that I had liked so much, we no longer wore our blue
pioneer scarf and white blouse, pupils started to bring
new schoolbags and toys into school, a little sweet shop
opened next to the dining hall, full of glittery treats that
we could rarely afford. More people disappeared and
it wasn’t until years later that I understood that these
people were afraid the change wouldn’t last, so they
packed their bags and moved westwards. The parents
of the little boy that had been missing on 10 November
had done exactly that, as one of the first.

A tidal wave of changes hit us – many parents lost
their jobs, so the new shiny things in the shops re-
mained as unattainable as before and on top of this
parents worried about future work, our future educa-
tion, about losing everything they had always taken for
granted. Us children were of course blissfully unaware
of that. In mid-December, on one of the coldest days
of the year, my parents finally crossed what used to
be the Wall, received their welcome money for all of
us and we went to the Ku’damm. It must have been
a mind-blowing experience for anyone, but for me as
a child the most poignant memory was of a huge de-
partment store and baskets and baskets full of stuffed
animals standing on the floor. I felt incredibly sorry
for all those animals, boxed together without love in
those baskets.

We left with very little, some bananas and clem-
entines, and very cold feet. That evening, my parents
tucked me in and gave me one of those little teddies
we had seen. For them, the first purchase with their
welcome money; for me, a rescued animal from the
toy basket. ■

Caroline Henderson, FPI

November 1989 in Sofia

1989 was a significant period in
my life. I was a second-year stu-
dent at Sofia University. There was
a student’s strike and the Univer-
sity was blocked. There was eupho-
ria in the air. People were talking
about the strike – the TV was show-
ing every day what was going on.

There are still doubts that the television was not always
broadcasting the truth. But this is not so important, as
there are many witnesses of how it happened.

The strike lasted some weeks. Then one day every-
body started to discuss that the government had fallen.
The University leaders met in the famous small res-
aurant called “The Egg” at the University. And it was
pronounced that life needs changes. That is how the
democratic wave came about. Everything was peaceful
and no real conflicts were provoked.

The next day it was already officially announced.
The former head of the government was dismissed. The
citizens were everywhere in the squares and parks. Musi-
cians were having concerts almost every evening in the
open air, and the people were singing with them, carry-
ing lights or flags. November 1989 was a time of joy and
hope. My compatriots felt new life in their vanes. The
mood everywhere was the same – like in some transcen-
dental spiritual state. We have listened to that Scorpions’
song – “Wind of Change” – a million times.

It was a period that happens once in a lifetime. I am
happy to have experienced all that. ■

Desislava Tsvetkova, DG TRADE
The fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 was a historical ‘game changer’ for the continent of Europe, bringing to an end the artificial divisions imposed by force after the Second World War. This series of largely peaceful revolutions allowed most of the former Communist-ruled countries of Central and Eastern Europe to embark on the path towards EU membership through the (re-)establishment of democracy, the rule of law and the difficult transition from ‘planned’ to market economies. But the end of the Cold War also allowed some neutral and non-aligned countries to seize this window of opportunity and to apply for EU membership – first with Austria, Sweden and Finland in 1995, and then with Malta and Cyprus joining the first wave of the 2004 enlargement, thereby helping to truly reunify our continent.

The EU’s enlargement in 2004 and 2007 has benefited all EU Member States, strengthening the EU’s position as a global economic player and creating a larger and more integrated internal market. It has boosted growth and improved living standards in the 12 countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 and has provided new export and investment opportunities for the 15 countries that were already EU members.

While the crisis has affected growth and jobs in all Member States, the enlarged EU has been better able to weather the storm together.

Here are some key statistics* that give an idea of the positive impact that the EU’s eastern and southern enlargement has had on both gross domestic product (GDP) per inhabitant and the structure of countries’ economies in terms of employment.

* On the basis of the earliest and most recent years for which statistics are currently available.
ENLARGEMENT IN DGT AND SCIC
THE BIG BANG OF A ‘POSITIVE BABEL’
by Matteo Manzonetto, CEND

Ten years ago, the Commission and the other Institutions began welcoming thousands of new colleagues from the countries of the ‘big enlargement’. However, for our two linguistic DGs – DGT and SCIC – this was more like a ‘Big Bang’ than a gradual evolution.

Unlike other DGs, both DGT and SCIC needed to be able to move from covering 11 languages to 20 while maintaining their usual services, from day one (1 May 2004), and even before. A number of colleagues were already involved in preparing the last steps of the enlargement – indeed SCIC began as early as 1993 training interpreter trainers from the future candidate countries – and when the day came, the linguistic DGs were impressively enlarged themselves. DGT added 415 translators and 55 assistants to the 59 colleagues from the EU-10 already in place, while SCIC added more than 220 new staff members. And what’s interesting about this growth is that it actually made the Commission work more efficiently, since the near doubling in the number of languages was reflected in only a 20% increase in costs linked to languages.

For DGT, the number of pages translated jumped from 1,270,000 in 2004 to over 2 million in 2013 (including translations into three further languages – Bulgarian, Irish, and Romanian). For SCIC, the prime challenge was not purely about volume, since the demand for the new languages in meetings was limited at the start not least for logistical reasons (most meeting rooms did not have enough interpreter booths for a full language regime). The seismic change was the complexity of meetings, held in many more languages with an increased number of delegations and nearly twice the amount of documentation – along with the pressure of maintaining the quality of interpretation.

A ‘positive Babel’
But this ‘Big Bang’ didn’t affect just the DGs’ structure and their organograms – the staff also felt the impact keenly.

“Ten years ago, a dream came true – to start a new life, a new career, to travel and work abroad. And in a way, it was as I had imagined it during the months I spent waiting for the official call,” recalls Mark Vella, currently head of one of the Maltese translation teams. “Everyone was excited about finding out about the others – accents, customs and experiences. Ironically, we also learned more about ourselves, sizing up our national identity alongside this sudden multitude of ‘identities, in this ‘positive Babel’.”

Mara Magone, a Latvian web translator, likens her feeling about her new life to the fall of the Berlin Wall. She actively contributed to the process while working in the EU legislation translation centre in Latvia since 1998.

Everything had to be done from scratch, remembers Rima Kavaliauskaite-Taylor, a Lithuanian translator since autumn 2004: “Back then, there were different challenges to the ones we face today – everything had to be created by ourselves! You can only begin to imagine the paucity of new information, not to mention the foreignness of the everyday jargon that we use without batting an eyelid today. Interaction was another great part of the job. Every day there were contacts and consultations with counterparts across DGT, because the internal procedures and frameworks still had to be set up. We worked hard but the rewards were immediate and tangible.”

The beginning of a new life
For Katarína Skáčaniová, Head of the Slovakian Language Unit in SCIC, the enlargement was a new beginning in her life, thanks to the opportunity of moving to another country and doing the job of her dreams: “For me and the Slovak people, 1 May 2004 was an important day and worthy of celebration”.

For Hungarian Gábor Patyi, assistant to the Head of the Interpretation Progaramming Unit, accession “opened up the world” for him. He moved abroad as soon as he graduated: “Enlargement was the best thing that ever happened to me.”
Alja Sotlar, interpreter from Slovenia, grew up waiting for enlargement: “I was just starting high school and Slovenia became independent from Yugoslavia. I was already dreaming about joining the EU.” Enlargement changed her life, allowing her to become an interpreter. “I’m very grateful to have lived through these historic times.”

Lithuanian interpreter Skirmantė Marijauskienė underscores the satisfaction of working as an interpreter in Brussels, the city she defines as “the centre of excellence, the mecca for all the young and aspiring interpreters in the world. I feel I saw my dream come true.”

Merje Laht, Estonian interpreter, says that she might agree with those who said that SCIC was a better place to work before the enlargement: “There were fewer languages, fewer interpreters who knew each other better, etc. But you know what I really think? The world is a better place after the big enlargement, and that is far more important.”

Celebrations also offered staff the opportunity to confront their specific pasts, as Dariusz remarks: “Meeting friends from ex-Communist countries was particularly enriching. We spent hours recollecting what life was like in our countries when we were children. It turned out that we Poles felt we had most in common with Slovaks and Czechs, that we had different perceptions of history to Lithuanians and that it was simply wonderful to have a drink with Hungarians. Actually, it was wonderful to have a drink with everyone, and we never missed an opportunity to do so.”

Also Paulina Stendera-Bzdela, one of the first Polish translators at DGT and currently head of sector in DGT’s Budget and Finance Unit, recalls the first pioneering years as those she remembers most vividly: “We did things that seemed almost impossible. For me it was a unique and unforgettable experience. I believe Croatians might be feeling that way right now.”
Le 10 octobre, à l’occasion de la Journée mondiale de la santé mentale, l’équipe psychosociale du Service médical-Bruxelles de la DG HR a organisé une conférence sur la dépression au travail. Trois experts ont fait part de leur expérience en tant que psychiatres afin de sensibiliser le personnel de la Commission sur cette question souvent méconnue.

Le Service médical a invité les professeurs Daniel Souery (PsyPluriel, Belgique) et Samuel Leistedt (C.R.P. Les Marronniers, Belgique), ainsi que le docteur Patrick Légeron (Stimulus, France), auteur du rapport sur les risques psychosociaux pour le gouvernement français.

Les trois experts ont mis l’accent sur l’importance de la déstigmatisation dans la lutte contre la dépression. Ils ont souligné la nécessité de reconnaître la dépression non pas comme une faiblesse personnelle mais comme une véritable maladie qui touche de nombreuses personnes, quels que soient leurs milieux professionnels et sociaux. Les chiffres parlent d’eux-mêmes: presque une personne sur quatre a déjà été ou est atteinte de dépression.

Les psychiatres invités soutiennent également la dédramatisation des professionnels de la maladie et des patients: d’une part, le mot « psychiatre » fait peur et, d’autre part, les patients sont généralement perçus comme des gens socialement exclus ou mentalement déséquilibrés, alors que le psychiatre gère tout type de troubles mentaux.

Patrick Légeron, spécialiste du stress en entreprise, partage avec nous quelques notions et conseils pour mieux appréhender la maladie, et nous en dit plus sur le phénomène de burnout.

Quelle est la valeur ajoutée de ces sessions d’information pour une organisation comme la nôtre?

P. L.: Ces sessions d’information sont très importantes, car la communication joue un rôle essentiel dans la prévention. Ces rencontres permettent certes de fournir de plus amples informations sur les maladies psychiques et leurs conséquences, mais aussi de rappeler au personnel qu’il existe souvent un service compétent au sein des organisations et des entreprises, et que des professionnels, tenus par le secret médical, sont à leur écoute pour évoquer ces questions. Comme c’est le cas pour la Commission.

Le burnout est-il une maladie propre au milieu du travail?

P. L.: Le burnout est aujourd’hui considéré comme un phénomène universel. Il ne touche pas uniquement le milieu du travail, mais il est vrai que l’environnement professionnel est particulièrement exposé à ce problème. Malgré un manque de données scientifiques,
nous estimons qu’il touche 7 à 9 % de la population active dans des formes et des intensités très diverses.

Les facteurs du stress sont multiples. Il peut être causé par la surcharge de travail, la pression des chiffres, le manque d’autonomie, l’absence de reconnaissance ou encore par le faible soutien social. Le burnout est le contraire de l’engagement en ce sens qu’il engendre un déclin d’énergie, d’implication et d’efficacité.


De même, si vous ne parvenez pas à aborder le sujet avec des collègues dont le cas vous inquiète, vous pouvez bien entendu en discuter directement avec le Service médical. Les personnes ont souvent
Le tertiaire serait plus exposé en termes de contrainte mentale

du mal à admettre qu’elles souffrent de cette maladie et prétendent que cet état de stress et de fatigue «passera». Et pourtant, plus le traitement commence tôt, plus il est efficace. Il est important de souligner que les traitements médicaux sont très efficaces, souvent associés à une psychothérapie. Mais il vaut mieux prévenir que guérir!

L’administration publique comporte-t-elle autant de risques que les autres secteurs d’activité?

P. L.: Vous m’auriez posé cette question il y a vingt ou trente ans, ma réponse aurait sans doute été tout autre. A l’époque, on connaissait les secteurs à risque alors que maintenant, il est difficile de trouver un secteur d’activité qui ne soit pas à risque. Les études montrent que le stress au travail est très important et qu’il touche tout le monde. Cependant, le tertiaire serait plus exposé en termes de contrainte mentale. De nos jours, même les organismes publics font maintenant face aux problèmes de performance et de rentabilité, ce qui place les personnes sous la pression des résultats et donc un niveau de stress élevé.

Les managers ont-ils un rôle à jouer dans la prévention?

P. L.: Bien sûr, il existe trois niveaux de responsabilité: l’individu, le manager, l’entreprise. Il faut regarder le problème du plus haut niveau. Comme l’expliquait le docteur Schweitzer, prix Nobel de la paix en 1952, l’exemplarité est la première forme de management. Dans ce sens, le manager est le premier acteur de santé au sein de l’entreprise. Le manager doit être attentif et veiller au bien-être de son équipe pour empêcher le burnout. Prenons le cas du risque d’incendie par exemple. L’entreprise ou l’organisation sait qu’il y a des risques d’incendie, c’est pourquoi elle installe des issues de secours et des extincteurs même s’il n’y a jamais eu d’incendie auparavant. Dans le même sens, elle doit être consciente que le travail expose aujourd’hui au risque de burnout, et, de ce fait, il est nécessaire de mettre en place des mesures de protection ou de dépistage.

Rappelons, de plus, que le burnout n’affecte pas seulement la performance de l’employé, mais aussi celle de l’équipe de travail et a donc un coût pour l’employeur.

Quels sont vos conseils pour le personnel?

P. L.: Tout est une question d’équilibre. Il faut éviter le sur-engagement dans le travail et trouver le juste équilibre entre sa vie professionnelle et sa vie personnelle. S’adapter au stress en le gérant mieux, se concentrer sur le positif, prendre des habitudes de vie saines, bien se reposer et savoir se relaxer…

Tous ces conseils semblent évidents, mais sont essentiels pour prévenir le risque de burnout.

Conseils pour éviter le burnout

• Ne pas s’engager excessivement dans son travail
Eviter le surengagement, avoir des hobbies.

• Équilibrer sa vie professionnelle et sa vie privée
Trouver un juste équilibre entre le travail (ambitions, carrière) et son mode de vie (famille, détente).

• S’adapter au stress
Changer ses attentes et son attitude, ne pas être trop perfectionniste.

• Se concentrer sur le positif
L’optimisme est bon pour votre santé.

• Avoir confiance en soi
Oser s’exprimer et apprendre à dire «non».

• Savoir se relaxer et recharger les batteries
Faire des pauses, pratiquer la relaxation ou la méditation.

• Adopter des habitudes de vie saines
Prendre soin de soi physiquement pour augmenter sa résilience (manger sainement, faire de l’exercice, bien dormir).
Giving our waste a second life can be a very creative and funny affair, as the five colleagues awarded by EMAS show.

The EMAS photo competition winners not only crafted great things with what others just see as rubbish, but captured them in a series of inspiring shots to be displayed in the Berlaymont 1st floor between 14 November and 3 December.

The first prize went to Marianne Lefebvre (DG JRC, Sevilla) and her bother-in-law Matthieu Allereau who, in collaboration with ‘L’heureux Cyclage’ asbl (Grenoble, France) put together a new bicycle using pieces collected in a dump (tyres excluded) (photos 1a and 1b).

Just behind them we find Karin Friemel (DG SCIC). She realised a series of pin boards made of old corks (2) – this is something that she used to do even when ‘upcycling’ (that is, recycling while adding value to the raw material) wasn’t fashionable.

In third place, Bodil Rodwell (DGT) put together an old, worn-out office chair, two pairs of worn, outdated jeans, a screwdriver, a sewing machine and a few hours of work – et voilà, she has a brand new chair (3).

Philippe Haettel (DG RTD) won fourth place. Although he didn’t craft the coat hangers made out of old silver spoons (4), his photograph perfectly depicts how stylish these ‘reincarnated’ objects can be.

The fifth prize went to Kathleen James (DG JRC, Ispra) for her ‘Old boots, new smell’ campanula flower pots (5).

This initiative – organised in the framework of the European Week for Waste Reduction – underlines once more the potential of waste – be it on a small scale such as our colleagues’ examples – or on a larger scale, as the EMAS team is trying to do, already with some results.

In fact, EMAS has succeeded in decreasing the Commission waste in Brussels by 25% (2005-12). ■

EMAS Photo Contest
► http://europa.eu/th68GW
EMAS waste webpage on My IntraComm
► http://europa.eu/lCj87dv
La Commission a décidé de muter

Pierre Amilhat
directeur
direction «Asie, Asie centrale, Moyen-Orient/ Golfe et Pacifique»
DG DEVCO

Carla Montesi
directeur
direction «Afrique de l'Ouest et centrale»
DG DEVCO

Margus Rahuoja
directeur
direction «Aviation et questions internationales des transports»
DG MOVE

La Commission a décidé de nommer

Franck Sébert
directeur
direction «Audit»
DG REGIO

La Commission a décidé de détacher

Brian Holmes
directeur
Agence exécutive «Education, audiovisuel et culture»
EACEA
José Luis Gonzalez Vallvé, a former Head of the Commission’s Representation in Spain, talks to Commission en direct about his book ‘Reconstruyendo el sueño europeo’ (Reconstructing the European Dream).

How did you end up working in the Commission?
I started working for the Commission in 1987, with 15 years of prior professional experience in both the private and public sectors. I believe I was selected, among other reasons, because of the combination of my academic training and work experience – a Master’s degree in Civil Engineering and a Master’s degree in Law.

During my first 12 years in the Commission, I worked on Regional Policy in the then DG XVI. There I had the chance to take part in the modernisation of the less developed European Regions. This was a real success, since Spain had at that time up to 13 ‘less developed’ regions, while now there is only one. In 2006, I wrote a book about this experience, entitled ‘The Greatest Solidarity Operation in History’, published by the EU. In 1987, for instance, the richest European region was an industrial/commercial one – Hamburg, with a GDP per inhabitant 180% above the EU average (100). Now it is a financial one, Inner London, at 340%, which shows the excessive dominance of the financial sector.

As Head of the Commission’s Representation in Spain, I had communication and representative functions, and, therefore, had the opportunity to work, for instance, on Spain’s referendum on the European Constitution, which garnered the best result – with 77% voting ‘Yes’. This position required both an involvement in all the European policies as well as with the institutional, political, social and economic dimensions of Spain, in order to inform the Commission and accompany Commission Presidents and Commissioners on their visits to Spain and in their meetings with Spanish Ministers, the Prime Minister and H.M. the King of Spain.

Why did you write this book?
To tell about the advantages of the European project and the need for everybody to get involved with its reconstruction, to be an actor not a spectator. It is not an easy task, and nobody but ourselves will be able to do it. We must communicate with others – it’s a good therapy and even more effective in these individualistic times, where collective communication is often being ignored. I also wanted to contribute with a construc-
tive critique made by somebody who has lived ‘Europe’ from the inside.

Why does the ‘European dream’ need rebuilding?
There is a general feeling of disenchantment with Europe. Traditionally very pro-European, some 72% of Spaniards state, according to the Spring 2014 Eurobarometer (see link below), that they “don’t trust the EU”. Things carry on as usual, and nobody acts.

The EU’s construction is more of a process rather than a product, and each generation needs to take up the project and make it their own. In the past, some did fine, others not. But it is now up to us to rebuild it.

The EU must be practical, special, attractive, and able to give responses and to convince Europeans – not a complicated superposition of local, provincial, regional, national and European institutions, and a complex collection of norms.

Do you think Europe will emerge strengthened from this crisis? And if so, why?
We will not overcome the crisis just by managing three or four macroeconomic variables. We need not only a constitutional or economic response but also a personal/global response.

We are in a period of civilisational change. The old is dying – shifting in the global balance of power, impotence of states, power monopolies, and the accompanying opacity and credit bubble. But the new is having difficulty arising – collective intelligence, new democracy on time and on line, transparency, and a new sustainable social and environmental deal. We, Europeans, have a great opportunity to redesign and rebuild a new political reality. The EU is the only one able to pursue this goal and to effectively respond to this huge change and to citizens’ aspirations.

Why do you consider European identity as ethical and political rather than territorial?
An identity is not what you have, but the one you want. The best way to coexist is by reconciling the respect for individual rights and freedoms in a democratic system of law, with social and environmental balance and prosperity for all in solidarity. This is the European identity we all want. Collective identities are not built from top down, but bottom up, with the conviction and personal commitment to a desirable and sustainable model of coexistence which European identity can be.

Do you think that it is possible to have a multicultural identity?
Yes, starting with the freedom of thought and by adopting convincingly the European model – not from ideological, political, religious or nationalist prejudices. It is not easy, but highly advisable.

What do you mean when you explain that Europe is facing a new Cold War regarding energy?
Our high energy dependency weakens the EU, influencing relations with other states in a similar way to the Cold War. In order to strengthen ourselves, we not only need clean energy but also autonomy and competitiveness. So we need a common energy policy – inwardly (agreement on nuclear, fracking, renewables) and outwardly, appearing to the rest of the world as a single negotiator/buyer.

On a global scale, does the EU need to be a missionary for its own political model?
The European model is the most desirable one for the world’s citizens, so we need to explain and convince people everywhere of the good reasons for adopting it. Global adoption of this model would rebalance world competitiveness and humanity would gain in dignity.

Eurobarometer
> http://europa.eu/!Wb88qb

Reconstruyendo el sueño europeo,
by José Luis Gonzalez Vallvé, ed. Plazy y Valdés, Madrid (Spain), 2014.
Un ancien collègue de la Commission, Georges Bidault, a fêté son 100e anniversaire le 31 octobre dernier. Né à Alençon (France), Georges Bidault a travaillé durant 28 ans comme contrôleur principal du Trésor auprès de la Paierie générale de la Seine, dépendant du ministère des Finances en France.


Après avoir quitté la Commission en 1976, Georges Bidault s’installe à Cannes dans une maison entourée d’un jardin où il peut s’adonner à sa passion pour le jardinage et les fleurs. Il garde un très grand intérêt pour l’actualité et tout ce qui se passe dans le monde. Il boude cependant la télévision et préfère écouter la radio ou s’adonner à la lecture, ce qui fait de lui encore aujourd’hui un lecteur assidu.

Selon l’usage pour nos centenaires, Georges Bidault a reçu à l’occasion de son anniversaire un petit cadeau de la part de l’unité «Politique sociale» de la Commission, de même qu’une lettre de félicitations signée par le président José Manuel Barroso.

Attention à ne pas confondre votre mot de passe My IntraComm avec votre compte ECAS pour accéder au Régime Commun d’Assurance Maladie (RCAM) en ligne.

- My IntraComm, le site intranet de la Commission, contient beaucoup de documents administratifs et d’informations sur les activités de la Commission, ainsi qu’un portail consacré au personnel retraité. My IntraComm propose notamment les sections suivantes:
  - Infos – informations importantes les plus récentes
  - Administration – assurance maladie, retraites, services sociaux, droits statutaires
  - Info Senior en cinq langues
  - Culture et loisirs, liste des accès, liens vers les associations seniors, contacts utiles...

Pour recevoir un code My IntraComm, contacter:
CODES D’ACCÈS – MO-34 01/88, 1049 Bruxelles
HR-INTRACOMM-CODE-PENSIONNES@ec.europa.eu

- Le compte ECAS permet d’accéder au RCAM en ligne pour:
  - saisir des demandes de remboursement pour les frais médicaux et consulter leur suivi
  - demander une autorisation préalable
  - faire une demande de prise en charge
  - voir le détail des frais médicaux
  - vous renseigner sur vos droits et ceux de votre famille
  - créer des certificats de couverture RCAM
  - contacter le PMO pour des questions ou explications Il faut un scanner ou un appareil photo numérique pour télécharger vos documents numérisés.
Après avoir accédé à l’application, vous pourrez consulter le tutoriel pour vous aider à l’utiliser.

Pour demander un mot de passe d’accès au RCAM en ligne: voir Olivier Pypens ou Anthony Masini, PMO, Rue de la Science 27, Bureau 00/03, 1049 Bruxelles (9:00-12:00 et 14:00 à 16:00) – vous munir de votre GSM et du mot de passe de votre e-mail privé.
Si vous n’êtes pas à Bruxelles, contacter le helpdesk.
» http://europa.eu/hrP34Px
- Femmes poursuivies par des satyres, par Honoré Daumier, 1850.

- Trois baigneuses, par Paul Cézanne, vers 1875.

- Venus Frigida, par Pierre Paul Rubens, 1614.

Souvent qualifié de peintre-diplomate, Peter Paul Rubens a été aussi et surtout l’un des peintres les plus novateurs de l’histoire de l’art. Le Musée Royal des Beaux-Arts d’Anvers (KMSKA), la Royal Academy of Arts de Londres et BOZAR se sont intéressés à son rôle en tant qu’inspirateur de nombreux artistes et ont réuni quelque 160 œuvres. Peintures, esquisses, dessins et gravures représentatifs de son œuvre propre sont mis en regard d’œuvres d’artistes de toutes les époques. Rembrandt, Murillo, Watteau, Fragonard, Gainsborough, Reynolds, Delacroix, Daumier, Cézanne, Renoir, Kokoschka... Tous, à leur manière, sont des héritiers de Rubens. Tous se sont nourris de son art de la composition, de sa somptueuse palette et de ses techniques picturales.

L’exposition *Sensation et Sensualité* se déploie en six espaces thématiques et explore six facettes de l’œuvre de Rubens: la violence, le pouvoir, la sensualité, la compassion, l’élégance et la poésie.

C’était surtout pour l’évocation de ces thèmes que les artistes ont eu recours à Rubens. Les peintres de cour ont été fascinés par sa virtuosité dans le traitement de l’allégorie. Les Espagnols se sont intéressés surtout à ses tableaux religieux, les Britanniques à ses paysages et à ses portraits, tandis que les peintres français se sont inspirés de ses scènes bucoliques. Quant aux artistes allemands et autrichiens, ils ont admiré sa vitalité.


La partie «Pouvoir» révèle une toute autre facette de l’artiste. Ici, il se fait peintre de propagande, parfois considéré comme le précurseur des cinéastes idéologiques du XXe siècle tels Riefenstahl ou Eisenstein. Une série de gravures évoquent le cycle de Marie de Médicis, série de 24 tableaux commandés par l’épouse du roi français Henri IV afin d’immortaliser sa propre vie, actuellement conservée au Louvre. Aujourd’hui, ces allégories politiques retiennent souvent l’attention pour leurs personnages pittoresques et leurs détails humoristiques. Mais c’est oublier qu’au temps de leur création, ces tableaux à caractère politique mêlant mythologie et réalité étaient compris des initiés seuls.

On retrouve un Rubens plus attendu dans la section «Luxure». Peau nacrée des nymphes ou des déesses, cuir tanné des personnages masculins ou des satyres: son imitation troublante de la chair érotise les sujets mythologique ou divin. L’opulence des corps passera bien vite de mode, mais le dialogue des œuvres permet d’admirer une scène coquine du rococo sous le pinceau de Boucher ou la déclinaison des bacchanales par Daumier.

Quant aux thèmes «Compassion» et «Elegance», ils abordent respectivement les tableaux religieux de l’artiste dont les reproductions ont voyagé jusqu’en Chine et les portraits d’apparat de la bourgeoisie dans lesquels excella également Antoine Van Dyck.

Enfin, l’exposition se clôture sur le thème de la «Poésie» et présente un Rubens lui-même inspiré par Titien dans la *Bacchanale des Andriens* qu’il copie. Cette œuvre sera le point de départ du *Jardin de l’amour*, pièce majeure prêtée par le Prado (Madrid). Dans un jardin des délices contemporain, cette «Conversation à la mode» entre cinq couples élégamment vêtus évoque les années heureuses que Rubens vécut avec sa jeune femme Hélène Fourment à la fin de sa vie.

http://bit.ly/1tYOHIKe
ACROSS
06 City where the film ‘The third man’ is set
07 Russian word indicating the ‘restructuring’ of the Soviet Union and its economic system
10 Yuri, first human to journey into the outer space
12 Crimean city that hosted the conference dividing the world into spheres of influence
15 USSR in the Cyrillic alphabet
16 German acronym for German Democratic Republic
17 Leonid, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 1964-1982
18 The Polish trade union that helped bring democracy to the country
19 The Eastern Bloc reply to the OECD in Western Europe

DOWN
01 City hosting the 1980 Summer Olympics – boycotted by 65 countries
02 British rock band, also famous for their album ‘The Wall’
03 City that gave the name to collective defense pact among eight Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe
04 Nickname of Josip Broz, Yugoslavian leader
05 Said ‘Ich bin ein Berliner’ (initials)
08 The US President who accompanied the end of the Cold War
09 Jan, a student who set himself on fire as a political protest against the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968
11 The Soviet top boxer who challenges Rocky Balboa in the fourth film of the series
13 Major Russian aerospace company
14 Mikhail Gorbachev’s policy of transparency
16 Alexander, father of the Prague Spring

Answers to October’s Crossword
ACROSS: 01 PLOVDIV - 03 SYSPER - 06 BOEING - 07 NIAGARA - 08 OIL - 11 GIRONA - 13 EROS - 14 LINCOLN - 15 BBC - 18 OTOPENI - 20 GARLIC - 21 ARDENNES - 22 TUSK
DOWN: 02 VENIZELOS - 04 EEAS - 05 KRYPTON - 09 LAFENICE - 10 GAELIC - 12 OHM - 16 BEECH - 17 SPAM - 19 TURKU

Answers in next month’s edition. Send your suggestions for clues and keys to matteo.manzonetto@ec.europa.eu, with ‘crosswords’ in the subject line.
01 Who built the Berlin Wall?
   a. the authorities of the Deutsche Demokratische Republik
   b. the Soviet authorities
   c. the Western Allies

02 When did the construction of the Wall start?
   a. Winter 1946
   b. Spring 1955
   c. Summer 1961

03 Who was West Berlin’s Oberbürgermeister (mayor) at the time of the Wall’s construction?
   a. Konrad Adenauer
   b. Willy Brandt
   c. Helmut Kohl

04 How long was the Berlin Wall overall?
   a. 120 km
   b. 155 km
   c. 160 km

05 How many watch towers did the Berlin Wall have?
   a. 251
   b. 302
   c. 187

06 Approximately how many concrete blocks were used?
   a. 20,000
   b. 55,000
   c. 45,000

07 According to the state-funded Centre for Contemporary History (ZZF), how many people died at the Wall?
   a. 136
   b. 256
   c. 89

08 Chris Gueffroy, aged 21, was the last person to be shot dead while trying to cross the Wall. When did this happen?
   a. February 1989
   b. August 1984
   c. May 1988

09 When was the border between East and West Berlin opened again?
   a. 8 October 1989
   b. 9 November 1989
   c. 10 December 1989

10 When did the official dismantling of the Wall begin?
   a. 13 June 1990
   b. 1 January 1990
   c. 9 May 1991
In the aftermath of World War II, Germany was divided into occupation zones among the victors (USA, UK, France, and the USSR). Its capital Berlin shared the same fate. Half of the city – the de facto capital of the German Democratic Republic (DDR) – was administered by Moscow, the other half by the Western allies.

In 1961, to prevent the exodus of thousands of Eastern Germans to the West, the DDR decided to permanently seal the Berlin border between the two blocs with a concrete wall. The Berliner Mauer was born.

In November 1989, the wave of democratic reforms started earlier in the summer in Poland and Hungary reached the DDR and Berlin. The DDR authorities announced on 9 November that finally their citizens could travel to West Germany and West Berlin. People flocked to the Wall and started tearing it down and flooding across. Germany eventually reunified on 3 October 1990, less than a year later.

Between 1961 and 1989, 136 persons died trying to cross the Wall. It was stoutly defended: 302 watchtowers with armed guards overlooked 155 kilometres of concrete wall, barbed wire, and a no-man's-land where people would be an easy target for the guards. The order was “shoot to kill”.

© Belga
Christmas Choristers are back

For more than 18 years now, the Christmas Choristers’ choir brings together active and retired staff from all EU Institutions, as well as spouses and friends. Ahead of the December break, join us and fill your ears with Christmas songs, your heart with a festive atmosphere and your spirit with lively exchanges with colleagues. Passionate choir leaders bring in their musical expertise, helping the choir rehearse Christmas carols from all over Europe in different languages. Do you enjoy singing and read music? Or want to help with the logistic support and publicity? Rehearsals begin on 6 November, with performances in different buildings from 1 to 17 December.

For more info, see our page under the ‘Useful to know’ section on My IntraComm.

Christmas Choristers on My Intracomm
- http://europa.eu/my63YX
- Contact: Corinne Gils (RTD)
- EC-CHRISTMAS-CHORISTERS@ec.europa.eu

Swim for life 2014

Sunday, 30 November, Victor Boin Swimming Pool, Saint-Gilles, Brussels

Last year Team Europe raised €9,500 and swam 57 kilometres in the annual swim marathon to fight AIDS and support people touched by AIDS. This year we go for a new record!

Join us as a swimmer, sponsor and/or supporter!

Sponsor us by donating here:
(by credit card or Paypal, paid to Team Captain Ryan Heath)
- http://bit.ly/1wB3vPC

Register to swim here:
- http://swimforlife.bgs.org/

or by e-mailing
- Ryan.Heath@ec.europa.eu

Cours de Pilates

Tous les mercredis, 12:45-13:45, VM-2, Bruxelles

« Après 10 séances, vous sentez la différence. Après 20 séances, vous voyez la différence. Et après 30 séances, vous avez un corps tout neuf. » C’est ce que promettait Josef Pilates, créateur d’un entraînement tout en douceur, le Pilates. Parmi le large éventail d’activités proposées par les cercles de loisirs dans les nouvelles installations sportives du Van Maerlant – 400 m² de salles climatisées, sol en plancher, vestiaires entièrement équipés et douches –, le Pilates vous aidera à redessiner votre silhouette et vous remettre en forme, ou encore à retrouver votre énergie et développer votre bien-être.

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- raphaelgalante@yahoo.fr

Internacia Lingvo Esperanto courses

Every Wednesday, 18:30, VAM-2, 1st floor, Brussels

How to overcome language discrimination in the long run? If you think that you can do something about it, come and taste a solution for non-discriminatory communication.

Join our cercle de loisir ‘Amis de la Internacia Lingvo/Esperanto’. We offer a starter and an advanced course in this auxiliary language which is10 times easier to master than English.

Michael Cwik, tel. 027 674 021
Françoise Pellegrin, tel. 023 582 728
- www.esperantobruselo.org
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