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From Rome to Europe? The Association of European Historians (AEH) 1980-1992

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Introduction

On 28th August 1985, during the sixteenth Congress of the International Committee of Historical Sciences, a group of 419 historians from 12 European countries founded the “Association of European Historians” (AEH).¹ For several scholars concerned about the prevailing national dimension of historical research and teaching in Europe still in the 1980s, it was necessary to create a meeting point towards the «overcoming of nationalistic prejudices which still hinder a proper understanding of the history of Europe and the promotion of the integration of historiographies in different European countries».² The AEH aimed at introducing a “new” narrative for a collective history of Europe to replace the outdated sums of individual national histories. From its members’ perspective, during a crucial phase of the European integration process, historians had the civil responsibility to foster a common European identity and support the coping of nationalism. Consequently, the AEH's main objective was to provide an «authentic and active contribution to the new reality of Brussels, Strasbourg, and Luxembourg».³ This dissertation analyses how, and to what extent, the Association related to the European Communities (EC), also in comparison with other scholarly networks of the period, within the macro-theme of the relationship between EC institutions and historians. Furthermore, this study examines what activities the AEH carried out outside its connections with political institutions to promote collaboration between the historiographies of different European countries. How did the AEH position itself in the political and historiographical debates of the 1980s?

The AEH has been analysed in the studies on the second postwar period in Italian historiography, particularly through the figure of the Italian historian Armando Saitta, President of the Association. Paolo Simoncelli has described the AEH referring to the final stage of Saitta’s career before his death, providing a general description of the association and

¹ Armando Saitta, ‘L’Associazione Degli Storici Europei’, *Critica Storica* XXII, 2-3 (1985): 322-325.

² «Favorire l’eliminazione dei residui pregiudizi nazionalistici che nelle diverse storiografie nazionali ostacolano un’adeguata comprensione del passato e dell’odierna realtà dell’Europa»: Armando Saitta, ‘Un convegno per una nuova storia d’Europa’, *Critica Storica* XVIII, 4 (1981): 683.

³ «Un autentico e attivo contributo alla nuova realtà che si sta realizzando tra Bruxelles, Strasburgo, e Lussemburgo»: report of the Roman meeting to prepare an international congress on Europe and its historical formation, 6 Nov. 1981, Archive of the Italian Institute for Modern and Contemporary Ages (IHIMCA), Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress.

its activities.⁴ Francesca Russo, analysing the connections between Saitta and the European pacification projects, has defined the AEH as the natural destination of his commitment to the integration of European historiographies.⁵ Similarly, Alessandro Guerra has emphasised Saitta's influence on the Association by comparing his early studies on the European revolutionary period in the nineteenth century and the European pacifist ideal of the Association.⁶ Guerra has argued that the AEH caught a perspective shift in the European vision closely linked to the 1789 Revolution in France and the three-year Jacobin period in Italy.⁷

However, the existing studies regarding the AEH do not exceed Saitta's figure. The common shortcoming of the literature mentioned above is an overall analysis of the AEH, its role within the historiographical debate of the period, and the interactions with political bodies. Firstly, it is noticeable that the AEH perspective seems to challenge the so-called "national revival" in European history writing during the 1980s.⁸ Stephen Berger has outlined that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Italian, French, British, and German historiographies witnessed attempts to renationalise history writing.⁹ He has stressed that such attempts were mostly linked to political turns to the right in Britain and Germany, respectively, in 1979 and 1982, and the failure of the "historical compromise" in Italy. On the other hand, in France, the intellectual rise of the right coincided with the socialist presidency of François Mitterand, although he had to share power with centre-right governments. Against this background, this study assesses the AEH paradigm within the "national revival" framework.

Secondly, and in the opposite direction, the AEH paradigm seems to strike with some fundamental historiographical turns of the period. Stuart Woolf has defined the structure of a comparative European history from above, and from below, that would exceed the national boundaries.¹⁰ In the 1980s, globalisation questioned the meaning of purely national narratives. Outside of Europe, global history as practised by William McNeill and by the world-systems analysis of Immanuel Wallerstein gave impetus to a history writing

⁴ Paolo Simoncelli, *Voce dedicata ad Armando Saitta*, in Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana fondata da Giovanni Treccani, *Il contributo italiano alla storia del pensiero. Storia e politica* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana fondata da Giovanni Treccani, 2013), 76–88.

⁵ Francesca Russo, 'Armando Saitta e i progetti di pacificazione europea', in *Studi di teoria politica*, ed. Giuseppe Barbaccia, (Palermo: Carlo Saladino editore, 2012), 44.

⁶ Alessandro Guerra, 'Fra via Caetani e l'Europa. Armando Saitta e l'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'età Moderna e Contemporanea', *Annali di storia moderna e contemporanea*, no. 4 (2016): 103–6.

⁷ Alessandro Guerra, *Armando Saitta. Due storie d'Europa* (Roma: Sapienza University Press, 2018), 202–3.

⁸ Tony Judt, *A Grand Illusion?: An Essay on Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

⁹ Stefan Berger, 'A Return to the National Paradigm? National History Writing in Germany, Italy, France, and Britain from 1945 to the Present', *The Journal of Modern History* 77, no. 3 (September 2005): 629–78.

¹⁰ Stuart Woolf, 'Europe and Its Historians', *Contemporary European History* 12, no. 3 (2003): 323–37.

increasingly detached from the nation-centred perspective.¹¹ At the same time, the Eurocentric perspective was disputed by postcolonial scholars, who took a strand in the historiographical debate during the 1980s.¹² They contested the European centrality in the development of modernity. They especially criticised the colonial attitude of Western historiography in considering Europe as the cradle of civilisation and the “centre of history”. How did the AEH interact with these pivotal shifts?

Furthermore, one could observe a lack of analysis concerning the AEH's international dimension and its connections with the political bodies, especially the European Communities (EC). According to several authors, since the early 1980s, the EC has provided a more in-depth commitment to cultural policies and meetings of historians.¹³ The cultural and political eagerness developed around Mitterand's “great design” fostered new contemporary historical research initiatives and projects on European integration.¹⁴ Since 1985, the Delors presidency at the European Commission (EUCO) and the Single European Act gave new impetus to the connections between EC institutions and historians, especially in the newly born history of European integration.¹⁵ Hence, a critical question arises: how did the AEH engage in the European integration process in the 1980s?

In this regard, the connections between historians and the EC in that period have been largely debated in the literature. Particularly, scholars have linked historians' affiliation with the EC institutions and the EC legitimacy crisis since the early 1970s.¹⁶ In that period, the economic recession hampered the silent approval of European integration by public opinion.¹⁷ Consequently, the perception of a democratic deficit in the EC raised the issue of the political

¹¹ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974); William Hardy McNeill, *Polyethnicity and National Unity in World History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

¹² Dipesh Chakrabarty, ‘Provincializing Europe: Postcoloniality and the Critique of History’, *Cultural Studies* 6, no. 3 (1 October 1992): 337–57. For an overall analysis of the world history at the time, see: Marnie Hughes-Warrington, ed., *Palgrave Advances in World Histories* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230523401>.

¹³ Michael Bruter, *Citizens of Europe?: The Emergence of a Mass European Identity* (New York: Springer, 2005); Antonio Varsori, ‘From Normative Impetus to Professionalization: Origins and Operation of Research Networks’, in *European Union History: Themes and Debates*, ed. Wolfram Kaiser and Antonio Varsori (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2010), 6–25; Oriane Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe: EU Promotion of Europeanness since the 1950s* (New York: Springer, 2013), 52; Alessandro Laruffa, ‘Historians’ Affiliation With the European Integration Process in the 1980s’, *JEIH Journal of European Integration History* 28, no. 2 (2022): 269–92.

¹⁴ Varsori, ‘From normative impetus’, 10; Laruffa, ‘Historians’ Affiliation’, 277.

¹⁵ Varsori, ‘From normative impetus’, 16; Laruffa, ‘Historians’ Affiliation’, 271.

¹⁶ Woolf, ‘Europe’, 334–5.

¹⁷ Leon N. Lindberg and Stuart A. Scheingold, *Europe's Would-Be Polity: Patterns of Change in the European Community* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

identification with the integration process.¹⁸ Scholars describe the mobilisation of the European identity concept in the 1970s as a first step to promote European integration among the member states' citizens.¹⁹

This interpretation has begotten a considerable number of studies. As Calligaro has argued, in the early 2000s, Cris Shore emphasised the EU politicisation of culture. Shore has observed a transposition of political-identification strategies, specifically the creation of symbols and rituals, from the national to the European level. He has described this process as a top-down instrumentalisation of culture, labelling the "Europeanisation of Europe" as a kind of "internal colonialism".²⁰ Shore's interpretation exemplifies the main analytical basis of the studies on the European identity, which mainly have consisted of the juxtaposition of the EC with national identity-building.²¹ Such comparison suggests a twofold scenario. A first strand of literature has argued that is not possible to identify a European identity due to the dearth of a shared culture, myths, and memories that served as the foundation for the development of national identities.²² A second strand of literature has stressed the possibility of an exclusive European identity based on a sort of "Euro-nationalism" and "European nation".²³ Despite some differences in the results, both approaches focus primarily on the centralised, top-down, elite-driven dimension of these identity policies.²⁴ With some notable exceptions,²⁵ what remains unclear is the role of bottom-up processes conducted by noninstitutional actors in European identity building. This research project addresses this shortcoming by analysing a case study: the AEH's contribution to inventing, supporting, and communicating the European identity in the 1980s.

Specifically, the AEH intended to contribute to the writing of a "new" history of Europe conceived as a united entity rather than the sum of individual states. This study analyses the

¹⁸ Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 2; Yves Mény, 'De La Démocratie En Europe: Old Concepts and New Challenges', *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 41, no. 1 (2003): 1–13.

¹⁹ Bruter, *Citizens of Europe?*, 38–2;

²⁰ Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 3; Cris Shore, *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration* (London: Routledge, 2000), 64.

²¹ Martin Kohli, 'The battlegrounds of European identity', *European Societies* 2, no. 2 (1 January 2000): 113–37.

²² Shore, *Building Europe*, 65–70.

²³ Anthony D. Smith, 'National Identity and the Idea of European Unity', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 68, no. 1 (1992): 55–76; Johan Galtung, 'The Emerging European Supernationalism', *International Journal of Sociology* 24, no. 2–3 (1 June 1994): 148–65; Gerard Delanty, 'Europe and the search for identity', *European Journal of Social Theory* 5, no. 4 (2002): 385–544.

²⁴ The same approach has been used in some following studies on the European Union. See: ; Cris Shore, "'In Uno Plures' (?) EU Cultural Policy and the Governance of Europe', *Cultural Analysis* 5 (1 January 2007); François Foret, *Légitimer l'Europe: Pouvoir et symbolique à l'ère de la gouvernance* (Presses de Sciences Po, 2008).

²⁵ Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*; Monica Sassatelli, *Becoming Europeans: Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies* (New York: Springer, 2009).

AEH's attempt and its contradictions in the context of the debate on the relationship between European history, EC institutions, and historians. Recently, Morgane Le Boulay has pointed out that, since the late 1980s, an increasing number of medievalists, early and late modernists, and contemporary historians have focused on the history of Europe. However, Le Boulay continues, the emergence of multiple visions of Europe's history cannot be analysed only by focusing on the academic sphere. The writing of the different histories of Europe, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, which were crucial for the process of European integration, involved actors from outside the scientific world.²⁶

This study argues that already in the early 1980s, the AEH pioneered a focus on the history of Europe, and not simply European integration, that would characterise the following decades. Such an attempt, however, was far from straightforward. What forms of alliance or clash occurred between the AEH and the EC institutions? Were there collaborations or tensions regarding not only the political instrumentalisation of history but also between different interpretations of European history? In answer to these issues, the dissertation analyses the emergence of connections between a developing centre of power, the European Union, and an evolving scholarly field, European history, emphasising collaborations, conflicts and power relations between the AEH and EC institutions. In other words, this study intends to contribute to examining a symbolic instrument of political legitimisation, born on the national level and reaffirmed in the European sphere: the writing of history.

Since the early 1980s, the European Commission (EC) has promoted cooperation between historians concerning the study of the integration process: the main goals were identifying shared European origins and strengthening European identity.²⁷ Researchers have primarily investigated the collaborations between the EC and historians in the 1980s and the 1990s, particularly the Liaison Committee of European Historians (LCEH).²⁸ The existing literature focuses on LCEH's structure and connections with the Directorate-general of the European Commission for Information (DG X) regarding cultural policies. Specific actions were designed by DG X to collaborate with historians and foster the European integration history.²⁹

²⁶ Morgane Le Boulay, *La Fabrique de l'histoire de l'Europe : Un Domaine de Recherche Entre Savoir et Pouvoir Depuis 1976 En France, En Allemagne et Au-Delà* (Rennes: Press Universitaires de Rennes, 2022), 11–12.

²⁷ Antonio Varsori, 'From Normative Impetus', 6–25; Morgane Boulay, 'Investir l'arène Européenne de La Recherche. Le "Groupe de Liaison" Des Historiens Auprès de La Commission Européenne', *Politix* 89 (1 January 2010): 103–24; Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 15–77.

²⁸ Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 43–78; Varsori, 'From normative impetus', 14–25; Le Boulay, 'Investir', 108–24; Wilfried Loth, 'La contribution du Groupe de liaison à l'histoire des institutions européennes', in *Les institutions européennes font leur histoire: regards croisés soixante ans après le traité de Paris*, ed. Michel Mangenot and Sylvain Schirmann (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012), 47–58.

²⁹ Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 16.

Scholars have described the LCEH establishment as a midpoint between EUCO's interest in the European integration history and some historians' claim for EC institutions' support of historical research.³⁰ The knowledge of the European Parliament's (EP) efforts to foster historians' involvement with the EC remains limited. However, a growing body of scholarship has called into question long-held assumptions about key moments in the EP's history, such as the transformative impact of the 1979 elections and the Maastricht Treaty.³¹ Basing on these re-evaluations of the EP's role, this dissertation analyses the under-examined interactions between Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and historians during the 1980s, using the AEH as a case study.³²

Particularly, this research project aims to investigate the relationship between the AEH and the EP's concerning the European educational cooperation policies. The research lays on some existing studies that have highlighted the significance of common education policies in European integration.³³ According to these scholars, the EC institutions has shown an interest in educational policies due to the central position of education in creating an open European labor market.³⁴ In the 1980s, the Member States' educational priorities were transformed by new international competitive and technological conditions.³⁵ Researchers have emphasised the importance of education in building "technological" EC.³⁶ Furthermore, the "Europeanisation" of teaching and learning became a primary focus within EC policies. To this extent, the 1980s were a crucial period for European educational cooperation³⁷ and the EP's role has been extensively debated in the literature.³⁸ However, the connection between

³⁰ Varsori, *From normative impetus*, 13.

³¹ For the traditional approach see: George Brunn, 'Das Europäische Parlament Auf Dem Weg Zur Ersten Direktwahl 1979', in *Aufbruch Zum Europa Der Zweiten Generation: Die Europäische Einigung 1968-1984*, ed. Franz Knipping and Matthias Schönwald (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2004), 47–72; Mark Gilbert, *Surpassing Realism: The Politics of European Integration Since 1945* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 175–92. For the new approach, I refer to the special issue on the European Parliament in the 1970s and the 1980s of the *Journal of European Integration History*, 27, 1 (2021), and particularly to: Kiran Klaus Patel and Christian Salm, 'The European Parliament During the 1970s and 1980s: An Institution on the Rise? – Introduction', *JEIH Journal of European Integration History* 27, no. 1 (28 June 2021): 5–20.

³² On the topic see: Laruffa, 'Historians' Affiliation', 269–70.

³³ Alberto Amaral et al., eds., *European Integration and the Governance of Higher Education and Research* (New York: Springer, 2009); Anne Corbett, 'Higher Education as a Form of European Integration: How Novel Is the Bologna Process?', *ARENA* 15(1 January 2006), 1–28; Laruffa, 'Historians' Affiliation', 270.

³⁴ Amaral, Neave, Musselin, Maassen, *European integration*, 5.

³⁵ Christian Laval, Louis Weber, and Institut de recherche de la FSU, *Le Nouvel Ordre Éducatif Mondial : OMC Banque Mondiale OCDE Commission Européenne* (Paris: Nouveaux regards, 2002), 113.

³⁶ Carmen Flury, Michael Geiss, and Rosalia Guerrero Cantarell, 'Building the Technological European Community through Education: European Mobility and Training Programmes in the 1980s', *European Educational Research Journal* 20, no. 3 (1 May 2021): 348–64.

³⁷ Flury, Geiss, Cantarell, 'Building', 348–9.

³⁸ Simone Paoli, 'Alle Radici Della Politica Educativa Europea (1968-1974)', *Ventesimo Secolo* 5, no. 9 (2006): 199–228; Luce Pépin, 'The History of EU Cooperation in the Field of Education and Training: How Lifelong Learning Became a Strategic Objective', *European Journal of Education* 42, no. 1 (2007): 121–32, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1465-3435.2007.00288.x>.

historians and European identity building through the "Europeanisation" of history teaching remains unclear. This research project aims to fill this gap by investigating how the AEH adopted a specific affiliation pattern with the European integration process regarding educational cooperation policies and history teaching.

Starting from vastly unused materials collected from the archive of the Italian Historical Institute for Modern and Contemporary Ages in Rome and the Archival centre of the "Scuola Normale Superiore" in Pisa, the first part of this study focuses on the links and interactions between the AEH, the EC institutions, other networks, and the historiographical trends of the period. It includes these actors in the history of European integration and the history of historiography. Four central research questions frame it: firstly, what brought these scholars together, and how did the relationship operate, evolve and change throughout the examined time frame? Secondly, how did the AEH position within the national, global, and postcolonial historiographical trends in the 1980s? Thirdly, how did the AEH engage the European integration process as a noninstitutional actor? Moreover, how did it interact with the EP and the common educational policies?

However, the connections between the AEH and the EC have weakened since the Association's official establishment in 1985. In the first phase, from 1981 to 1985, the preliminary AEH aimed at supporting the EC institutions actively³⁹. From 1985, a gradual decrease in communication and collaboration between AEH and EC institutions occurred. At the same time, the Association began to engage with historians from the Soviet bloc to include «the broader horizon in which European society has been historically realised».⁴⁰ Based on this paradigm, the AEH tried to foster a "new" European narrative by rethinking the history of Europe in a collective framework without nationalism or political subordination. As a result, the history of Europe should reveal the unique common roots and the richness of diversities. In reconstructing the European identity complex path, the AEH highlighted convergences but even contradictions and conflicts. To this extent, in addition to the members of the EC countries, the Association involved the scholars of the Soviet bloc to consider the historical formation of European society from the broadest possible perspective.

These contacts provide new outlooks concerning the contacts between East and West during the Cold War in the 1980s. According to Sari Autio-Sarasmo and Katalin Miklóssy, historiography considered the collapse of the communist system in Eastern Europe in 1989

³⁹ Report on the roman meeting for the preparation of an international congress about Europe and its historical formation, 6 Nov. 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, 2.

⁴⁰ «L'orizzonte più ampio in cui la società europea si è storicamente realizzata». Armando Saitta, 'L'Associazione degli storici europei', *Critica Storica* XXII, no. 2-3 (1985), 322.

and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 as a new era, resulting in significant changes in the interpretation of the period.⁴¹ The grand narratives of law-governed historical processes appeared to have ended, leading Francis Fukuyama to declare the end of history.⁴² Similarly, Karl Popper believed that the notion of history as a suprapersonal power had suffered a significant defeat with the conclusion of the Cold War.⁴³ The opening of the Eastern archives and the supposed disappearance of the bipolar mindset generated high expectations of a forthcoming revolution in historiography. Thus, the end of the Cold War was considered a unique opportunity to enhance the understanding of the Cold War era.⁴⁴ Thirty years on, the literature has challenged the emphasis on the bipolar contentious nature of the Cold War and the superpower approach in Eastern and Western scholarship. Autio-Sarasma and Miklóssy have effectively described that, while the emphasis on bipolarity presents a simplified understanding of the alleged unity within opposing political blocs, the superpower perspective exaggerates the role of superpowers in shaping global affairs. Despite having access to comprehensive data on top-level political decision-making and international negotiations, research still predominantly centers around these areas of investigation. As a result, narratives of the Cold War's "winners" inevitably emerge, portraying the conclusion of the conflict as a victory for the West, specifically the United States.⁴⁵ At this time, scholars, primarily those based in Western Europe, frequently emphasise the significant impact of European powers and their leaders' policies on the outcome of the Cold War. They also foreground the evolution of European institutions as a determining factor. However, the analysis is predominantly on a macro level, focusing on high politics and international relations between state actors.⁴⁶ One of the fundamental assumptions underlying several Cold War studies is that the Iron Curtain created an insurmountable barrier between two rigid blocs.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Sari Autio-Sarasma and Katalin Miklóssy, 'Introduction', in *Reassessing Cold War Europe*, eds. Sari Autio-Sarasma and Katalin Miklóssy, (London: Routledge, 2010), 1–15: 1.

⁴² Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?', *The National Interest*, no. 16 (1989): 3–18.

⁴³ Pauli Kettunen and Juhana Aunesluoma, 'History in the Cold War and the Cold War in the Present', in *The Cold War and the Politics of History*, ed. Juhana Aunesluoma and Pauli Kettunen (Helsinki: University of Helsinki Press, 2008), 9–16.

⁴⁴ Autio-Sarasma and Miklóssy, 'Introduction', 1.

⁴⁵ Autio-Sarasma and Miklóssy, 'Introduction', 1. The literature presenting the United States as the only hero have been challenged as far too one-sided. See: Michael Cox, 'Who Won the Cold War in Europe?: A Historiographical Overview', ed. Frederick Bozo and Marie-Pierre Reyniers (London: Routledge, 2008), 1–12.

⁴⁶ Just to name a few: Ralph B. Levering, *The Cold War: A Post-Cold War History* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2016); Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (New York: Basic Books, 2017); Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

⁴⁷ Fred Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations* (London: Macmillan Education, 1994), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-23658-9>; Robert Service, *Comrades!: A History of World Communism* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2007).

Instead, expanding our focus beyond the realm of superpowers, we can identify other levels of interaction that had a dissimilar character and were equally significant in shaping the daily experiences of individuals during the Cold War period. For instance, Autio-Sarasmo and Miklóssy have considered the blocs' existence and the underlying bipolarity at the level of world politics. However, they also recognise that not all European developments resulted from the bipolar structure. The central premise of their argument is that the relationship between the East and West during the Cold War era was not solely characterised by confrontation or mutual distrust, but also included instances of collaboration. Correspondingly, this study asserts that the ideological divide between the two sides and the politics of the Cold War bloc did not have a comprehensive impact on the entirety of society in both Eastern and Western Europe. As Dionysios Chourchoulis has recently emphasised, the increasing availability of archival materials have provided scholars with a huge amount of new information, not least on the interaction between top-down and bottom-up forces. In addition, it has allowed researchers to deal with unexplored issues and scales of analysis or to challenge supposed solid perspectives on the Cold War.⁴⁸

Below the bipolar framework, diverse actors including individuals, institutions, and states engaged in multilevel interactions. These actors at lower levels of influence than the great powers frequently cooperated in conflict with the bloc leaders. In many respects, this dissertation aligns with recent approaches to Cold War research that use different scales of analysis rather than focusing only on international relations and diplomacy. Recently, it is noteworthy to observe the rise of diverse methodologies, with a specific focus on Europe. One of the most remarkable and inventive advancements in Cold War literature over the past decade is the new perspective on East European states, which have been considered as autonomous players in political affairs rather than completely subjugated by the Soviet bloc.⁴⁹ In this context, cultural, intellectual, and scientific vectors gradually allowed autonomous links and networks of contacts to emerge, promising to encourage parallel developments within societies and to transcend, as it were, the disastrous division of the continent. As Antoine Fleury and Lubol Jilek have shown, "despite everything", links were maintained by

⁴⁸ Dionysios Chourchoulis, 'Understanding the Long Détente and Its Crisis in Cold War International History', *Journal of Contemporary History* 55, no. 3 (2020): 666–78.

⁴⁹ Vojtech Mastny et al., *Origins of the European Security System: The Helsinki Process Revisited, 1965-75* (London: Routledge, 2008); Oliver Bange and Gottfried Niedhart, *Helsinki 1975 and the Transformation of Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008); Frederic Bozo et al., *Europe and the End of the Cold War: A Reappraisal* (London: Routledge, 2012); David S. Mason, *Revolution in East-Central Europe: The Rise and Fall of Communism and the Cold War* (London: Routledge, 2019); Csaba Békés, *Hungary's Cold War: International Relations from the End of World War II to the Fall of the Soviet Union* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022).

actors frequently independent of the respective governmental bodies.⁵⁰ This research project analyses an international academic community over ten years between the Cold War and détente, offering a transnational outlook on the history of an academic discipline, namely the history of Europe. The Association of European Historians is a distinct international academic community that was not initiated or funded by any state or the EC, unlike many cultural organisations during the Cold War. Nevertheless, the Association's profile was shaped by the serious commitment of key historians to participate in international meetings across political divisions during the Cold War and détente. This study reveals the AEH's deep historical background, international connections, and whether political institutions did or did not attach value to the meetings. A history of this organisation reveals a world of international academic connections that, through their contacts, helped to maintain an international framework.⁵¹

The AEH was by no means unique as an international collaboration between the blocs. Aside from the above-mentioned LCEH, and global-scale networks such as the International Committee of Historical Sciences (ICHS), the literature has analysed several cases of intellectual cooperation between scholars during the Cold War. For instance, Michel Christian, Sandrine Kott, and Ondřej Matějka have shown the existence and longevity of East-West contacts across the Iron Curtain between groups of actors in various international organisations, especially the International Labour Organization (ILO), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the World Council of Churches (WCC).⁵² These contacts were not always linear and symmetrical, as Jürgen Danyel and Jan Claas Behrends pointed out. They interviewed some German researchers born between 1930 and 1956 to show how, despite political barriers, ideological differences and different methods, contacts between West German historians and their colleagues in the Eastern Bloc were established and maintained, but the political climate and simple misunderstandings for bilateral cooperation had significant consequences.⁵³ Antoine Fleury and Lubor Jílek have shown similar hurdles by collecting several case studies concerning intellectual, scientific, musical and cinematographic, federalist, and denominational networks among the East and West.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Antoine Fleury and Lubor Jílek, *Une Europe malgré tout, 1945-1990* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2021).

⁵¹ This discussion is inspired by the work of: Maxine Berg, 'East-West Dialogues: Economic Historians, the Cold War, and Détente', *The Journal of Modern History* 87, no. 1 (March 2015), 36–71: 38.

⁵² Michel Christian, Sandrine Kott, and Ondřej Matějka, 'International Organizations in the Cold War: The Circulation of Experts Beyond the East-West Divide', *Acta Universitatis Carolinae Studia Territorialia* XVII, no. 1 (2017): 35–60.

⁵³ Jürgen Danyel and Jan Claas Behrends, *Grenzgänger und Brückenbauer: Zeitgeschichte durch den Eisernen Vorhang* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2018).

⁵⁴ Antoine Fleury and Lubor Jílek, *Une Europe malgré tout, 1945-1990* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2021).

Nevertheless, these dialogue platforms were noteworthy, as Maxine Berg pointed out. Analysing the International Economic History Association, founded in 1950, he has emphasised the potential of reading Cold War events through the relatively small scale of analysis of an economic history association.⁵⁵

Comparably, this study challenges the historiography of the history of Europe in the 1980s through the AEH. The development of relations with Eastern European scholars follows the organisation of the Association's congresses. The “East enlargement” of the Association became public at the conference for the Bicentenary of the French Revolution in 1989, an anniversary of worldwide resonance. Simultaneously, the AEH began a gradual detachment from the EC institutions. The prevailing Italian existing literature has analysed the conference extensively, but only concerning the connections between Armando Saitta and the conference. Mario Francesco Leonardi has depicted the congress as the peak of Saitta's career, characterised by his studies on the French Revolution.⁵⁶ In the same vein, Alessandro Guerra has included the 1989 conference as part of Saitta's twenty-year presidency at the Italian Historical Institute for the Modern and Contemporary Age in Rome.⁵⁷ Recently, Anna Maria Rao has analysed the genesis of the conference as a long-running process since Saitta's first studies in the 1950s.⁵⁸ However, the European and international dimension of the initiative is absent or under-emphasised in these studies. Indeed, some critical questions arise: did the AEH's “East enlargement” affect the connection with the Communities during significant efforts in EC cultural policies? Did the “East enlargement” affect the AEH's affiliation with the European integration process? What were the effects on its structure and historiographical paradigm?

Furthermore, the existing literature pays little attention to the AEH conference on the occasion of the Fifth Centenary of the “Discovery of America” in 1992. At a time of significant international and historiographical debates on the meaning of the term “discovery”, and parallel efforts to “provincialise” Europe, the Association organised its second official conference. The reviews by Mario Francesco Leonardi and Emma Marras on the subject provide an overview of the lectures. However, they do not contextualise the genesis, the course, and the possible scientific consequences of the congress. How did the

⁵⁵ Maxine Berg, ‘East-West Dialogues: Economic Historians, the Cold War, and Détente’, *The Journal of Modern History* 87, no. 1 (March 2015): 36–71

⁵⁶ Mario Francesco Leonardi, ‘Armando Saitta e la Rivoluzione francese. Note complementari.’, *Critica Storica* XXVIII, 4 (1991), 667–676.

⁵⁷ Guerra, ‘Fra via Caetani e l'Europa’, 104.

⁵⁸ Anna Maria Rao, ‘Da Laterza al Congresso Del 1989: Armando Saitta e La Rivoluzione Francese’, in *Cultura e Organizzazione. Armando Saitta e La Storiografia Italiana Del Secondo Novecento*, ed. Alessandro Laruffa and Marcello Verga (Rome: Viella, 2023), 115–44.

conference fit into the debate on whether this anniversary should be celebrated? Did historiographical novelties emerge from the lecturers? How did this conference fit in with previous initiatives?

In a nutshell, this research project goes beyond sectoral studies and aims to study the Association of European Historians comprehensively. Through the analysis of the AEH, the dissertation challenges the history of European historiography, European integration, the Cold War, and the relationship between historians and politics in the 1980s.

Theoretical framework

This study is grounded on two theoretical frameworks: the history of European integration and the history of historiography.

European integration history

As an independent field of study, European integration history is relatively recent. The first studies on some post-1945 Western European countries involved in the integration process emerged in the 1960s, organised mainly by political scientists and legal scholars. At the time, historians were primarily interested in the prehistory of pro-European integration thinking to find useful past for the federalist ideas. During the first thirty years, the discipline was dominated by diplomatic and economic history. The research focus was the politicians, the political forces, the debates, and the reasons that underpin the integration process.⁵⁹

The topics of interest began to shift during the 1970s and especially during the 1980s with the opening of some EC institutions archives in 1983, namely the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) archives. New materials and sources regarding the 1940s and the 1950s became available, supporting research in a broader range of fields.⁶⁰ While the state-centric approach remained a core nucleus, some scholars have gone beyond the first-generation boundaries by including the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the European Court of Justice in the field. As Kiran Klaus Patel has argued, the cultural and transnational turns have added new

⁵⁹ Kiran Klaus Patel, 'Widening and Deepening? Recent Advances in European Integration History', *Neue Politische Literatur* 64, no. 2 (1 July 2019): 327–57, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42520-019-00105-4>.

⁶⁰ Règlement (CEE, Euratom) n° 354/83 du Conseil du 01.02.1983 concernant l'ouverture au public des archives historiques de la CEE et de la CEEA, June 1979 - Nov. 1982, HAEU, CM2/1983-00167/001.

angles, particularly in the representation, identity, and role of non-state actors.⁶¹ Concerning the research questions, the origins of the EC have been flanked by different perspectives assessing the impact of the integration process on European societies. Significantly, the discipline has increasingly experienced a self-reflexing turn, witnessed by new debates on historiography and narratives.

Focusing on the 1980s, research on the integration process and its consequences have diversified in recent years. This trait reflects, on the one hand, the new opportunities provided by archived-bases analysis on a decade in which the EC was committed to new policy domains and, on the other hand, the interdisciplinary and multilevel nature of the field.⁶² Dialogues with cultural anthropology, sociology, political science, and legal studies have shaded the boundaries and the aims of European integration history. According to Rüdiger Graf and Kim Christian Priemel, this interaction is distinctly useful for historians since other scholars provide insights from different perspectives regarding several concepts, ideas, and categories that are currently emerging in the historical field.⁶³ Unlike older integration research projects, recent historical studies adopt insights from neighbouring disciplines, a merging of theories and methodologies, and systematic interdisciplinary cooperation. As a result, European integration has been recently linked to broader processes in contemporary history, legal and social sciences, such as the rise of human rights, the role of international organisations, civic engagement, and the history of historiography.⁶⁴

Especially in the last two decades, a specific strand of research has been established on public engagement in European integration. In the early stages of the field, this topic has been mostly marginal. Currently, research has challenged the issue of how citizens and civil society have related to the integration process.⁶⁵ Existing literature has widely accepted that European integration mainly unfolded through top-level negotiations between politicians, economists, and representatives of interest groups. However, as many scholars have argued, European citizens and civil society addressed European affairs at crucial junctures. For

⁶¹ Patel, 'Widening and Deepening?', 328.

⁶² Wolfram Kaiser and Jan-Henrik Meyer, *Societal Actors in European Integration: Polity-Building and Policy-Making 1958-1992* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

⁶³ Rüdiger Graf and Kim Christian Priemel, 'Zeitgeschichte in der Welt der Sozialwissenschaften. Legitimität und Originalität einer Disziplin', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 59, no. 4 (15 October 2011): 479–508.

⁶⁴ Wolfram Kaiser and Johan Schot, *Writing the Rules for Europe: Experts, Cartels, and International Organizations* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Kiran Klaus Patel and Wolfram Kaiser, *Multiple Connections in European Cooperation: International Organizations, Policy Ideas, Practices and Transfers, 1967-1992* (London: Routledge, 2019).

⁶⁵ I hereby interpret the civil society as the set of associative, economic, cultural, and social relations existing in complex societies between citizens, which stands as a network distinct from and sometimes opposed to the state and political society. On the history and the debates about civil society, see: Michael Edwards, *Civil Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009).

instance, Frederike Neißkenwirth has scrutinised the collaboration between Dutch and German federalist sections of the European movement in the first decade after World War II.⁶⁶ Her study has described how civic engagement in European federalism was active even earlier than the birth of the EC. Similarly, but from a different perspective, Antonin Cohen has focused on a small group of intellectuals and its impact on the Schuman Plan.⁶⁷ He has claimed that the idea of a supranational authority had roots in the 1930s' and 1940s' far-right corporatism and personalism; aside from the specific hypothesis, his study asserts that the integration impulse of the postwar period had more diverse origins than traditional depictions. Moreover, a volume edited by Martial Libera, Sylvain Schirmann, and Birte Wassenberg has analysed the links between abstention, Euroscepticism, and "antieuropéisme" since the first EP elections in 1979.⁶⁸ Specifically, the volume has examined whether the elections boosted forms of euroscepticism, shedding light on the paradoxical link between elections and the resistance to the European integration. These few studies exemplify the emergence of a new research trend which claims to bring in the European integration history the bottom-up processes and actors. Accordingly, this dissertation considers bottom-up interactions of the AEH historians with the European integration process in the 1980s.

Thus, recent literature has disputed traditional assumptions and analysis scale of European integration. Furthermore, in the last few years, some scholars have challenged traditional assumptions about EP history. The 1979 first direct elections, and especially the Maastricht Treaty, have been long considered focal turning points not only in the EP history but even in the whole integration process.⁶⁹ Recently, scholars have stressed the lack of systematic studies on the EP's past and its impact on European integration.⁷⁰ Especially the 1970s and 1980s, precisely the period from the first direct elections to the Maastricht Treaty, have been scarcely analysed.

In countertrend, several studies have been newly conducted over those two decades aiming at de-emphasise the traditional hypothesis. Firstly, some scholars have resized the game-changer role of the 1979 elections. Mechthild Roos has highlighted the EP's formal powers to influence legislative processes since the early 1970s by analysing the Parliament's powers in

⁶⁶ Frederike Neißkenwirth, *'Die Europa-Union wird Avantgarde bleiben': Transnationale Zusammenarbeit in der niederländischen und deutschen Europabewegung (1945-1958)* (Münster: Waxmann Verlag, 2016).

⁶⁷ Antonin Cohen, *De Vichy à la Communauté européenne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2016).

⁶⁸ Martial Libera, Sylvain Schirmann, and Birte Wassenberg, *Abstentionnisme, Euroscepticisme et Anti-Européisme Dans Les Élections Européennes de 1979 à Nos Jours* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016).

⁶⁹ Cf. note 31.

⁷⁰ Kiran Klaus Patel and Christian Salm, 'The European Parliament During the 1970s and 1980s: An Institution on the Rise? – Introduction', *JEIH Journal of European Integration History* 27, no. 1 (28 June 2021): 5.

the budgetary decisions.⁷¹ With a different perspective, Umberto Tulli has stressed how the separation of the EP and the national mandate caused a series of downsizing for the MEPs, for example, the exclusion from national parties' meetings and the impossibility of discussing states' foreign policies with the national ministers.⁷² Noticeably, Roos and Tulli do not minimise the importance of the first EP direct elections. However, using the scale of the policy fields instead of the institutional shift, the 1979 divide seems to downgrade the MEP's workspaces in terms of networking and policy flow.

Secondly, Wolfram Kaiser has questioned the traditional literature approaches to the EP as a unitary actor.⁷³ He has effectively described how the conflicts among the same MEPs have hampered the institutional reform of the EP. Cross-party cooperation on issues like the Draft Treaty on the European Union in 1984 exhibited sharp divisions. Political ideologies and party policies often translated into discords among the groups; as a result, the EP's different structures, such as the various committees, were frequently in conflict, as Jan-Henrik Meyer has argued.⁷⁴

Thirdly, the interdisciplinary approach revealed the EP's influential role as a policy-maker in the 1970s and 1980s, long before the Maastricht Treaty. In the literature, the traditional assumption is that the EP was little weight before the introduction of the co-decision procedure in 1992.⁷⁵ Certainly, the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty awarded granted new formal powers in EP policy-making. However, in the 1970s and the 1980s, the EP had already performed crucial roles in the EC governance system, primarily in the informal dimension. As well as high-ranking Commission representatives were involved in the EP activities and meetings, various informal networks existed on different levels between the two entities.⁷⁶ Prominent MEPs like the former German Chancellor Willy Brandt (from 1979 to 1983), former French Minister of Health Simone Veil (from 1979 to 1993), and the former Italian Minister of Public Education Mario Pedini (from 1979 to 1984) strongly influenced EC policy-making. From a long-term perspective, Kaiser has demonstrated that

⁷¹ Mechthild Roos, 'A Parliament for the People? – The European Parliament's Activism in the Area of Social Policy From the Early 1970s to the Single European Act', *JEIH Journal of European Integration History* 27, no. 1 (28 June 2021): 37–56.

⁷² Umberto Tulli, 'The European Parliament in EC External Relations, From the Inception of European Political Cooperation to the Single European Act', *JEIH Journal of European Integration History* 27, no. 1 (28 June 2021): 121–38.

⁷³ Wolfram Kaiser, 'Towards a European Constitution? The European Parliament and the Institutional Reform of the European Communities 1979-84', *JEIH Journal of European Integration History* 27, no. 1 (2021): 79–98.

⁷⁴ Jan-Henrik Meyer, 'Pushing for a Greener Europe: The European Parliament and Environmental Policy in the 1970s and 1980s', *JEIH Journal of European Integration History* 27, no. 1 (28 June 2021): 57–78.

⁷⁵ Brunn, *Das Europäische*, 72.

⁷⁶ Patel, Salm, 'The European Parliament', 16–17.

the EP's Draft Treaty on European Union contained ideas and features that were successively included in the Maastricht Treaty and the 2007 Lisbon Treaty.⁷⁷

According to the recent strands of literature, this research project argues that in the early 1980s, some MEPs had key roles in supporting historical research, specifically the AEH, concerning common educational policies. This analysis is included within the framework of the great interest shown by scholars in the last decades concerning European initiatives in education and training.⁷⁸ Since the 2000s, some studies have begun a fascinating reassessment of the EC educational and cultural policies in the 1950s and 1960s, mainly due to the importance that the period assumed in the later phases.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the EC were essentially committed to realising a customs union and a common agricultural policy during their first ten years. This focus, combined with the low educational demand expressed by the European economy, produced a lacking formal legal recognition of the educational cooperation in the 1957 EEC Treaty.⁸⁰

Between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, the first EC enlargement and, above all, a series of coinciding economic, political, and cultural shifts marked a crucial turning point in the development of the so-called “second” European integration.⁸¹ Simultaneously, the combined effects of the tertiarisation and the technical transformation caused a profound change in European production processes. The EC policy-makers realised that vocational training was no longer sufficient to provide adequate preparation for the European workforce.⁸² As a result, the common vocational training policy became the path to pursue and realise an EC intervention in the field of higher education. Recently, Simone Paoli has disputed traditional literature's assumption concerning the necessity of a human and

⁷⁷ Kaiser, ‘Towards a European Constitution?’, 96–97.

⁷⁸ John Field, *European Dimensions: Education, Training, and the European Union* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1998); Sotiria Grek, ‘From Symbols to Numbers: The Shifting Technologies of Education Governance in Europe’, *European Educational Research Journal* 7, no. 2 (1 June 2008): 208–18; Andreas Moschonas, *Education and Training in the European Union* (London: Routledge, 2019).

⁷⁹ Antonio Varsori, *Towards a History of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Europe in a Comparative Perspective: Proceedings of the First International Conference : October 2002, Florence* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2004); Francesco Petrini, ‘The Common Vocational Training Policy in the EEC from 1961 to 1972’, *European Journal: Vocational Training* no.32 (2004); Anne Corbett, *Universities and the Europe of Knowledge* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006); Luce Pépin, ‘The History of EU Cooperation in the Field of Education and Training: How Lifelong Learning Became a Strategic Objective’, *European Journal of Education* 42, no. 1 (2007): 121–32.

⁸⁰ J. van der Harst and European Union Liaison Committee of Historians, *Beyond the Customs Union: The European Community's Quest for Deepening, Widening and Completion, 1969-1975* (Bruxelles: Bruylant, 2007), 223–35.

⁸¹ Antonio Varsori, *Alle origini del presente: l'Europa occidentale nella crisi degli anni Settanta* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2007), 9–15.

⁸² Moschonas, *Education*, 95–97.

cultural dimension alongside economic integration. Rather, Paoli has argued that the EC was obliged to develop the educational policies further due to economic considerations.⁸³

This process, in highs and lows, proceeded during the 1980s. The debates between the second half of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s were fundamental for the subsequent evolution of community education policy.⁸⁴ The first cooperation policies emerged, and the main conflicts opened up within the EC concerning the educational question were solved with the “victory” of the Commission over the Parliament, the rectors, and all the hierarchically inferior components of the university, business, and labour worlds. This new arrangement in power relations, combined with the technological reconversion of the European production systems and the Single Market strategy by 1992, redefined the contents and objectives of the educational action, restoring centrality to the EC dimension.⁸⁵ The main challenge concerned the creation of a workforce with knowledge, skills and, in some respects, even identities tailor-made to the perspective of a technologically advanced and internationally competitive single market. This process was accompanied by the “Europeanisation” of the education programs, which was necessary to strengthen European feeling in the global scenario.⁸⁶ What remains unclear in the studies on educational cooperation in the 1980s is the role of historians in developing these programs. This dissertation contributes to assessing such a role by analysing the AEH interactions with European educational policies.

History of historiography

According to recent developments in European integration history, one of the challenges of this study is to connect the analysis of a specific integration aspect with the history of historiography. Specifically, this dissertation aims to include the AEH both within the European integration process and the historiographical debate of the period, seeking to find connections, interactions, and influences between them. In this context, the growth of historiography in the 1980s is worth noting. In 1980, the International Commission for the

⁸³ Simone Paoli, *Il sogno di Erasmo: la questione educativa nel processo di integrazione europea* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2010), 176–231. For the traditional approach, see: Guy R. Neave, *The EEC and Education* (London: Trentham Books, 1984).

⁸⁴ Sean Van Raepenbusch, *Politique sociale, education et jeunesse* (Bruxelles: Éditions de l’Université de Bruxelles, 1998), 308–310.

⁸⁵ Isabelle Cassiers, ‘Le Contexte Économique: De l’âge d’or à La Longue Crise’, in *Milieus Économiques et Intégration Européenne Au XXe Siècle. La Crise Des Années 1970: De La Conférence de La Haye à La Veille de La Relance Des Années 1980*, ed. Éric Bussière, Michel Dumoulin and Sylvain Schirmann (Paris: Institut de la gestion publique et du développement économique, 2007), 13–32.

⁸⁶ Paoli, *Il sogno di Erasmo*, 176–231; Amaral, Neave, Musselin, Maassen, *European integration*, 94.

History and Theory of Historiography, affiliated with the ICHS, was created. It brought together scholars interested or engaged in research and teaching into history and the theory of historiography. The Commission was initiated in 1976 by the Romanian historian Lucian Boia, the Frenchman Charles-Olivier Carbonell, and the American George G. Iggers. Significantly, at the International Congress of Historical Sciences in Bucharest in 1980, 106 historians from 26 countries joined the new Commission, including Bulgaria, China, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Italy, France, Great Britain, Poland, Romania, USSR, East and West Germany.

In Carbonell's words, the history of historiography was a discipline long ignored or confused with bibliography. By the end of the 1970s, the convergence of different approaches, such as Croceanism, Marxism, “Nouvelle histoire”, and the new scientific thinking, affirmed the relative value of historical research. Hence, a new history of historiography was born, in which the links with society, culture, and ideas became essential. Consequently, Carbonell continued, every study could provide information on the context and time in which it was conceived. Every work of historical research, even the most imperfect, could bear witness. The teaching of history, historical vernacularisation, the relationship between texts and images, and the different representations of the past could also be interpreted in this sense.⁸⁷

Among its objectives, the Commission aimed to avoid regional or ethnocentric preoccupations to reflect the various theoretical interests in the past and ways of approaching the past. To achieve this goal, one of the main tools was the publication of a journal with an international perspective. In 1982, the Commission founded “Storia della Storiografia”, a biannual journal that worked as a point of reference for world scholars interested in the history of historiography. The management and scientific editorship was initially trusted by a group located in Milan and led by Bianca Cavallotti Valota, an Italian scholar working on East-European history. Maria Assunta Del Torre emphasised that, although very young, the history of historiography was already a completely autonomous discipline. She stressed the importance of defining the field of research. Rather than a simple review of the “progress” or bibliography of historical work, Del Torre continued, the history of historiography analysed all forms of interpretation and transmission of historical data in different times or cultural and geographical areas.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Charles-Olivier Carbonell, ‘Pour une histoire de l’historiographie’. *Storia della Storiografia* 1, 1 (1982), 7–25.

⁸⁸ Maria Assunta Del Torre, ‘«Storia Della Storiografia» , Una Nuova Rivista’, *Rivista Di Storia Della Filosofia* (1984-) 39, no. 2 (1984): 323–28.

Accordingly, the AEH dealt with the history of historiography with an international outlook. This study analyses the AEH in light of two opposite trends in historiography in the 1980s. Firstly, it is noticeable that the AEH perspective seems to challenge the above-mentioned “national revival” in European history writing during the 1980s.⁸⁹ Stefan Berger stressed how Europeanisation has questioned the meaningfulness of purely national narratives; as a result, many actors have reacted defensively to these trends by adhering to national narratives. In particular, radical right-wing movements in Europe have attempted to manipulate versions of traditional and familiar national histories to strengthen their political goals. However, the exploiting of national history to achieve political objectives was not limited to the radical right, as mainstream center-right and center-left parties in several European countries also employed this strategy. The European continent was frequently considered as a composite of the distinct national historical narratives and cultures. This approach typically viewed these national narratives as contributing to the establishment of a “closer political union” in the aftermath of the disastrous experiences associated with nationalism during the first half of the 1900s. Nonetheless, national narratives and their contested nature have had a significant influence in shaping national, regional, and European identities.⁹⁰ Against this background, this study assesses the AEH’s attempt to “Europeanise” European history against the “national revival” framework.

Indeed, despite the tendency towards a world-historical approach even in the history of historiography, the AEH paradigm seems to strike with this second fundamental historiographical trend of the period. In the 1980s, globalisation questioned the meaning of purely national narratives. Outside of Europe, global history as practised by William McNeill and by the world-systems analysis of Immanuel Wallerstein gave impetus to a history writing increasingly detached from the nation-centred perspective.⁹¹ According to Sebastian Conrad, while comparative and transnational approaches focus on individual cases and nations as their starting point, world-systems theory adopts the opposite viewpoint by positing that larger regional systems serve as the primary units of historical analysis, with smaller entities being derivative of these larger structures. World-systems theory emerged as a key macro-historical

⁸⁹ Cf. notes 8–9.

⁹⁰ Stefan Berger, ‘NATIONAL HISTORIOGRAPHIES IN TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE: EUROPE IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES’, *Storia della Storiografia* 50, no.1 (2006), 3–26: 3–4; see also: Ronald Grigor Suny, ‘Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations’, *The Journal of Modern History* 73, no. 4 (2001): 862–96; Guy P. Marchal, ‘Die Schweizer Und Ihr Mittelalter: Missbrauch Der Geschichte?’, *Schweizerische Zeitschrift Für Geschichte*, no. 55 (2005): 131–48.

⁹¹ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974); William Hardy McNeill, *Polyethnicity and National Unity in World History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

framework for global thinking in the 1970s and 1980s, offering an alternative to modernisation theory. This approach, epitomised by Wallerstein's model, drew on the work of scholars such as Karl Polanyi and Fernand Braudel to introduce a new paradigm of world-historical analysis. Although Wallerstein's model was partially influenced by the centrifugal logic of European expansion, it also diverged from the traditional paradigm by placing greater emphasis on systemic processes.⁹²

At the same time, the Eurocentric perspective was disputed by postcolonial scholars, who took a strand in the historiographical debate during the 1980s.⁹³ Subaltern studies, which originated in India, has presented significant challenges to the Eurocentric assumptions of historians. The approach, which focuses on the perspectives of marginalized or "subaltern" classes, emerged as a critical "history from below" during the social conditions that followed Indira Gandhi's state of emergency.⁹⁴ The field was therefore rooted locally, but it also drew on various international models. Vinayak Chaturvedi has argued that, although rooted locally, subaltern studies drew on various international models and evolved beyond the history of colonial India to encompass a range of regions and disciplines. By the end of the 1980s, subaltern studies had become the most dynamic sector within postcolonial theory and cultural studies in the Anglo-American academy, with numerous essays and monographs exploring "subalternity" in Latin America, Africa, China, and Palestine.⁹⁵ Accordingly, Sebastian Conrad attributes the criticism of Eurocentrism within subaltern studies to its non-Western origins, as it challenged the dominant interpretation of the global past centred around the rise of Europe. In the 1980s, despite the prominence of Eurocentric narratives, critical approaches gained a more central position in the historiographical debate.⁹⁶ As a result, a critical question arises: how did the AEH interact with these pivotal shifts?

⁹² Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 48. For a concise synthesis of the theoretical principles of world-systems theory, see: Fernand Braudel, *The Perspective of the World* (New York: Harper Collins, 1985); Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁹³ Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Provincializing Europe: Postcoloniality and the Critique of History', *Cultural Studies* 6, no. 3 (1 October 1992): 337–57.

⁹⁴ Conrad, *What Is Global History?*, 35.

⁹⁵ Vinayak Chaturvedi, *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial* (New York: Verso Books, 2012), vii–xii. Chaturvedi's volume goes further by analysing that, as the Subaltern Studies project became growing influential, its relationship to the heterodox Gramscian Marxism, which had informed its founding theoretical charter became increasingly distant.

⁹⁶ Conrad, *What Is Global History?*, 35.

Methodology

Actors

To approach the above issues, this research project focuses on three groups of actors. The first group includes the AEH members, the presidency office, and the Executive Board, whose activities are mainly unresearched. The study analyses both the institutional activity of the Association, including the conferences, publications, meetings, and fundraising, and the informal ties among members. This two-fold analysis scale investigating the official and the informal roles allows for comprehensively outlining the AEH framework. Especially relevant for examining the AEH's evolution is the membership from the Soviet bloc countries from 1985 onwards. The AEH's "expansion" towards the East was influenced by changes in the Soviet leadership.⁹⁷ In the early 1980s, the Soviet Union's handling of the deployment of new American and Soviet missiles created concern among Western European countries about the Soviet threat.⁹⁸ However, when Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985, a different situation emerged. During his first visit to the West, Gorbachev emphasised the importance of Europe to Soviet foreign policy.⁹⁹ Gorbachev mobilised the concept of a "Common European Home", stressing «an unquestionable integrity, although the countries involved belong to different social systems and are members of opposing military and political blocs».¹⁰⁰ Within this context, the participation of scholars from the Soviet bloc, as well as the interactions among them and the members from the Western European countries, produced several consequences in the Association's political links and its historiographical paradigm.

The second group of actors combines EC institutions, political parties, and single politicians. The focus is on the AEH links with EC institutions, especially with the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and the European People's Party (EPP). According to Wolfram Kaiser has argued, transnational Christian political networks, such as the EPP, along with less structured groups, have played a major role in shaping European integration.¹⁰¹ Kaiser has

⁹⁷ Laruffa, 'Historians' Affiliation', 285.

⁹⁸ Jonathan Haslam, 'Soviets Take Fresh Look at Western Europe', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 44, no. 4 (1 May 1988): 38–42.

⁹⁹ Neil Malcolm, 'The "Common European Home" and Soviet European Policy', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 65, no. 4 (1989): 659–76.

¹⁰⁰ Michail Gorbačëv, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1987).

¹⁰¹ Wolfram Kaiser, *Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

highlighted how the EPP and its members have established policy priorities, advocated for policy solutions, and formed alliances through interconnected party politicians who leveraged their overlapping party and government positions. Furthermore, Paolo Acanfora has recently stressed the Italian Christian Democrats' role in the European integration process in the 1980s.¹⁰² He has emphasised how the “Democrazia Cristiana” (DC)’s commitment to Europe was insistently evoked at party assemblies, including an explicit reference to the fathers of Europe. This feature characterised the whole decade as a response to the political, institutional, and ideological crisis of Europeanism. The DC considered Europeanism as its qualifying trait and presented the EPP to public opinion as the “true party” of Europe. Accordingly, this study investigates the role of the EPP and the Italian Christian Democrats in European identity-building through collaboration with historians.

The third group includes similar international networks of historians in the 1980s. The AEH collaboration with the EC institutions did not emerge out of the blue.¹⁰³ In 1980, René Girault, a French historian, initiated an international research project that investigated how power politics was perceived in Western Europe.¹⁰⁴ The primary focus of the study was the decline of European power, particularly in France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom, following World War II. By examining three distinct time periods (1938-1940, 1945-1950, and 1950-1957), the historians involved in the project portrayed Europe as a continent that had lost its global influence but had regained its economic and political potential. This studies led to the creation of an informal, transnational network of historians from European Community (EC) countries, which foreran the analysis of post-war European nations using a multinational research approach.¹⁰⁵ Concurrently, the Liason Committee of European Historians (LCEH) was established. In 1982, the EUCO and the Luxembourg University Centre jointly organised the “International Conference of Professors of Contemporary History” in Luxembourg, which concentrated on the origins and records of European integration between 1946-1952.¹⁰⁶ During the conference's closing, the attendees suggested and approved the establishment of a liaison committee of historians, consisting of two historians from every Member State or applicant country. The founding document outlined

¹⁰² Paolo Acanfora, ‘The D.C. and the “European Question” in the Transformations of the Cold War’, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 27, no. 3 (27 May 2022): 348–65.

¹⁰³ On the topic see: Laruffa, ‘Historians’ Affiliation’, 277–8.

¹⁰⁴ Ennio Di Nolfo, *Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy and the Origins of the EEC, 1952-1957* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012).

¹⁰⁵ Varsori, ‘From normative impetus’, 10.

¹⁰⁶ International Conference of Professors of Contemporary History: Luxembourg, 28-29 January 1982, Study of the Beginnings of European Integration : the Value of Source Material and Records 1946-52, Report and Papers, Apr. 1982, Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU), CEUE_PICP-1115.

the committee's objectives, which included disseminating historical studies on post-war European history, providing scientific advice to the EC, aiding researchers in accessing archival sources, and promoting history conferences in the field. Thus, the AEH joined in an already existing collaboration framework with historians. This research project compares the different affiliation patterns with European institutions to assess the politicisation of historical research, the fields of expertise, and the possible interactions between the groups.

Chronological order

This dissertation follows a longer time span than the strict AEH period of activity, based on a twofold scale of analysis.

Firstly, the study includes the AEH at the culmination of a process that had been ongoing since the 1950s. The European Parliament, and its parliamentarians, had significantly contributed to developing educational cooperation between the member states. Despite conflicts with other institutions, by the end of the 1970s, the EP and its members claimed a central role in developing EC educational policies. To assess the AEH origins, this dissertation analyses the activities of the EP and the MEPs in the field of education since the 1950s, also in comparison with other institutions such as the European Council, the European Commission and the Council of Europe. During the 1980s, historians' affiliation with the EC experienced a particular impetus due to the integration legitimacy crisis. Particularly, this study focuses on the links between the AEH and common educational policies. A broad time span is required to effectively analyse the contribution of the AEH scholars to the debate on educational policies, especially its involvement within the EP commissions activities.

Secondly, a long-term perspective is provided for the AEH historiographical paradigm. The Association's headquarter was in Rome at the Italian Historical Institute for Modern and Contemporary Ages (IHIMCA), and its first President, the Italian historian Armando Saitta, was one of the main actors. As argued by the existing literature on Saitta, the AEH was the peak of a marked international trend of the IHIMCA since the 1960s. This study frames the Association within a long-path framework that made the IHIMCA an international hub for historical research.

After providing a broad time frame for the three aforementioned issues, this dissertation follows the AEH's evolution chronologically. Specifically, the activities of the Association have been divided into three main timespans. The first is referred to its preliminary stage

from 1981 to 1985, before the official establishment, which includes a substantial part of the affiliation with the EC. The second includes the period from 1985 to the congress for the Bicentenary of the French Revolution, with the progressive detachment from the EC and the increasing involvement of Soviet bloc historians. Finally, the third starts from late-1989 up to the congress on the occasion of the Fifth Centenary of the Discovery of America and the dissolution of the AEH in 1992.

Europeanness approach

The category of "Europeanness" is employed for the analysis. The EC institutions attempted to establish a European identity through specific policies in the late 1970s, but the use of the "identity" concept to analyse these policies is contested. Some literature compares identity-building policies between EC and national institutions and suggests that the national conception of European identity could enhance democracy at the supranational level.¹⁰⁷ However, another strand of literature points out that the national scale may not be sufficient to evaluate the EC-specific framework.¹⁰⁸ Bo Stråth has outlined the historical limitations of the identity concept, describing the instrumental use of European identity as the promotion of Western development standards during the political integration process between the 1970s and the 1990s.¹⁰⁹ Oriane Calligaro argues that the concept of identity is frequently linked to national dimensions and heroic forms of allegiances, which are unsuitable for examining EC's cultural policies.¹¹⁰ Instead, Calligaro proposes using the category of "Europeanness," which refers to a more flexible and diffuse context.

Starting from this basis, this study employs the category of Europeanness rather than European identity. In this respect, it follows the path of the sociologist Monica Sassatelli and the political scientist Oriane Calligaro, who look beyond the EC/EU institutions and seek to explore the cultural policies further. Instead of outlining the weaknesses of the EC/EU initiatives in light of the symbolic pattern of the nation-states, Sassatelli has focused on the specific cultural actions at the European level. By emphasising the diverse representations of

¹⁰⁷ Soledad García, *European Identity and the Search for Legitimacy* (London: Pinter, 1993); Jos De Beus, 'Quasi-National European Identity and European Democracy', *Law and Philosophy* 20, no. 3 (1 May 2001): 283–311, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1010697818063>; Thomas Risse, 'A European Identity? Europeanization and the Evolution of Nation-State Identities', in *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change*, ed. Maria Green Cowles, James Caporaso, and Thomas Risse (New York: Cornell University Press, 2018), 198–216.

¹⁰⁸ Kohli, 'The battlegrounds', 113–37.

¹⁰⁹ Stråth, 'A European Identity', 397.

¹¹⁰ Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 1–11.

Europe and examining the practical implications of the apparently vague institutional concept of "unity in diversity", she has contested the notion of a centralised, hierarchical vision of European culture imposed upon a passive public.¹¹¹

Similarly, Calligaro has stressed the diversity of voices participating in the EC/EU promotion of Europeanness. Her research has overcome strictly cultural programs and has explored a broader range of case studies covering a larger time span. This wide-ranging object of analysis is crucial to stress the divergences between institutional and noninstitutional visions of Europeanness and its promotion. Although "unity in diversity" is the hypothesis of the EC/EU Europeanness promotion, she has argued, the institutional actors have primarily supported the representation of European homogeneity.¹¹²

The case study examined in this dissertation highlights what Calligaro has effectively defined as the negotiation processes between the "entrepreneurs" of Europeanness within the EC institutions and the noninstitutional actors that have given substance to Europeanness. Accordingly, promoting Europeanness is not conceived as an overarching identity policy that imposes a homogenous interpretation of European identity. Rather, this work agrees that promoting Europeanness is a process of negotiation in which entrepreneurs of Europeanness within the EC institutions involve noninstitutional actors and charge them to invent and communicate representations of Europe. The negotiation is hereby analysed through the relation between the AEH historians and the EC entrepreneurs, specifically the MEPs.

In this regard, the role of the EC institutions is a fundamental research object; however, this study challenges the centralised dimension of the Europeanness promotion. The monolithic conception is discussed even within the same institutions. As a result, this research considers the "entrepreneurs" of Europeanness within the EC institutions rather than the institution as a whole. The EC institutions were not homogeneous, and their opinions have frequently been divergent concerning cultural policies. In addition, the entrepreneurs of Europeanness have often been individuals, such as EUCO officials, MEPs, and national ministers of the Member states. Crucial and largely investigated, among these actors were the EUCO's functionaries; in contrast, scarce attention has been paid to the EP members. This dissertation argues that the EP supported the EUCO's initiatives and directly intervened as an entrepreneur of Europeanness.

¹¹¹ Sassatelli, *Becoming Europeans*; Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*.

¹¹² Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 7.

The conventional categories of “identity policy” or “cultural policy” seem insufficient to analyse the composite structure of actors and their different nature.¹¹³ This research project does not challenge the existence of a cultural policy within the EU since the enactment of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. However, the time frame of the analysis, the 1980s, concerns a period before the institutionalisation of the EU cultural action and looks at the actions which compensated for the lack of an institutionalised framework, for which the Europeanness approach seems more suitable.

Following Calligaro’s methodology, this study conceives Europeanness as a flexible and contingent relation with the concept of “Europe” rather than an identification with a rigid substance. Despite the EC’s symbolic initiatives, such as the flag, anthem, and grandiose rituals, may be charismatic and inspiring, they should not overshadow the more subtle forms of promoting Europeanness.¹¹⁴ As Calligaro’s work, this study draws on Laura Cram’s distinction between “heroic” and “banal” Europeanism.¹¹⁵ Heroic Europeanism involves a strong commitment to a community, even to the point of self-sacrifice. In contrast, Calligaro continues, banal Europeanism is more akin to Michael Billig’s concept of banal nationalism, in which identification is more mundane and contingent than normative, trivial, or insignificant.¹¹⁶ Banal Europeanism, Calligaro concluded, seems to promote what Monica Sassatelli has defined as flexible and diverse forms of allegiance instead of an exclusive or stereotypical identity.¹¹⁷

Against this theoretical framework, the dissertation argues that the promotion of Europeanness engaged by the EC institutions and the noninstitutional actors aims primarily at promoting a process of banalisation of the European presence in the lives of citizens. This study follows Elayne Oliphant’s conception of banalisation as a privilege and a hidden power. Analysing the “banality” of Catholicism in France, she argues that, despite France being officially a secular nation, Catholicism is undeniably a monumental presence, defining Paris’s temporal and spatial rhythms. Exploring the violent histories and alternate trajectories effaced through this banal backgrounding of a crucial aspect of French history and culture, Oliphant’s aim is to unravel the contradictions of religion and secularism. She shows how aesthetics and

¹¹³ Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 6.

¹¹⁴ Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 7–14.

¹¹⁵ Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 6. See also: Laura Cram, ‘Imagining the Union: A Case of Banal Europeanism?’, in *Interlocking Dimensions of European Integration*, ed. Helen Wallace, One Europe or Several? (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 233–46, https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230514430_11.

¹¹⁶ Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 7. See also: Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage Publications, 1995).

¹¹⁷ Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 7. See also: Sassatelli, *Becoming Europeans*, 197.

politics come together in contemporary France to foster the kind of banality that Hannah Arendt warned against: the incapacity to take on another person's experience of the world. Comparably, this dissertation argues that the EC institutions in the 1980s tried to establish a kind of hidden power through the promotion of Europeanness. Among the actors involved in this process, the study challenges what Kiran Klaus Patel has effectively described as the phenomenon of "interpellation", which refers to the EU's intentional involvement of noninstitutional agents to support its activity.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, Patel has disputed the dominant strand of studies that describes the EU (and previously the EC) cultural policy as mostly top-down, interventionist, and dirigiste.¹¹⁹ Accordingly, this study argues that the AEH supported Europeanness building in the 1980s as a noninstitutional actor through, at the minimum, a partial bottom-up process.

Transnational history

To analyse the bottom-up Europeanness-building process of the AEH, the study places this historical association in the framework of "transnational history". The paradigm proposed here starts from Akira Iriye's definition, namely the study of movements and forces that cut across national boundaries.¹²⁰ Going further, Bernhard Struck, Kate Ferris, and Jacques Revel have argued that transnational history encompasses various established tools and perspectives such as historical comparison, cultural transfers, connections, circulations, entangled or shared history, and modern international history. Despite these perspectives have different origins, they all share the belief that historical and social processes cannot be fully comprehended within confined and predefined spaces.¹²¹ Consequently, transnational history can be considered a lens of study rather than a specific method.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Kiran Klaus Patel, 'Integration through Expertise: Transnational Experts in European Cultural Policies', in *The Cultural Politics of Europe. European Capitals of Culture and European Union since the 1980s*, ed. Kiran Klaus Patel (London: Routledge, 2012), 72–92.

¹¹⁹ Kiran Klaus Patel, 'Integration by Interpellation: The European Capitals of Culture and the Role of Experts in European Union Cultural Policies', *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 51, no. 3 (1 May 2013): 538–54.

¹²⁰ Akira Iriye, 'Transnational History', *Contemporary European History* 13, no. 2 (May 2004): 211–22, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777304001675>.

¹²¹ Bernhard Struck, Kate Ferris, and Jacques Revel, 'Introduction: Space and Scale in Transnational History', *The International History Review* 33, no. 4 (1 December 2011): 573–84: 574. See also: Deborah Cohen and Maura O'Connor, *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (London: Psychology Press, 2004); Philippe Ther, 'Comparisons, Cultural Transfers, and the Study of Networks. Toward a Transnational History of Europe', in *Comparative and Transnational History. Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*, ed. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 204–25.

¹²² See for instance: Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective Since 1789* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Patricia Clavin, 'Time, Manner, Place: Writing Modern European History

Nevertheless, as recently argued by Miriam Tedeschi et al., one could observe some common points. Transnationalism “from below”, from the viewpoint of individuals and civil society, concerns cross-border sociocultural, political, and economic activities, practices, and behaviours that are meaningful since they affect the identity and sense of belonging of people. Moreover, these features are carried out on a regular, not exceptional, basis in the everyday lives of individuals and small groups. Although fluid and ever-changing, from these common points can be derived variables that describe the level to which activities, practices, and behaviours are transnational. In the international literature, one could observe several examples of these variables, which vary greatly, depending on whether the methods used are quantitative, qualitative, mixed, or comparative.¹²³

In this study, the use of a “transnational” approach is a conscious one. The term “transnational” stresses the role of networks and transmission processes; in the field of international history, it emphasises the role of non-state actors.¹²⁴ “Internationalism” was a term used by the actors themselves; despite its ambiguous meaning and a variety of possible connotations, it can be described as the impulse to create new networks and bonds that reached beyond the nation-state. As a whole, in the words of Daniel Laqua, internationalism frequently relied on transnational structures and movements; and, in turn, transnational action was often driven by particular understandings of internationalism.¹²⁵

Among the expanding list of objects of transnational history, one might encounter a range of topics with some degree of diversity, including studies on international organizations, non-governmental organizations, or social movements.¹²⁶ This study analyses the

in Global, Transnational and International Contexts’, *European History Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (1 October 2010): 624–40, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265691410376497>.

¹²³ Miriam Tedeschi, Ekaterina Vorobeva, and Jussi S. Jauhiainen, ‘Transnationalism: Current Debates and New Perspectives’, *GeoJournal* 87, no. 2 (1 April 2022): 603–19, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-020-10271-8>.

¹²⁴ Patricia Clavin, ‘Defining Transnationalism’, *Contemporary European History* 14, no. 4 (2005): 421–39; Gunilla Budde, Sebastian Conrad, and Oliver Janz, eds., *Transnationale Geschichte: Themen, Tendenzen Und Theorien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010). The entries in Akira Iriye and Pierre Saunier, eds., *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History: From the Mid-nineteenth Century to the Present Day* (New York: Springer, 2016). treat a great variety of subjects, going far beyond the role of non-state actors in international politics. However, the Dictionary also includes many entries which exemplify this approach to transnational history.

¹²⁵ Daniel Laqua, *Internationalism Reconfigured: Transnational Ideas and Movements Between the World Wars* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2011).

¹²⁶ Struck, Ferris, Revel, ‘Introduction’, 574; Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, *Transferts, les relations interculturelles dans l’espace franco-allemand XVIIIe et XIXe siècle*, Travaux et mémoires de la Mission historique française en Allemagne, Göttingen (Paris: Éd. Recherche sur les civilisations, 1988); Marcel van der Linden, *Transnational Labour History: Explorations*, Studies in Labour History (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003); Donna R. Gabaccia and Franca Iacovetta, eds., *Women, Gender, and Transnational Lives: Italian Workers of the World*, Illustrated edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Ioanna Laliotou, *Transatlantic Subjects: Acts of Migration and Cultures of Transnationalism between Greece and America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

background, formation, and history of an international historical association. The early uses of this framework were connected to international organisations or, more broadly, contacts, coalitions and interactions across state boundaries not under the direct control of central governments. Clear examples of such histories are those of nongovernmental organisations such as the League of Nations, or the United Nations.¹²⁷ While transnational history has progressively extended beyond the nation-state to include the broad social spaces and networks of peoples and ideas, the historian can even focus on communities of experts and shared epistemic communities. To this extent, the concept of transnational history stimulates questions about the cohesion of networks.¹²⁸

A transnational academic community such as the Association of European Historians is distinctive. It was neither state-initiated nor funded, as were several similar organisations, nor did it entail a specific transnational framework. The history of historiography, at the time, did not have a core set of assumptions, theories, or even methodologies. However, a strong commitment among historians to international meetings across the world's political divisions during the period of the Cold War and détente helped to shape the profile of the subject. This study uncovers the historical background to their international connections and the significance that political institutions came - or not came - to attach to the meetings. A history of this organisation reveals a European network of international academic diplomacy that, because of its close connections, held together an international framework.

Unlike national or geographically limited history, transnational history does not take place within a clearly defined and predetermined space. Struck, Ferris, and Revel have effectively described Jürgen Osterhammel's proposition of social history from a transnational perspective challenges the spatial relations and dynamics starting from modern history. Osterhammel explicitly recognises the nation's and nation-states' significant impact on people's lives and societies. Thus, the aim of transnational history is to provide additional perspectives on national and spatial levels that have influenced the formation of nations, nation-states, and peoples in the past. Osterhammel argues that nations and nation-states are only one spatial dimension among others, ranging from global history and international dynamics to regional, local, and individual levels. He rejects the nation as a “close box”; rather, he proposes to

¹²⁷ D. Shaw, *Sir Hans Singer: The Life and Work of a Development Economist* (New York: Springer, 2002); Clavin, ‘Defining Transnationalism’; Laqua, *Internationalism Reconfigured*.

¹²⁸ See: Paul Kennedy and Victor Roudometof, *Communities Across Borders: New Immigrants and Transnational Cultures* (Milton Park: Taylor & Francis, 2004).

analyse the various forces and processes that have shaped and transformed national societies.¹²⁹

Despite some significant examples,¹³⁰ combining and analysing these various interacting spatial levels remains challenging. Osterhammel advocates for a "polycentric" approach to social history from a transnational perspective, which involves analysing different spatial levels from local to global contexts. He suggests that historical analysis should ideally begin from both ends simultaneously. However, the feasibility of this approach and its impact on the historical narrative and explanation in transnational history remain challenging. Despite the classic theory of science distinguishes between inductive and deductive methods, most historians find that the process of historical research involves a constant negotiation between questions and hypotheses, and the critical analysis of primary sources and evidence.¹³¹

This study employs an inductive method. According to Struck, Ferris, and Revel, zooming in on a small-scale or individual level offers multiple advantages. First, it allows for the inclusion of actors and their agency in the analysis, which is often overlooked in macro-level analysis. These actors, whether they are at the small-scale local level, individual level, or part of a group or institution, serve as the crucial links between different transnational spaces.¹³² Second, this approach enables an examination of the spatial diversity of individual actors' experiences and lives across various scales ranging from the micro-level to the macro-level, including national and global scales.¹³³ Finally, zooming in and out from microanalysis, case studies of individuals, or small groups to large-scale issues grand and vice versa enables working close to primary sources.

¹²⁹ Struck, Ferris, Revel, 'Introduction', 576. See also: Jürgen Osterhammel, 'Transnationale Gesellschaftsgeschichte: Erweiterung Oder Alternative?', *Geschichte Und Gesellschaft* 27, no. 3 (2001): 464–79.

¹³⁰ Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation*; Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2000); Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisierung und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich*, 1st edition (München: C.H.Beck, 2006); Isabel Hofmeyr, *The Portable Bunyan: A Transnational History of The Pilgrim's Progress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

¹³¹ Struck, Ferris, Revel, 'Introduction', 577. On the topic, see: Jacques Revel, *Jeux d'échelles. La micro-analyse à l'expérience* (Paris: Seuil, 1998); István M. Szijártó, 'The Paths of Microhistory', *Quaderni Storici* 53, no. 3 (2018): 917–28; Jan De Vries, 'Playing with Scales: The Global and the Micro, the Macro and the Nano', *Past & Present* 242, no. Supplement_14 (2019): 23–36.

¹³² Concerning the focus on individuals that shape Europe as a shared space, see: Catherine Evutov and Stephen Kotkin, *The Cultural Gradient: The Transmission of Ideas in Europe, 1789-1991* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); Ute Frevert, 'Europeanizing Germany's Twentieth Century', *History & Memory* 17, no. 1 (2005): 87–116, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ham.2005.0014>.

¹³³ Struck, Ferris, Revel, 'Introduction', 577.

Far-reaching microhistory

Incidentally, the dissertation takes into account what Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon names “far-reaching microhistory”. He criticises the traditional microhistorians’ approach, which upholds the contextualization of micro-scale analysis, placing the small unit of study in a broader context. Instead, he proposes minimising all contextualisation vis-à-vis the environment, limiting it to the immediate environment of the research object. He accepts the “big” context but argues that history is not well-equipped to explore it critically, on its own terms, with the tools it has at its disposal. Consequently, Magnússon focuses on the micro perspective, but at the same time, he urges to bring to the microanalysis the eventual impacts of larger processes on every unique local environment. In other words, he does not aim to fit the microhistorical approach to other conceptual frameworks, especially world or global history.¹³⁴

Magnússon’s argument is in sharp contrast to some microhistorians. He especially refers to Francesca Trivellato’s attempt to find connections between microhistory and global history. Taking her cue from the Italian microhistory tradition, Trivellato emphasises that the potential of a microhistorical approach to global history remains underexploited. Since the 1980s, the encounter between Italian microhistory and global history has been confined primarily to the narrative form. She proposes new ways for intersecting micro and global history by revisiting several studies of individuals whose lives traversed multiple linguistic, political, and religious boundaries has enjoyed considerable success among scholars.¹³⁵ Going further, Trivellato argues that Italian microhistorians’ reflections on the relationship between micro and macro can stimulate a critical self-reflexivity into the practice of global history, which sometimes reproduces the same previous Eurocentric and teleological narratives. As a result, Trivellato concludes that the synchronic approach that accompanies the combination of micro-and macro-analysis counterbalances this tendency.¹³⁶

Magnússon strongly counters this interpretation. He applies microhistory on the intensely concentrated research object, deeply analysing all the tools and resources it offers, but with

¹³⁴ Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon, ‘Far-Reaching Microhistory: The Use of Microhistorical Perspective in a Globalized World’, *Rethinking History* 21, no. 3 (3 July 2017): 312–41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642529.2016.1252540>.

¹³⁵ See: Hans Medick, ‘Turning Global? Microhistory in Extension’, *Historische Anthropologie* 24, no. 2 (2016): 241–52; Mark Gamsa, ‘Biography and (Global) Microhistory’, *New Global Studies* 11, no. 3 (2017): 231–41; Szijártó, ‘The Paths of Microhistory’; John-Paul A. Ghobrial, ‘Moving Stories and What They Tell Us: Early Modern Mobility between Microhistory and Global History’, *Past & Present* 242, no. Supplement_14 (2019): 243–80.

¹³⁶ Francesca Trivellato, ‘Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?’, *California Italian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2011), <https://doi.org/10.5070/C321009025>.

the consciousness that the subject is indirectly part of a much larger context. It does not imply, however, that the larger context strictly determines the events at the local level.¹³⁷ While the micro context analysed could have little or no significant contact with the outside world, it is widely accepted that “the outside”, namely the events, the authorities, the thoughts, or the ideas, could reach, and even connect, people rooted in faraway places. Such an approach provides microhistory with the opportunity to contribute to research on the interaction between people in different cultural regions and thus to add considerable inputs to research on a larger scale.

Accordingly, this study aims to slow down the research process, examine each source, and place it in the context of other knowledge and large-scale context. The AEH is a notable example of the issues analysed by Magnússon. The Association has frequently carried out its activities differently from the general context. Alternatively, it has related to political macro-structures but has also detached from them. It has made academic contacts on an international level but has also refused to mix with similar organisations. The AEH involved scholars from the Soviet bloc but, at the same time, preferred not to involve institutionally recognised bodies, as happened in other case studies. In a nutshell, the AEH interacted in a non-linear manner with the external context; consequently, the far-reaching microhistory approach seems appropriate for this research project.

Spatial analysis

The spatial framework of the AEH provides relevant information on its growth. Within the analysis of the AEH’s evolution across time, a spatial shift emerges. Since 1985, the Association’s membership and structure experienced successive for its historiographical paradigm and vice versa, as well for its affiliation with the European integration process and its support to Europeanness. Thus, a spatial inquiry into the AEH’s evolution across time is necessary to expand the analytical dimension of this study.

Spatial methodologies in historical research have undergone a profound conceptual reframe over the last two decades. Roughly twenty years ago, Denis Cosgrove argued that a widely acknowledged “spatial turn” across arts and sciences corresponds to post-structuralist agnosticism on both naturalistic and universal explanations about single-voiced historical

¹³⁷ See also: Ian Cook and Michelle Harrison, ‘Follow the Thing: “West Indian Hot Pepper Sauce”’, *Space and Culture* 10, no. 1 (2007): 40–63.

narratives.¹³⁸ Correspondingly, he has stressed recognising position and context as crucially implicated in all knowledge constructions. Ten years later, this interpretation has been uplifted by the leading volume of Barney Warf and Santa Arias about the spatial turn and its implications for a broad range of disciplines.¹³⁹ They have emphasised how spatial thought has arguably played a major role in helping to facilitate interdisciplinary inquiry that offers a richer, more contextualised understanding of human experience, social relations and the production of culture. Similarly, Ralph Kingston has stressed how history's "rediscovery of space and place" is firmly on the agenda for the twenty-first century.¹⁴⁰ More recently, Mimi Sheller has described the potential of John Urry's "mobilities turn" as a heuristic development of the spatial turn.¹⁴¹ This shift includes, among others, the distribution of agency between people, places, and material assemblages of connectivity; a broader shift in the spatial imagination of mobilities towards "nonrepresentational" social theory; and lastly, the emergence of new methodologies linked to arts, design, and public policy.

This study asserts that space is a social construction relevant to the understanding of the past. According to the interpretation of Warf and Arias, the spatial analysis hereby presented considers the literal and metaphorical use and assumptions of "space", "place", and "mapping" both to denote a geographic dimension and as an essential aspect of the production of culture. Going further, this study applies a substantive notion of spatiality, which is considered decisive in comprehending the past as well as time. In this respect, the space is intimately involved in the occurrence of historical events rather than relegated to an afterthought. In a nutshell, spatiality is a key feature not only for the overused reason that everything happens in space but, more crucially, for the understanding of where, how, and why events occur.

Accordingly, this study aims to answer the following questions through spatial analysis: where and when did the AEH membership enlargement occur? Did it cover specific geographical areas? Did this enlargement affect its links with the EC and/or its historiographical paradigm? What were the interactions between all these elements?

¹³⁸ Denis Cosgrove, 'Introduction: Mapping Meaning', in *Mappings*, ed. Denis Cosgrove (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 5–34.

¹³⁹ Barney Warf and Santa Arias, *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2008), 2–3.

¹⁴⁰ Ralph Kingston, 'Mind Over Matter?', *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 1 (1 March 2010): 111.

¹⁴¹ Mimi Sheller, 'From Spatial Turn to Mobilities Turn', *Current Sociology* 65, no. 4 (1 July 2017): 623–39.

Sources and outline of the thesis

The analysis of the AEH brings several challenges and, depending on the involved focus, frequently requires the researcher to draw on indirect and/or limited sources. Many sources of the IHIMCA, the Association's headquarters, have been lost due to distracted renovations, the President's alternations, and inaccurate archival choices. In addition, as is still the case nowadays, it was not common to preserve personal notes, papers, or manuscripts of the AEH members. To further complicate the context, the meetings of the board, the scientific committee, and most of the informal gatherings frequently took place privately, leaving the researcher "blind-baking" with the mere information that a meeting occurred.

A particularly difficult situation occurred concerning the last AEH congress in 1992. In the Association's main archive at IHIMCA, there are only sources relating to the organisation of the congress, while sources relating to the lectures are absent. Consultation of public and private archives of the institutions and scholars involved in the conference was unsuccessful. The little information available about the conference comes from a few secondary sources. Despite the scarce availability of direct sources, the fifth chapter analyses to the genesis, the proceedings, and possible historiographical innovations that emerged from the 1992 conference in the light of the international political and scientific debate.

Another obstacle has been faced concerning the private archives of the AEH's members. As in the institutional archives, except for the IHIMCA, we can observe a scarcity of materials about the AEH, the personal archives of the most influential members of the Association have been a valuable source. However, most members have non-inventory archives in possession of their relatives, so the consultation is far from simple. In addition to the confusion of the materials, even simple access to these archives has been strongly difficult and sometimes impossible. Not least, the Covid-19 pandemic has seriously affected this research. For several months in 2020 and 2021, the archives have been forbidden to scholars, and travels to consult sources in different countries have been hardly possible. Notwithstanding, this study draws on a significant range of sources, including books, journals, newspapers, pamphlets, diaries, letters, law texts, memoirs, biographies, photographs, and oral history recordings.

The first chapter provides two long-term perspectives regarding the connections between historians and educational cooperation with the Europeanness building. In order to include the 1980s context in a larger framework, this early section of the study draws upon a variety of sources collected from the European Parliament archive in Luxembourg, the European

Commission and the European Council archives in Brussels, the Historical Archives of the European Union in Florence, and the Historical Archives of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The materials reveal significant links between the EP and Europeanness-building since the 1950s, primarily through educational cooperation. This study challenges the traditional literature on the topic by showing the significant role of EP concerning educational cooperation as early as the 1960s. Finally, the chapter includes a long-term analysis of Armando Saitta, the first President of the AEH, and the Italian Historical Institute for Modern and Contemporary Age, which entered into the debate on educational cooperation through collaboration with the EP.

The second chapter analyses the AEH preliminary phase before the official establishment. This section takes the cue from an overview of similar networks of historians in the period to include the AEH in a broader context analysing comparable frameworks. During the early 1980s, Saitta and the other AEH promoters began collaborating with the European Parliament, which was remarkably committed to educational cooperation, laying the ground for the structure of the Association. The starting point of the future AEH was the 1983 congress on Europe, which is analysed both in the light of the debate on educational cooperation and the historiographical trends of the period. In order to reconstruct the path to the AEH, this module pays particular attention to the sources collected at the archives of the EP, the IHIMCA, the “Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa”, and the Italian Central Committee for Historical Studies.

The AEH's official establishment and the progressive detachment from the EC institutions are the focuses of the third chapter. This section starts from the crucial two-year period between 1983 and 1985, representing the critical time span for the AEH establishment. Indeed, the Association has started to transcend the EC borders both concerning the membership and the scale of analysis. The paradigm shift is connected to the weakening of the connections between the AEH and the EC, which progressively decline. Simultaneously, the Association involves an increasing number of Soviet bloc historians, creating a bridge of cooperation between the two blocs, which is analysed in the last paragraph.

Nevertheless, the Association continued to support the Europeanness building without the EC's political and economic partnership, as shown in the fourth chapter. The 1989 congress on the history of European historiography on the French Revolution aim to Europeanise the scholars' outlook on the topic and spread a European feeling without the collaboration of the EC. The congress is framed in the international debate concerning the Bicentenary, specifically focusing on the dispute between the “traditional” and “revisionist” approaches to

the Revolution and the ICHS activities of the period. In this regard, the sources of the IHIMCA, the “Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa”, and the Italian Central Committee for Historical Studies, are integrated with the ICHS fond of the Centre historique des Archives nationales (CHAN) in Paris.

Finally, the fifth chapter discusses the AEH final stages. Notably, it considers the last activity of the Association, namely a congress in 1992 on the occasion of the Fifth Centenary of the Discovery of America. Similarly to the French Revolution congress, this section includes the congress in the international scenario, especially the debate concerning the “Discovery” and the postcolonial suggestions. Unfortunately, due to the scarcity of primary sources concerning this congress, the main discussion derives from secondary literature.

1. Before the AEH: educational cooperation and "Europeanisation" of historical knowledge

This chapter aims to frame the AEH within EP's long-term role in educational cooperation. Following the formation and development of common educational policies in the EC between the 1960s and 1970, it argues that the first forms of educational cooperation started long before the 1975-1985 conventional turning period. Specifically, the chapter highlights the EP's contribution to educational issues since the late 1950s, challenging the traditional idea of a superfluous and feeble role exercised by the Parliament on EC's decision-making until the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. To foster this argument, the chapter is divided into three sections. The first part addresses the EP's role in promoting common educational policies among the EC member states in the 1960s, despite the European Economic Community (EEC) Treaty lacking any formal joint commitment to education. The second section analyses the EP's struggle to intervene in the mounting debate concerning educational cooperation during the 1970s. Finally, the last part examines Italian MEP Mario Pedini's commitment to renewing history teaching in this context through the involvement of a historians' group led by the Italian historian Armando Saitta.

1.1 "Best supporting actor": the European Parliament and the educational cooperation in the 1960s

Most commonly referenced works of literature conventionally accept the period between the mid-1970s and the 1980s as the beginning of the educational cooperation within the European integration process.¹⁴² These studies underline the prevailing economic dimension of the integration process, at the expense of addressing the issue of creating a "European

¹⁴² Just to name a few: Ivor Goodson, 'European Cooperation in Education: Historical Background and Contemporary Experience', *European Journal of Teacher Education* 5, no. 1–2 (1 June 1982): 19–28; Hermann Muller-Solger, 'Educational Policy Cooperation in the European Community', *Zeitschrift Fur Padagogik* 36, no. 6 (1990): 805–25; Janet Fink, Gail Lewis, and John Clarke, *Rethinking European Welfare: Transformations of European Social Policy* (new York: SAGE, 2001).

education". At the very beginning of the integration process, some influential national governments encouraged an economic-driven European integration to preserve education as a crucial instrument for nation-building.¹⁴³ The only exception standing out was vocational training to provide the workforce with more robust qualifications or to facilitate the adaptation to newly introduced production systems.¹⁴⁴

The primary reason for this interpretation is that the EEC Treaty, signed in Rome on 25th March 1957, did not include a common education policy. The educational domain did not seem relevant for achieving the goals set by the Treaty. Indeed, the new organisation's primary objectives were to establish a common market for a harmonious development of economic activities, continuous and balanced growth, increased stability, and closer relations between the member countries. In a phase characterised by a substantial incidence of agricultural activities, a low-tech industrial production system, and very little development of advanced services, it was hard to prefigure how joint action on general education could contribute to realising the economic commitments of the EEC Treaty. The EEC was essentially devoted to realising a customs union and a common agricultural policy during the first twelve years of its existence. This task, combined with the low educational demands in the European economy, entailed the lack of formal legal recognition for the educational cooperation in the Treaty and no significant developments throughout the 1960s.¹⁴⁵

However, the shortage of economic interest was not the only cause of this exclusion. A further obstacle was the concern by most governments, the French one above all, notably that educational cooperation could undermine their national sovereignty. The areas of school and university education were primarily considered an exclusive national competence or, as in the case of the Federal Republic of Germany, a regional prerogative.¹⁴⁶ The Italian government was the only exception for several economic, social, political, and cultural reasons. Indeed, it was interested in the development of a common educational policy to increase its national prestige and contribute to solving its structural problems.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Antonio Varsori, *Introduction*, in Paoli, *Il sogno di Erasmo*, 12.

¹⁴⁴ Incidentally, vocational training was already part of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) framework since 1948. See: Regula Bürgi, 'Learning Productivity: The European Productivity Agency—An Educational Enterprise', in *The OECD's Historical Rise in Education: The Formation of a Global Governing Complex*, ed. Christian Ydesen (Berlin: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 17–37.

¹⁴⁵ Jan van der Harst and European Union Liaison Committee of Historians, *Beyond the Customs Union: The European Community's Quest for Deepening, Widening and Completion, 1969-1975* (Bruxelles: Bruylant, 2007), 223–35.

¹⁴⁶ Carlo M. Frediani, 'La Politique de La Communauté Européenne En Matière d'éducation et de Culture', *Europe En Formation*, no. 284 (1992): 51–53.

¹⁴⁷ Marinella Neri Gualdesi, *Il Cuore a Bruxelles, La Mente a Roma* (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2007), 67–87.

A recent strand of literature has disputed the lack of educational cooperation before the 1970s. The renewed and fascinating interest in the European Communities (EC) social dimension in the 1950s and 1960s, sparked by Italian scholars such as Antonio Varsori, Francesco Petrini, Simone Paolo, and Lorenzo Menchi, along with the application of its implications to its cultural dimension by Anne Corbett and Luce Pépin, has shed light on the need to reconsider this period with particular attention due to the crucial role it assumed in the following phases.¹⁴⁸

Although the EEC and Euratom Treaties did not expressly include a specific common education policy, some legal references within them laid the basis for the possible development of educational cooperation. Firstly, article 128 of the EEC Treaty instructed the Council of Ministers on a proposal from the EEC Commission to establish guidelines for a common vocational training policy enhancing national economies and the common market. Secondly, embracing a proposal by the Commission, the Euratom Treaty explicitly mentioned in Article 9, the creation of a university-level institution by the Council. Despite both outlining an area of common intervention in the training sector, the two articles were based on different political conceptions. On the one hand, the desire to implement a vocational training policy was essentially aimed at strengthening the EC's economic provisions; on the other hand, the prospect of a European university reflected the ambition to consider the joint educational dimension as a prerequisite for cultural and political development.¹⁴⁹

The first attempt to introduce a compelling debate on the education issue was made on 26th September 1961, when the EEC Commission proposed an act concerning General Principles for the Implementation of a Common Vocational Training Policy.¹⁵⁰ The consultation of the Parliamentary Assembly (PA), although not legally prescribed, was formally requested by the EEC Commission President Walter Hallstein. He encouraged the PA involvement because of the repercussions that these measures will have in the social field and the great interest of the

¹⁴⁸ Francesco Petrini, 'The Common Vocational Training Policy in the EEC from 1961 to 1972', *European Journal: Vocational Training*, no.32 (2004), 45–54; Anne Corbett, *Universities and the Europe of Knowledge: Ideas, Institutions and Policy Entrepreneurship in European Union Higher Education Policy, 1955-2005* (New York:Springer, 2005); Antonio Varsori, *Inside the European Community: Actors and Policies in the European Integration 1957-1972* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2006), 9–19; Luce Pépin, *The History of European Cooperation in Education and Training: Europe in the Making: An Example* (Luxembourg: European Union Publications Office, 2006); Paoli, *Il sogno di Erasmo*.

¹⁴⁹ John Lowe, 'Education and European Integration', *International Review of Education / Internationale Zeitschrift Für Erziehungswissenschaft / Revue Internationale de l'Education* 38, no. 6 (1992): 579–90.

¹⁵⁰ Avis sur les principes généraux pour la mise en oeuvre d'une politique commune de formation professionnelle, 26 Sept. 1961, Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU), CES-488.

PA in this field.¹⁵¹ Thus, Hallstein urged the Council to ensure the timeliness of the parliamentary opinion.

The EEC Commission was striving for the PA's political recognition in social and educational policy-making for two main reasons. Firstly, the parliamentary institution focused on cultural policies since the Common Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).¹⁵² The Common Assembly's main contribution concerned the link between cultural and social needs as the cornerstone of a new policy to improve workers' conditions. In 1956, the Assembly approved a motion to «establish a social action programme aimed at providing, through practical measures taken jointly by employers and workers, for the satisfaction of the material, moral, cultural and psychological needs of workers».¹⁵³ Going further, the Common Assembly emphasised the tie between education policies and freedom of movement in the Member states.¹⁵⁴

Secondly, the EEC Commission considered the Parliamentary Assembly as a valuable ally in discussing with the Council the legal, political, and financial framework of the common vocational training policy. While the PA shared with the EEC Commission a supranational and broad vision of vocational training, the representatives of France, West Germany, and the Netherlands within the Council were far more rigid and decidedly less inclined to dialogue.¹⁵⁵ The Commission's intentions were so evident that the French government officially complained about consulting the PA. Nevertheless, the Council accepted Hallstein's proposal to involve the PA by urging the parliamentarians to formulate a consultative opinion.

The Parliamentary Assembly expressed its position on 29th and 30th March 1962 with the cooperation of the Committee on Research and Culture, meanwhile changing its nomenclature to European Parliament (EP). Although the three leading parliamentary political forces had different theoretical bases, the debate substantially agreed on the inseparability of vocational training and general education. The Christian Democrats fully recognised the need to create a cultural base for vocational training, conceived both as a tool for individual development as well as an instrument to enhance workers' professional skills.

¹⁵¹ Avis sur les principes généraux pour la mise en oeuvre d'une politique commune de formation professionnelle, 21 Sept. 1961, HAEU, CES-488.

¹⁵² Sandro Guerrieri, 'The Start of European Integration and the Parliamentary Dimension: The Common Assembly of the ECSC (1952–1958)', *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 28, no. 1 (1 January 2008): 183–93.

¹⁵³ «Stabilire un programma di azione sociale volto a provvedere, attraverso misure pratiche adottate congiuntamente dai datori di lavoro e dai lavoratori, alla soddisfazione dei bisogni materiali, morali, culturali e psicologici dei lavoratori». Compte rendu de la réunion du 21 avril 1955, 7 May 1955, HAEU, AC-177.

¹⁵⁴ Compte rendu de la réunion du 7 mai 1955, 11 May 1955, HAEU, AC-178.

¹⁵⁵ John T. Addison and W. Stanley Siebert, 'Vocational Training and the European Community', *Oxford Economic Papers* 46, no. 4 (1994): 696–724.

Similarly, the socialists considered the general education of workers as an extraordinary mean of collective emancipation on a social and economic level. This interventionist perspective was even shared by the liberal group, despite its strong free trade and market economy-oriented stance. Within the framework of a generally hostile attitude towards public initiatives in the social and industrial sectors, the Liberals believed that the Community should acquire and assume specific competencies in training young people to support economic development.¹⁵⁶

The Council of Ministers broke through its reserves, adopting a resolution on 2 April 1963.¹⁵⁷ During the debate, Lionello Levi Sandri, representing the Commission, reasserted the parliamentary proposal to link education and vocational training. Accordingly, the Council adopted some fundamental objectives in terms of educational policies. Firstly, it advocated the inclusion of vocational training within general education. In addition to enabling everyone to acquire knowledge, technical skills, and achieve the highest level of training, the EEC Member States recognised the fundamental value of young people's intellectual and moral development. As a result, the Council supported the entanglement between general education and professional training from a global and continuous education perspective.

However, the legislative insights did not immediately lead to tangible consequences. Following a one-year stalemate in 1964, the EEC Commission developed a draft action programme on vocational training as an intermediate step between theoretical principles and concrete proposals.¹⁵⁸ In this respect, the Parliament expressed its resolution based on a report by the Italian Christian Democrat Armando Sabatini.¹⁵⁹ The tone of the debate was decidedly cautious as a consequence of the problematic political climate ignited by the French government's protests that would lead to the "empty chair crisis".¹⁶⁰ Sabatini refrained from explicitly citing the common education policy; nevertheless, he emphasised that the previous year the Council «had already approved a programme to be implemented with specific measures without detracting from the usefulness of the list made by the Executive concerning objectives and procedures to be followed».¹⁶¹ Accordingly, the Parliament supported a closer

¹⁵⁶ Politique commune de formation professionnelle, 1962, HAEU, CCEE_AFSO-53.

¹⁵⁷ 96e session du Conseil de la CEE, Bruxelles, 21.02.1963, HAEU, CM2/1963-9.

¹⁵⁸ Prospective régionale concernant l'emploi dans l'agriculture, 1964, HAEU, CEUE_AFEF-1028.

¹⁵⁹ Les programmes d'action de la Commission de la CEE en matière de politique commune de formation professionnelle en général et dans l'agriculture (Armando Sabatini), 17 Mar. 1966, HAEU, PE0-611.

¹⁶⁰ On the topic see: Philip Bajon, 'The European Commissioners and the Empty Chair Crisis of 1965-66', *JEIH Journal of European Integration History* 15, no. 2 (2010): 105–24.

¹⁶¹ «Aveva già approvato un programma da implementare con misure specifiche senza nulla togliere all'utilità della classificazione elaborata dall'Esecutivo in merito agli obiettivi da raggiungere e le procedure da seguire». Les programmes d'action de la Commission de la CEE en matière de politique commune de formation professionnelle en général et dans l'agriculture (Armando Sabatini), 17 Mar. 1966, HAEU, PE0-611.

link between school and practical education yearning for a unified structure. All political forces confirmed their widespread consensus; as stressed by the socialist Peter Hansen, «the most important part remains the basic education of young people, from which we will then try to arrive at a qualification».¹⁶²

Simultaneously, the EP committed to improving cooperation in the cultural field. From its perspective, schools had the task of providing a unified view of European culture, educating the younger generations to break out of national isolation, and developing a broader view of inclusion and solidarity within a common European system. Parliament's commitment to cultural cooperation resulted from specific political objectives and institutional processes. First, large parliamentary sectors, especially the Christian Democrats and the Liberals, envisaged joint educational and cultural policies as potential means to counteract the European Communist parties. In 1966, the Italian Christian Democrat Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza highlighted that «education is one of the greatest problems of a democratic society» and the «united front of western democracy, necessary to defend freedom from the threat of communist totalitarianism, requires a more stringent solidarity between spiritual and cultural forces with an authentic European spirit».¹⁶³ Second, the EP as a whole recognised that deepening the cultural integration process could contribute strengthening its institutional power. They hoped extensive cultural integration would increase the demand for stronger democratic and representative institutions. In the MEPs' minds, this process would mean a central role for the Parliament.

Furthermore, the EP already had dedicated structures. In 1961, the Parliamentary Assembly established a Committee for Research and Culture. Defining its role and goals, Mario Pedini, a prominent Italian Christian Democrat and member of the committee, in a letter to the Belgian chairman Charles Janssens stated that:

¹⁶² «La parte più importante rimane l'educazione di base dei giovani, da cui poi si cercherà di arrivare a una qualifica». Ibid.

¹⁶³ «L'educazione è uno dei più grandi problemi di una società democratica»; «il fronte unito della democrazia occidentale, necessario per difendere la libertà dalla minaccia del totalitarismo comunista, richiede una più stretta solidarietà tra le forze spirituali e culturali con un autentico spirito europeo». Proposition de résolution concernant la création d'un Office européen de la jeunesse (Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza), 4 May 1966, HAEU, PE0-673.

«Our commission has a function of primary importance. It would be appropriate to identify the lines of a cultural policy for the Six and to study how these can affect other circles that will only later gravitate towards our Community. The priority is to give our commission objective information on the school policy of the individual countries of the Community to quickly achieve the co-ordination of school curricula and a well-organised exchange of teachers and students».¹⁶⁴

The committee gradually acquired a fundamental role in parliamentary dynamics. In 1965, the Parliament recognised the committee's specific weight and increased its membership from 17 to 29.¹⁶⁵ Provocatively, in the context of the parliamentary debate on the establishment of the European Schools, the West-German Socialist member Martin Seifritz wondered whether, «given the European Parliament's interest in the specific problems of cultural and education policy», it would have been more appropriate to «discuss whether vocational training should be an economic policy rather than an education and culture policy».¹⁶⁶

Education increasingly became the critical issue within the Committee for Research and Culture during the early 1960s. The first issue concerned a possible European university.¹⁶⁷ On the one hand, the supporters of the project, in the words of the Belgian Christian Democrat Pierre De Smet, claimed that «the creation of a university institute at the European level would be an excellent model and experiment for solving the problems of teaching and

¹⁶⁴ «La nostra commissione ha una funzione di primaria importanza. Sarebbe opportuno individuare le linee di una politica culturale dei Sei, e studiare fin d'ora come queste possano interessare altri ambienti che solo successivamente graviteranno verso la nostra Comunità. La priorità è dare alla nostra commissione una oggettiva informazione sulla politica scolastica dei singoli paesi della Comunità affinché si giunga rapidamente ad una coordinazione dei programmi scolastici e a uno scambio ben organizzato di insegnanti e alunni». Pedini Mario, Chrétien-Démocrate, 28 juin 1962, HAEU, CPPE-450.

¹⁶⁵ Nombre des membres de la Commission de la recherche et de la culture, 22 Mar. 1965, PE0-4772.

¹⁶⁶ «Visto l'interesse del Parlamento europeo per i problemi specifici della politica culturale e dell'istruzione, potrebbe essere opportuno discutere se la formazione professionale debba rientrare nella politica dell'istruzione e della cultura piuttosto che nella politica economica». Création d'écoles européennes préparant aux études de niveau universitaire, 24 Mar. 1965, HAEU, PE0-22221.

¹⁶⁷ The idea of a European university institution was already on the agenda of the pro-European movements at the Hague Congress and the Lausanne Conference (1948-1949). The project did not take shape until the «relaunch» at the Messina Conference of Foreign Minister of the six founder countries in 1955. Walter Hallstein, the German State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, promoted the idea of a fully-fledged European university to be included in the future Euratom Treaty. Despite the efforts of the Italian government, the interim committee set up by the European Commission and the European Parliament, attempts to establish the European University failed, mainly because of the opposition of General de Gaulle and national academic circles. It was within an intergovernmental framework that the Heads of State and Government, meeting in Bonn in July 1961, put the project back on the drawing board, resolving the issue by committing to participate in the financing of a European University Institute in Florence. See: Jean-Marie Palayret, 'Des négociations à la création de l'Institut universitaire européen de Florence', *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 114, no. 1 (2002): 343–63, <https://doi.org/10.3406/mefr.2002.9856>.

culture in general».¹⁶⁸ On the other hand, some opponents like West-German Fernand Friedensburg were dubious about creating an «Italian national institute with a simple European label».¹⁶⁹ Martin Seifriz even proposed to abandon the Bonn suggestions and establish an international study and research institute in Berlin.

The second issue concerned the balance of power between member states and the EEC concerning education and culture. Although the members of the committee agreed about the Parliament's commitment to cultural policies, urging the assembly to intervene more energetically in the field, a clear contrast emerged. Some participants, like the Dutch Christian Democrat Willem Schuijt, rejected a complete cultural unification, claiming that it was an attempt at homogenisation; and other members, like Seifriz, who argued for «a balance between European cultural heritage and individual national heritages».¹⁷⁰ We might argue that a twofold conflict loomed. On the one hand, we can observe what Roel J. in 't Veld, Hans-Peter Füssel, and Guy Neave have described as “the attack of internationalism” and the attempt of the nation-state to defend its positions in the cultural field.¹⁷¹ On the other hand, as argued by Julian Lonbay, the debate depicted frictions between multiple cultural identities that challenged the centripetal forces of statehood.¹⁷² In the background, we can observe the issue of European identity and its definition through a common heritage, as widely discussed by Jacinthe Ruel, and the construction of what Hugh Seton-Watson has named “European mystique”.¹⁷³

The report produced by the committee and subsequently approved by the Parliament was the result of a broad compromise. The mediation would characterise the parliamentary activities in the following years: «although we should not strive for a unification or standardisation of European education, we should nevertheless organise very close cooperation between the

¹⁶⁸ «La création d'un institut universitaire au niveau européen constituerait un excellent modèle et une expérimentation pour résoudre les problèmes d'enseignement et de culture en genre». Réunion des 26 et 27 novembre 1962, HAEU, PE0-4165.

¹⁶⁹ «Italienisches nationales Institut mit einem einfachen europäischen Label». At the Bonn conference in 1961, the French head of state set two conditions: a) to avoid the name “University”, as it was not a matter of creating a body authorised to award degrees; b) to include the Institute within the framework of cultural cooperation between the six governments and not under the auspices of Euratom. See: Palayret, ‘Des négociations’, 346–7.

¹⁷⁰ «Una completa unificazione non solo in ambito economico e sociale, ma anche in ambito culturale». Réunion des 26 et 27 novembre 1962, HAEU, PE0-4165.

¹⁷¹ Roel J. in 't Veld, Hans-Peter Füssel, and Guy Neave, *Relations between State and Higher Education: Legislating for Higher Education in Europe* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1996), 19.

¹⁷² Julian Lonbay, ‘Education and Law. The Community Context’, *European Law Review* 14, no. 6 (1989): 363–87: 364.

¹⁷³ Jacinthe Ruel, ‘Quale Identità per l'Europa? La Comunità Europea e La Retorica Della Cultura e Dell'identità (1970-98)’, in *Storia e Storici d'Europa Nel XX Secolo*, ed. Maria Matide Benzoni and Brunello Viguzzi (Milano: Unicopli, 2001), 83–111; Hugh Seton-Watson, ‘What Is Europe, Where Is Europe? From Mystique to Politique’, *Encounter* LXV, no. 2 (July 1985): 10–29.

member states at all levels of education».¹⁷⁴ Based on this guideline, the Parliament conceived five proposals.

Firstly, in the area of primary and secondary education, the EP advocated the extension of the European Schools to cities not hosting the headquarters of the European institutions, to involve people from other European countries and integrate teaching beyond the national and linguistic scope of the existing schools.¹⁷⁵ On this point, however, the Parliament agreed that despite «the European Schools' contribution to the strengthening of the European idea in school education in general», this intervention would have a «limited influence on a common European policy in the cultural field».¹⁷⁶

Secondly, concerning vocational training, the Parliament proposed the establishment of a cultural fund to finance travel and accommodation costs as part of an international exchange programme for young workers. In 1964, the first exchange programme was adopted by the European Council within the framework of the EEC Treaty.¹⁷⁷ Although not strictly a component of vocational training common policy, the programme provided short periods in one of the member states to improve the training of young people. Through the funding, the EP sought to give concrete form to this international cooperation.

Thirdly, concerning university education, the EP expressed its support to the art.57 of the EEC treaty for the common recognition of diplomas, certificates, and other qualifications by proposing the development of minimum syllabuses valid in all EC countries. To this extent, parliamentary support for the creation of the European university did not wane following the project's suspension in 1965 due to the “empty chair crisis”.¹⁷⁸ On the eve of the negotiations breakdown, the chairman of the Committee on Research and Culture, Janssens, stated with disappointment that the institute would not be able to award degrees and therefore questioned the usefulness of such a limited institution.¹⁷⁹ Notwithstanding, in the opinion drafted on

¹⁷⁴ «Si nous ne devons pas aspirer à une unification ou à une standardisation de l'enseignement européen, nous devons néanmoins organiser une coopération très étroite entre les États membres à tous les niveaux de l'enseignement». Problèmes de coopération culturelle entre les États membres (August de Block), 1962-1963, HAEU, PE0-428.

¹⁷⁵ The first European School was established in Luxembourg in 1953 by private initiative of the ECSC Parents' Association. Subsequently, the School became public through a treaty approved by the ECSC member states in 1957. On september 1958, the member states approved a Protocol to officially allocate the European schools to the education of EC employees and researchers. On the topic see: Robert H. Beck, 'Change and Harmonization in European Education', *British Journal of Educational Studies* 21, no. 1 (1973), 8–9.

¹⁷⁶ «la contribution des écoles européennes au renforcement de l'idée européenne dans l'enseignement scolaire en général [...] et, dans une mesure limitée, à une politique européenne commune dans le domaine culturel». Problèmes de coopération culturelle entre les États membres (August de Block), 1962-1963, HAEU, PE0-428.

¹⁷⁷ Steve Bainbridge, Julie Murray, and Terry Ward, *An Age of Learning: Vocational Training Policy at European Level* (CEDEFOP, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2000), 22.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. note 151.

¹⁷⁹ Creation of an European University, 1964, HAEU, EUI-884.

behalf of the Commission, Schuijt reaffirmed that «the critical situation in which the negotiations for the resumption of European integration currently find themselves is in no way a reason to pass over the university project in silence».¹⁸⁰

Lastly, the EP urged for the establishment of a European study fund. The art.123 of the EEC Treaty, through the European Social Fund, provided for the financing of unemployed workers' mobility to improve their professional skills.¹⁸¹ Officially launched on 20 September 1960, this fund was limited to reimbursing expenses for the vocational re-education of unemployed workers. Instead, the Parliament proposed to set up a special fund to democratise education and guarantee adequate educational opportunities for European citizens.

Arguably, this five-point programme concerning cultural cooperation between the EEC member states was the most advanced synthesis of the parliamentary proposal on education in the 1960s and the last significant activity of the Committee on Research and Culture. The Commission was dissolved on 2 February 1967 and replaced by the Committee on Research, Energy and Atomic Problems, while the competencies for education were significantly entrusted to the Political Commission.

Between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, the first EC enlargement and, above all, a series of coincident economic, political, and cultural shifts marked a crucial turning point in the development of the so-called “second” European integration.¹⁸² The workers' and students' revolts that broke out between 1967 and 1969 in the main European countries played a decisive role, which has been surprisingly underestimated by the historiography on European integration.¹⁸³ Between April and July 1968, the leadership of the EC suffered significant pressures for the relaunch of educational cooperation. The protest movements that had broken out in France, Holland, Germany, Italy, and Belgium approached with mistrust and indifference to the process of European integration.¹⁸⁴ In a speech in June 1968, the Vice-President of the newborn European Commission (EUCO) Levi Sandri admitted with a hint of despondency that «none of these young people, whether students or

¹⁸⁰ «In een namens de Commissie opgesteld advies herhaalt Schuijt dat "de kritieke situatie waarin de onderhandelingen over de hervatting van de Europese integratie zich thans bevinden, geenszins een reden is om het universitaire project in stilte te laten passeren». Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Brigid Laffan, 'Policy Implementation in the European Community: The European Social Fund as a Case Study', *Journal Common Market Studies* 21, no. 4 (1982): 389.

¹⁸² Antonio Varsori, *Alle origini del presente: l'Europa occidentale nella crisi degli anni Settanta* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2007), 9–15.

¹⁸³ Antonio Varsori, 'La Storiografia Sull'integrazione Europea', *Europa Europe* no. 1 (2001): 69–93.

¹⁸⁴ Giovanni Arrighi, Terence K. Hopkins, and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Anti-Systemic Movements* (London: Verso Books, 1989).

workers, none of their movements, saw, pointed to a united Europe as the goal towards their aspirations».¹⁸⁵

In this context, besides the institutional structures of individual member states, the survival of the whole integration process was at stake. The use of a predominantly technical language, tools, and decision-making processes obscured the political significance of the EC. Faced with a generation that, for the first time, was accessing the political arena without a war experience, the original aims of economic growth and peacekeeping appeared to have poor significance. According to Levi Sandri, Sicco Mansholt, and Jean Rey, valuable EUCO members, the EC had to redefine its image, content, and mission to ensure the future of an integration project.¹⁸⁶ In addition, the fulfilment of the customs union implicated the widespread feeling that the “economic phase” was coming to an end, replaced by the “political and cultural phase”.¹⁸⁷ On the occasion of the ceremony for the completion of the customs union in Brussels, the EUCO President Rey urged to focus on the issues concerning young people, notably education, training, and university exchanges, to increasingly involve them in the European integration process.¹⁸⁸

Meanwhile, within the member states crossed by the protest movements, and especially in France shattered by the students’ and workers’ revolts of “May”, new reflections on the reform of national education policies and systems emerged.¹⁸⁹ During the 1960s, the French government succeeded in cultivating national pride as a fundamental political and ideological glue; instead, at the end of the decade, it was forced to face a decline in national feelings to the benefit of dangerous third-world myths and regionalist suggestions.¹⁹⁰ In this context, the Europe of culture and education was no longer a threat to national identity but a valuable resource to stem the subversive and centrifugal drifts that were tempting French youth.¹⁹¹

On 24th July 1968, the possible outcomes of these processes were first outlined in a passionate speech by the French Minister of National Education Edgar Faure to the French

¹⁸⁵ «Nessuno di questi giovani, fossero studenti od operai, nessuno dei loro movimenti, ha visto, ha additato in un’Europa unita l’obiettivo verso il quale marciare per poter realizzare le loro aspirazioni». Discours sur "La Comunità europea oggi" tenu à conclusion du dixième cours du Centre d'information et d'études sur les Communautés européennes pour les Venises (Venise, 9 juin 1968), HAEU, LLS-9.

¹⁸⁶ Lonbay, ‘Education and Law. The Community Context’, 365–6.

¹⁸⁷ Lucio Levi and Umberto Morelli, *L’unificazione europea. Cinquant’anni di storia* (Torino: Celid, 1994), 165–166.

¹⁸⁸ Déclaration à l’occasion de l’achèvement de l’union douanière de 1er juillet 1968”, 1967-1969, HAEU, CECA_APBF-1487.

¹⁸⁹ Keith A. Reader and Khursheed Wadia, *The May 1968 Events in France: Reproductions and Interpretations* (New York:Springer, 2016).

¹⁹⁰ Emmanuel Livet and Michelle Valo, ‘L’Europe En Traînant Les Pieds’, *Monde de l’éducation* 152, no. 9 (1988): 72.

¹⁹¹ Giuliano Garavini, *Dopo Gli Imperi: L’integrazione Europea Nello Scontro Nord-Sud* (Milan: Mondadori Education, 2009).

National Assembly.¹⁹² Although a member of the Gaullist government of Couve de Murville, Faure was an independent politician hailing from a long militancy in the Radical Party with brief experiences in minor centre-left formations. While not typical pro-European, Faure was sufficiently detached from the Gaullist nationalism to understand that «our higher education cannot alienate itself from European construction, [...] Our neighbours are grappling with similar difficulties. Is this not perhaps the moment to attempt major concertation at the European level to examine all these problems?».¹⁹³ Going further, in his speech on 16 October 1968, Furet proposed «a sort of European university federation that would go beyond the current Common Market countries».¹⁹⁴

Faure reasserted his opinions at the 6th Conference of the Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe (CoE) member states, held in Versailles from twentieth to 22nd May 1969.¹⁹⁵ The novelty of Faure's discourse consisted of the proposal for greater international cooperation and the original and sophisticated political strategy. He argued that a European Community could not be separated from a new Europeanism providing solutions to the educational, political, and cultural crises. More concretely, he proposed to define a new role for the education systems, starting with creating a European Statute for teachers and students, a European Information Bank, a European University Institute for Advanced Technology, and a European Office of Education.

Faure found enthusiastic interlocutors in Strasbourg. As Kiran Klaus Patel has argued, in several instances, the EC has exploited the CoE experience as a point of reference and inspiration for its policies, especially concerning the cultural heritage.¹⁹⁶ It is worth noting that the concept of European cultural heritage, as developed by the CoE, was emulated by the EC and employed to legitimate its actions in the field of culture during the 1970s.¹⁹⁷ The first official agreement on cultural issues at a European level was the 1954 European Cultural Convention of the CoE. The Convention stated that the CoE aimed to «achieve a greater unity between its Members for the purpose, among others, of safeguarding and realising the ideals

¹⁹² Déclaration de Edgar Faure (Assemblée nationale, 24 juillet 1968), Discours de personnalités européennes, HAEU, EM-261

¹⁹³ «Notre enseignement supérieur ne peut s'éloigner de la construction européenne, [...] Nos voisins sont aux prises avec des difficultés similaires aux nôtres. N'est-ce pas le moment de tenter une grande concertation au niveau européen pour examiner tous ces problèmes?». Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ «Une sorte de fédération européenne des universités qui irait au-delà des pays actuels du Marché commun». Déclaration de Edgar Faure (Assemblée nationale, 16 octobre 1968), Discours de personnalités européennes, HAEU, EM-261.

¹⁹⁵ Report of the sixth conference of European ministers of Education (Versailles, 20-22 May 1969), 24 Sept. 1969, Historical Archives of the Council of Europe (HACE), CME/HF (69).

¹⁹⁶ Kiran Klaus Patel, 'Provincialising European Union: Co-Operation and Integration in Europe in a Historical Perspective', *Contemporary European History* 22, no. 4 (November 2013): 656.

¹⁹⁷ Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 82–3.

and principles which are their common heritage».¹⁹⁸ The CoE confirmed its cultural vocation with the creation of the Cultural Fund in 1959 and the establishment of the Council for Cultural Cooperation in 1962.¹⁹⁹ In Faure's view, these instruments needed adequate strength and resources while, at the same time, finding the correctives to address the new educational issues.

Since 1967, the Council of Europe had publicly manifested a willingness to take advantage of the growing desire for educational and cultural cooperation raised by the protest movements.²⁰⁰ The CoE hoped to increase its specific weight in the international organisation system through a unique position in the education domain. Therefore, Faure's proposal found an immediate and enthusiastic response from the CoE institutions, especially from its Consultative Assembly. On 30th September 1969, the German Social Democrat MEP Georg Kahn-Ackermann tried to assimilate the proposal of the French Minister of National Education by bringing under the CoE the wholesale European educational cooperation. He argued that the CoE should have been the host of the Ministers of Education conference and the headquarter of a new European Bureau of Education supported by a network of independent institutes, including a Documentation and Information Centre, a Research and Innovation Centre, and a University Centre for High Technology Studies.²⁰¹ However, the EEC governments never assessed the Kahn-Ackermann plan seriously. They were looking beyond the CoE to improve educational cooperation. The context was ripe for an assumption of responsibility at the EEC's highest levels, and the Council of Europe was technically and politically inadequate to challenge Faure's suggestions.

Simultaneously, President De Gaulle's exit from the French political scene coincided with the appointment of Olivier Guichard as the head of the French Ministry of National Education. He linked the French proposal for European educational cooperation to economic processes and the anti-American feeling. Guichard outlined his strategy in a speech at the Dutch Institute of International Relations in The Hague on 27 November 1969.²⁰² The new minister reiterated the urgency of concerted action in developing national policies; however, unlike Faure, he de-emphasised the focus on student movements and the necessity to involve them in the European integration process. Guichard urged to safeguard the economy, the increasing

¹⁹⁸ European Cultural Convention, 19 Dec. 1954, HACE, ETS No. 018, 1.

¹⁹⁹ Jacques Fialaire, *L'école en Europe* (Paris: La Documentation française, 1996), 150–3.

²⁰⁰ Report on international cultural co-operation in a changing society, 20 Sept. 1967, HACE, AS/Cult (19) 24.

²⁰¹ Report on “Twenty years of European cultural co-operation”, 30 Sept. 1969, HACE, AS/Cult (23) 14.

²⁰² Extrait du journal “Le Monde” du 29 novembre 1969. Devant l’Institut néerlandais des relations internationales Guichard propose la création d’un Centre européen pour la développement de l’éducation, 1 Dec. 1969, HACE, AS/Cult (21).

challenges facing education systems, and the French supremacy in the global struggle for political, scientific, and cultural hegemony.²⁰³ To this extent, the French minister recovered the old suggestions of Europe as a third force between the US and the USSR. He argued that a specular crisis was affecting both the United States, shocked by the domestic and international consequences of the Vietnam War, and the Soviet Union, still grappling with the negative repercussions of the Prague Spring. Cleverly, he was taking advantage of the two superpowers' prestige and authority crisis, resoundingly underlined by the European protest movements, to impose a new role for Europe and France.²⁰⁴ The EEC represented the only geographical and political sphere to avert the "Balkanisation of the European culture" and create a new European cultural model.

Thus, Guichard advocated for a European Centre of Education under the supervision of the EEC National Education Ministers rather than a European Education Office at the Council of Europe. The new centre would focus on gathering information, statistics, and documentation on an EC scale; promoting cooperation between universities and the mobility of teachers and students within the EC area; and, finally, achieving complete harmonisation between the university systems and programmes of the EC countries:

«one must not forget that the cornerstone of our construction will be the harmonisation of teaching content and educational structures [...] It is no longer a question of looking at different pedagogical conceptions that can be brought closer together but of conceiving, starting from the needs of the European economic society and the European model of culture, the general objectives of education, its levels of training, its opportunities for progress».²⁰⁵

On 1 and 2 December 1969, the EEC Heads of State and Government summit in The Hague embraced this new political will, effectively introducing the path for the EC common educational dimension.²⁰⁶ Within the framework of the three new directions of completion, strengthening, and enlargement, the EC's highest political leaders agreed upon some

²⁰³ Raymond Poignant, *Education and Development in Western Europe, the United States, and the U. S. S. R.: A Comparative Study* (Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1969) 262–273.

²⁰⁴ Paul Berman, *A Tale of Two Utopias: The Political Journey of the Generation of 1968* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1996).

²⁰⁵ «Il ne faut pas oublier que la pierre angulaire de notre construction sera l'harmonisation du contenu de l'enseignement et des structures éducatives [...] Il ne s'agit plus de voir comment des conceptions pédagogiques différentes peuvent être rapprochés, mais de concevoir, à partir des besoins de la société économique européenne et le modèle européen de la culture, les objectifs généraux d'éducation, ses niveaux de formation, ses possibilités de progrès». Conférence des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement des 1er et 2 décembre 1969 à La Haye (Sommet de La Haye), 1964-1971, HAEU, BAC-028/1980_0253.

²⁰⁶ Conférence des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement des 1er et 2 décembre 1969 à La Haye (Sommet de La Haye), 1964-1971, HAEU, BAC-028/1980_0253.

commitments concerning the education policies.²⁰⁷ Firstly, according to the guidelines of the French government, the participants stated their joint commitment to promote a centre of development, progress, and culture. Secondly, with the input of the Italian government and particularly its new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aldo Moro, the summit reaffirmed the interest in creating a European University.

Indeed, Faure was not the sole statesman to understand the historical significance of the 1968 movements and to depict the European outlook as a possible solution to their demands. Based on his political experience and concern for the conditions and fate of Italian democracy, the Christian Democrat leader Moro developed a similar reflection. During a troubled congress of the Italian Christian Democracy on 29th June 1969,²⁰⁸ the Italian politician outlined the EC as a crucial feature of cohesion and integration of the continent:

«The time is ripe for a kind of political constituent of Europe. The goal is certainly noble and urgent. A United Europe is in the order of things; a necessity and a duty simultaneously. It will give the world a new and heard voice; it will make us the protagonists of the development of balance and peace; it will offer, moreover, the guarantee that the great distensive negotiation, which we do not cease to hope for, will not take place without us and therefore against us».²⁰⁹

Moro judged youth policy as an advantageous instrument to strengthen and comprehensively reorganise cultural cooperation between European countries:

²⁰⁷ N. Piers Ludlow, 'An Opportunity or a Threat? The European Commission and the Hague Council of December 1969', *Journal of European Integration History* 9, no. 2 (2003): 11–26.

²⁰⁸ In that period, Moro was the leader of the "left" wing of his party. However, the crisis of the Socialist party and the 1968 protests pushed the Italian Christian Democrats toward a right wing attitude. In contrast, Moro urged his party to «assume a new courageous initiative that, preserving the guarantee function, could enable to interpret the historical moment. To this extent, positioning on the left wing, notably the movement's positions, [the DC] could still be the protagonist in Italian politics. It will be able, therefore, to avoid the affirmation of an alternative, performing as opposition and alternative to it». See: Aldo Moro and Fondazione Aldo Moro, *L'intelligenza e gli avvenimenti: testi, 1959-1978* (Milano: Garzanti, 1979), 188–189.

²⁰⁹ «Stanno maturando i tempi per una sorta di costituente politica dell'Europa. È certo che l'obiettivo è nobile e urgente. L'Europa Unita è nell'ordine delle cose; una necessità e un dovere insieme. Essa darà al mondo una voce nuova e ascoltata; ci farà protagonisti di uno sviluppo di equilibrio e di pace; offrirà, oltretutto, la garanzia che il grande negoziato distensivo, che non cessiamo di auspicare, non si compia senza di noi e perciò contro di noi». Discourse of Aldo Moro at the XI congress of the Christian Democracy, 29 June 1969, Historical Archive of the Istituto Luigi Sturzo (HAILS), Christian Democracy Archive, fond 4 "Congresso Nazionale", 12 XI Congrso nazionale, Roma 27-30 giugno 1969.

«Young people are demanding a proper new order, a social life that does not suffocate but offers free space, a political perspective that is not conservative or merely stabilising, the leavening of human values. Such a society cannot be created without the active presence, in a truly influential position, of those for whom the past is past and who are completely open to the future [...] The injection of the lifeblood of enthusiasm, commitment, and rejection of the existing proper to young people into society, parties, and the state is a vital necessity, a condition for equilibrium and social peace in the new and open terms in which they can be conceived in an evolutionary phase».²¹⁰

Within this youth-centred strategy, Moro and the entire Italian ruling group did not cease to pursue the objectives that had historically motivated Rome's support for EC educational cooperation. Considering the modest schooling and literacy rates of Italian agricultural workers, the Italian Prime Minister Emilio Colombo emphasised the role of education in improving professional outputs.²¹¹ In turn, the Italian authorities looked with renewed concern «to the problem of the Mezzogiorno (a national problem for Italy) insofar this is a Community's issue».²¹² They argued that professional support in the southern areas of the country could not exclude a simultaneous educational action financed, as far as possible, with contributions from the EEC.

The new perspectives concerning youth and education were included in a cautious optimism for European integration, perfectly exemplified by the Christian-Democrat MEP Pedini:

²¹⁰ «I giovani chiedono un vero ordine nuovo, una vita sociale che non soffochi, ma offra liberi spazi, una prospettiva politica non conservatrice o meramente stabilizzatrice, la lievitazione di valori umani. Una tale società non può essere creata senza l'attiva presenza, in una posizione veramente influente, di coloro per i quali il passato è passato e che sono completamente aperti verso l'avvenire[...] L'immissione della linfa vitale dell'entusiasmo, dell'impegno, del rifiuto dell'esistente propri dei giovani nella società, nei partiti, nello Stato è una necessità vitale, condizione dell'equilibrio e della pace sociale nei termini nuovi ed aperti nei quali in una fase evolutiva essi possono essere concepiti». Ibid.

²¹¹ Visite du President Franco Maria Malfatti à Rome (12-14 novembre 1970), HAEU, FMM-17.

²¹² «Al problema del mezzogiorno (problema nazionale per l'Italia) nella misura in cui tale problema è comunitario». Visite du President Franco Maria Malfatti à Rome (12-14 novembre 1970), Rencontre avec Emilio Colombo, HAEU, FMM-17. On the topic see: Augusto De Benedetti, *Lo sviluppo sospeso: Il Mezzogiorno e l'impresa pubblica 1948-1973* (Catanzaro: Rubbettino Editore, 2013).

«Nobody thought that the miracle of a total European revival would happen at the European summit in The Hague and that it would suddenly be possible to erase the long EEC winter or suddenly redeem the Gaullist paralysis. Miracles certainly did not happen in The Hague: what did occur, however, without authorising triumphant optimism, justifies a reasonable and responsible recovery of confidence».²¹³

Simultaneously, the European Parliament experienced an institutional raise, which strengthened budgetary powers and support for democratic legitimacy.²¹⁴ The new hierarchical positioning of the parliamentary institution within the EC and the renewed confidence of MEPs led to a substantial shift in EP's behaviour and influence. Educational cooperation remained crucial on the political agenda of the Hague Summit due to the compelling economic, political and cultural demands. The Parliament was responsible in domains not expressly provided in the treaties: considering the traditional reticence towards education policy, the Parliament could have arguably been the protagonist of educational cooperation. Instantly, the EP started supporting research and industrial development in leading-edge sectors, renewed the commitment to creating a European university, and wished for close collaboration of youth in the integration process.²¹⁵

1.2 Struggling marginalisation: the European Parliament and education policies in the 1970s.

As Parliament strengthened its role, the need for a joint educational dimension increasingly became a widespread conviction. During the session of the Council of the European

²¹³ «Nessuno pensava che al Vertice europeo dell'Aia avvenisse il miracolo di un totale rilancio europeo e che improvvisamente fosse possibile cancellare il lungo inverno comunitario o riscattare di colpo la paralisi gollista. I miracoli all'Aia non sono certo avvenuti: si è però verificato quanto, senza autorizzare l'ottimismo trionfante, giustifica una ragionevole e responsabile ripresa di fiducia». Una nuova dinamica, 7 Dec. 1969, Mario Pedini, *Rapporto sull'Europa. Momenti e fatti dell'unificazione* (Milan:Mursia, 1979), 82–85. Pedini refers to the willingness for dialogue shown by the new French President Pompidou, compared to his predecessor De Gaulle. On the topic see: Georges-Henri Soutou, 'The Linkage between European Integration and Détente: The Contrasting Approaches of de Gaulle and Pompidou, 1965 to 1974', in *European Integration and the Cold War*, ed. N. Piers Ludlow (London: Routledge, 2007), 23–47.

²¹⁴ The Hague summit in 1969 established a greater degree of European Parliamentary control over the EEC budgetary process (Paragraph 5) and advocated for direct elections of the EP (conclusions). According to the EEC Commission, the democratic elections of the Parliament would have reinforced the democratic character of the Community and blunt charges that the EEC was an unaccountable technocracy. In the background was the Commission's long-standing ambition of forging more direct links between the Community institutions and the wider European public. In the long term, this process would have helped emancipate the EEC institutions from member state control. On the topic see: Ludlow, 'An Opportunity or a Threat? The European Commission and the Hague Council of December 1969'.

²¹⁵ Sean Van Raepenbusch, *Politique sociale, education et jeunesse* (Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1998), 305.

Communities held on 8th and 9th June 1970, the Belgian government proposed to convene a Council session with the participation of the Ministers of National Education.²¹⁶ Beyond a traditional pro-European sentiment, the Belgian delegation hunted for a common solution to national issues. Firstly, as shown by individual measures proposed in the document, the Belgian Minister of Education Piet Vermeyleen aimed to exploit Community resources to enhance Belgium's points of excellence like the College of Europe in Bruges and, arguably, to support the Belgian university system in coping with the growth of students and staff.²¹⁷ In addition, the government aspired to overcome, from an EC perspective, the cultural and linguistic rift that 1968 had revealed. The tumultuous affair linked to the University of Leuven had practically evidenced the necessity of an EC educational effort to strengthen the belonging to common European roots.²¹⁸

The European Parliament resolutely supported the Belgian proposal. Commenting on the intention to bring together the Education Ministers of the member states, the Dutch Liberal Cornelis Berkhouwer was particularly pleased with the meeting, emphasising the role that Parliament played in achieving the result.²¹⁹ The resolution concerning the meeting urged the Ministers of Education to discuss the traditional measures supported by the EP:

²¹⁶ Suggestion belge de réunir une session du Conseil avec la participation des ministres de l'éducation nationale, 10 June 1970, HAEU, CM2/1971-1344.

²¹⁷ During the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, Belgium gave its go-ahead to considerable investment for the development of its university network. The infrastructure was extended by the creation of the two Free Universities - Dutch-speaking and French-speaking - as separate institutions, a widening of fields of activity, and the granting of human and material resources for expansion to other existing institutions. In the 1970s, teaching staff grew by about 50% and the student population by a third, with the teacher/student ratio standing at one in 12 at the start of the 1980s. On the topic see: Ignace Hecquet and Brian Frost-Smith, 'Prospects for Revitalising the Belgian University System', *European Journal of Education* 19, no. 2 (1984): 131-49.

²¹⁸ During 1968, the Catholic University of Leuven was the scene of clashes between the French-speaking component and the majority Dutch-speaking Flemish component. As a result of these tensions and conflicts, between 1971 and 1972, the university was split into two separate structures. In Louvain-la Neuve, a small town in Walloon Brabant specifically created to host the new university, the francophone "Université catholique de Louvain" was born. Instead, the Dutch-speaking Katholieke Universiteit Leuven remained in the Flemish Brabant city of Leuven. On the topic see: Willy Jonckheere and Herman Todts, *Leuven Vlaams: Splitsingsgeschiedenis van de Katholieke Universiteit Leuven* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 1979).

²¹⁹ Correspondance et documents divers, Groupe de l'Alliance des démocrates et des libéraux pour l'Europe au Parlement européen, 15 Nov. 1971, HAEU, ADLE-2.

«2. hopes in particular that substantial progress can be made on the mutual recognition of diplomas and the freedom to provide services for non-salaried activities;

3. invites the Ministers of National Education to take - as of this first meeting - the necessary steps for the creation, in Florence, of a community teaching institute at the highest level where, in particular, the consequences and perspectives posed by the various transformations brought by scientific discoveries on the material and moral life of humankind, both on an individual and collective level, would be studied».²²⁰

Accordingly, the Political Commission appointed a Belgian liberal, Norbert Hougardy, to prepare a report on the concrete implementation of a youth policy within the EC framework.²²¹ The report produced a significant shift. The changed technical, economic, and social conditions, as well as new pedagogical perspectives, brought the topic of lifelong learning into the parliamentary debate.²²² From a predominantly cultural aspiration, education began to take on economic and social functions, and the Parliament assumed the proper terminology even before employing the new approach. Introducing the work of the Political Commission, Hougardy outlined the contours of the up-to-date EC education policy. He emphasised how «given that the reform of education is being discussed in all countries, it is urgent to undertake Community action on the subject, to move from information to education, by developing a unitary concept that considers modern requirements, and above all the growing need for lifelong learning».²²³

Incidentally, it is important to note that the progressive demands underpinned by the student and trade union movements, as well as the entry of an Italian communist representation in the EP, strongly influenced the debate on educational policies.²²⁴ Although the Italian Communist

²²⁰ «2.auspica in particolare che si possano compiere progressi sostanziali in materia di riconoscimento reciproco dei diplomi e di libera prestazione di servizi per attività non retribuite; 3. invita i ministri dell'Educazione nazionale a intraprendere, fin da questa prima riunione, i passi necessari per la creazione, a Firenze, di un istituto di insegnamento comunitario al più alto livello in cui si studino, in particolare, le conseguenze e le prospettive poste dalle varie trasformazioni apportate dalle scoperte scientifiche sulla vita materiale e morale dell'umanità, sia a livello individuale che collettivo». Appel à l'adresse des ministres de l'Education Nationale de la Communauté, 15 Nov. 1971, HAEU, PE0-4837.

²²¹ Politique de la jeunesse et de l'éducation dans le cadre des CE (Norbert Hougardy), 06 May 1971 to 02 Feb. 1972, HAEU, PE0-1299.

²²² Christian Laval, Louis Weber, *Le Nouvel Ordre Éducatif Mondial: OMC Banque Mondiale OCDE Commission Européenne* (Paris: Nouveaux regards, 2002), 98.

²²³ «Compte tenu du fait que la réforme de l'éducation fait l'objet de discussions dans tous les pays, il est urgent d'entreprendre une action communautaire dans ce domaine, dans le but de passer de l'information à l'éducation, en élaborant une conception unitaire qui tienne compte des exigences modernes, et notamment du besoin croissant d'apprentissage permanente». Commission politique, Procès-verbal de la réunion du 30 septembre 1971, 3 Dec. 1971, HAEU, PE0-19986.

²²⁴ The new delegation of 36 deputies elected by the Italian parliament on 21 January 1969 included seven members of the Italian Communist Party. Despite the difficulties, the Communist delegation, spurred by its leader Giorgio Amendola, engaged the European Parliament with enthusiasm and seriousness, making rigorous study, willing to dialogue, and consistent defence of its ideas, the privileged “weapons” of the political battle. The Italian communists, contrary to expectations, did not find a climate of open opposition to their positions or

parliamentarian Giorgio Amendola polemically declared that the debate seemed detached from current political issues, the Parliament strongly addressed the topic, taking up the idea of a European model of culture based on Guichard's suggestions.²²⁵

The EP considered common educational policies as the core of the hypothetical new European cultural model. Despite tenacious resistance from German Christian Democrats Heinrich Aigner and Hans Furler, who were concerned about the entry of «dangerous left-wing extremists into education», the Political Commission deemed progressive democratisation of education indispensable.²²⁶ The Socialist Dutch MEP Jan Bartholomeus Broeks highlighted that the EC, for the first time, discussed:

«several issues [...] especially the need to ensure equal opportunities for all young people, boys or girls or the children of peasants or workers, the need to ensure that young people can profitably participate in lifelong learning and the creation of a truly European education aimed at to [...] facilitate exchanges of young workers across borders».²²⁷

Following harsh debates in the Political Commission, the EP approved the Resolution on youth and education policies within the framework of the European Communities. In addition to democratising education, the Parliament emphasised respect for the cultural individualities that constitute Europe's heritage. Simultaneously, the EP identified organisational arrangements as the priority instrument for achieving a joint education policy. As an external projection, the resolution proposed the formation of a standing committee for education issues composed of senior officials from the Member states, and a Directorate General for Youth and Education within the Commission of the European Communities.²²⁸ In turn, Parliament attempted to reorganise its structure to manage educational competencies

hostility towards them. In an interview for the Italian newspaper “L’Unità” on 22nd March 1969, Amendola argued that the Communist buildings were inhabited by a large number of capable and intelligent people, men and women who felt «all the bitterness of a work that [cannot] achieve positive, concrete results because of the very political approach given to the Community». On the topic see: Maria Serena Adesso, ‘Il consenso delle sinistre italiane all’integrazione europea (1950-1969)’, *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea*, no. N° 9, 1 (29 January 2012).

²²⁵ Commission politique, Procès-verbal de la réunion du 14 mai 1971, 25 May 1971, HAEU, PE0-19974. Cf. notes 62–3.

²²⁶ «Gefährliche Linksextremisten im Bildungswesen». Commission politique, Procès-verbal de la réunion du 20 janvier 1972, 3 Mar. 1972, HAEU, PE0-19995.

²²⁷ «Een aantal kwesties [...] met name de noodzaak om te zorgen voor gelijke kansen voor alle jongeren, of het nu jongens of meisjes zijn, of de kinderen van boeren of arbeiders, de noodzaak om ervoor te zorgen dat jongeren op rendabele wijze kunnen deelnemen in levenslang leren en de totstandbrenging van een echt Europees onderwijs gericht op [...] het vergemakkelijken van de uitwisseling van jonge werknemers over de grenzen heen». Ibid.

²²⁸ Résolution sur la politique de la jeunesse et de l’éducation dans le cadre des CE, 28 Feb. 1972, HAEU, PE0-3117.

organically. However, due to the imminent enlargement of the EC to include the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Denmark, the EP waited until 1973 to establish a special Commission for Cultural Affairs and Youth, entrusted by acclamation to Broeks. ²²⁹

Parliamentary suggestions guided the first debate phase between the EC Ministers of Education held on sixteenth November 1971 in Brussels. It approved two decisions concerning the socio-economic and political-cultural domains of educational cooperation, as they had emerged in the 1960s. ²³⁰ The first decision referred to a more outstanding commitment to vocational training. The second decision resulted in a definitive agreement on the European University Institute (EUI), even though the signing of the Convention occurred some months later, on 19 April 1972, in Florence. ²³¹

In his speech on the occasion of the inauguration of the EUI on 15 November 1976 in San Domenico di Fiesole, the President of the Italian Republic, Giovanni Leone, stressed the importance of the tasks assigned to the new institution. ²³² Notably, according to the Parliament's concept, he highlighted the institute's double dimension of high-level teaching and research centre and the European institute's commitment to influencing Europe's cultural heritage. In a historical shortcut, the Italian President ideally linked the EUI to the spirit of Middle Ages universities like Bologna, Salamanca, and Paris were «valuable centres of training and fusion of universal international culture, of meetings of students and teachers from all regions of Europe, which made a decisive contribution to the formation of a common heritage of civilisation». ²³³ In this context, Leone remarked, «what could be more natural than the establishment of the Institute in Florence, which during the transition from the Middle Ages to the early modern period had been the cradle of Humanism and the universalist spirituality of the spirituality of the Renaissance, the crucible of imagination, truth, and beauty of a renewed civilisation radiating throughout the continent?». ²³⁴

²²⁹ Commission des affaires culturelles et de la jeunesse - Procès-verbal de la réunion constitutive du 13 mars 1973, 15 Mar. 1973, HAEU, PE0-20501.

²³⁰ Documents concernant la 174ème session du Conseil (et la conférence des ministres de l'éducation nationale des États membres des CE), Bruxelles, 16.11.1971, 18 Nov. 1971 to 23 Oct. 1972, HAEU, CM2/1971-79.

²³¹ Creation of the European University Institute, 1972-1976, HAEU, EUI-9.

²³² Inauguration of the European University Institute held on 15 of November 1976 in Florence, Sept. 1976 to december 1976, HAEU, EUI-1.

²³³ «Veri centri di formazione e di fusione di una cultura internazionale universale, di incontri tra studenti e insegnanti di tutte le regioni d'Europa, che hanno contribuito in maniera determinante alla formazione di un patrimonio comune di civiltà». Ibid.

²³⁴ «Cosa c'è di più naturale della fondazione dell'Istituto a Firenze, che nel passaggio dal Medioevo alla prima età moderna era stata la culla dell'Umanesimo e della spiritualità universalistica del Rinascimento, il crogiolo dell'immaginazione, della verità e della bellezza di una civiltà rinnovata che si irradiava in tutto il continente?». Ibid.

These resolutely optimistic words were in stark contrast to the procrastination that had preceded the EUI establishment by the six founding countries (and then the Nine during the last phase of negotiations). As Jean-Marie Palayret has effectively described, the Institute appears as the culmination of twenty years of hopes, difficulties, and disappointments, the avatar of partial achievements, advances, and crises that have characterised the process of European integration as a whole.²³⁵ Although the idea was born early in the minds of the "Founding Fathers", to the extent that it was one of the topics discussed at the European Congress in The Hague (May 1948) and the European Conference in Lausanne (December 1949), these "sowers of ideas" did not hide the difficulty of the undertaking. The EP, in this context, was the only actor that had been coherently advocating for the EUI establishment since the 1950s.²³⁶

After several ruinous attempts, the issue of the European University was productively revisited at the end of the 1960s. The resignation of General De Gaulle, the university reforms underway in most European countries following the student movements of 1968, the cross-fertilisation required by the increasing development of science, and the challenge that the United States posed to Europe in the academic field, all contributed to the desire for international cooperation in the educational policies. The EUI project was revived by an Italian memorandum in September 1968, which put forward the idea that the Institute could become an equivalent to Massachusetts's Institute of technology or the Harvard School of Business, specifically designed to train business leaders on a European scale.²³⁷ Two intergovernmental conferences, again convened on the initiative of the Italian government in October 1970 in Florence and in February 1971 in Rome, and the EP's resolution on youth and education policies brought progress to the negotiations, which led to the signing of the convention.

Similarly, the EP significantly influenced the establishment of a new Directorate General (DG) for Research, Science and Education at the Commission of the European Communities in 1973. The Commission decided to take this fundamental step since «the economic growth, which remains an important objective, makes it necessary to raise the level of research and

²³⁵ Jean-Marie Palayret, 'Des négociations à la création de l'Institut universitaire européen de Florence', *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome* 114, no. 1 (2002): 343–4.

²³⁶ Andrea Bosco, *A'Fedorator'for Europe: Altiero Spinelli and the Constituent Role of the European Parliament* (Florence: European University Institute, 1994).

²³⁷ Creation of an European University, 1955-1969, HAEU, EUI-890.

education».²³⁸ The political implications, previously emphasised by the EP, were primarily organisational:

«This decision produces a political intention: constitute an independent field of activity which, in the framework of a coherent Community policy, considers the whole range of research, science and education issues, which until now have been divided and thus subordinated to other objectives».²³⁹

Among the detailed objective plan set by the EUCO, the new DG should have addressed the teaching reform, the European cultural dimension, the freedom of movement, and the coordination of the member states concerning teaching and vocational training.

However, the new DG Commissioner Ralf Dahrendorf, while determined to lay the basis of a common educational policy, was «disgusted by the reference to harmonisation».²⁴⁰ Close to liberal academic circles, Dahrendorf believed that educational cooperation should have occurred in inflexible respect for differences and with the explicit aim of valorising and promoting national specificities. He clearly expressed his positions in a statement for the French press at the end of 1973.²⁴¹ In Dahrendorf's view, European educational pluralism represented a fundamental value for each country and an indispensable asset for the EEC. Thus, «the atmosphere of suspicion must be dispelled, admitting that differences in culture and education are part of each country's heritage. One must be able to accept them without any attempt at reform».²⁴²

Taking the cue from this fundamental premise, Dahrendorf and his collaborators prepared a communication addressed to the Council of the European Communities on 11th March 1974. Released in view of the second Council of the Ministers of Education to be held on 6th June 1974, the document was the first official EUCO's attempt to develop an organic and comprehensive viewpoint on possible educational cooperation. According to Dahrendorf, the EEC had a peculiar responsibility for three focal issues rather than providing a master plan.²⁴³

²³⁸ «La croissance économique, qui demeure un objectif important, rend en effet nécessaire une élévation du niveau de la recherche et de l'éducation». PROGRAMME DE TRAVAIL DANS LE DOMAINE "RECHERCHE, SCIENCE ET EDUCATION" (Communication personnelle de M. DAHRENDORF), 1973, HAEU, CEUE_SEGE-SEC(1973)2000.

²³⁹ «Constituer un domaine d'activité indépendant ou, dans le cadre d'une politique communautaire cohérente, serait pris en considération l'ensemble des questions relatives à la recherche, à la science et à l'éducation qui jusqu'alors étaient divisées et de ce fait subordonnées à d'autres objectifs». Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Interview with Dahrendorf, Ralf, 1998, HAEU, INT642.

²⁴¹ Joanne Lecerf, «L'Europe de votre métier», *Le Figaro*, 14 Dec. 1973.

²⁴² «Il faut dissiper le climat de suspicion, en admettant que les différences de culture et d'éducation font partie du patrimoine de chaque pays. Il faut savoir les accepter sans chercher à les réformer». Ibid.

²⁴³ CORRIGENDUM L'EDUCATION DANS LA COMMUNAUTE EUROPEENNE (présentée par la Commission au Conseil), 1974, HAEU, CEUE_SEGE-COM(1974)0253.

Firstly, the document claimed that the Community should have intervened in the practical and financial problems that prevented the improvement and expansion of the opportunities for exchanging teachers, researchers, and students between member states. The objective was crucial for European scientific research and the workers' and citizens' professional and cultural growth. Secondly, the communication urged the Council to address the education of migrant workers' children, especially for regions with a high rate of immigration, despite recognising the significant difficulties of the challenge. According to the Commission's data, more than 6 million migrant workers resided in the EEC countries, and the number of their children exceeded 1 million. Considering this context, it is not surprising that Dahrendorf was interested in the political, social, and cultural consequences of insufficient or inadequate schooling. Finally, educational cooperation should have become a cornerstone of the future European Union. Notably, it could have a decisive role in improving the knowledge of foreign languages, countries, and peoples, as well as the awareness of the European integration process.

Laying on its role in the previous years, the European Parliament tried to make its contribution to the debate concerning the second Council of Education Ministers. However, at the very moment when the EP seemed to influence educational policies and the first organic programmes on educational cooperation emerged, parliamentary effectiveness in the domain began to weaken considerably. The parliamentary opinion was requested neither by the Council nor the Commission, unlike other previous occasions.²⁴⁴ The Parliamentary Committee on Cultural Affairs and Youth expressly asked to formulate an opinion concerning the EUCO document. Introducing the discussion, the West-German Christian Democrat Klaus Peter Schulz, rapporteur for the opinion, stressed that «the procedure for parliamentary own-initiative reports had to be followed, as the Council did not consult Parliament on this matter».²⁴⁵ Accordingly, his colleague Egon Alfred Klepsch regretfully noted that «contrary to our expectations, the Council did not consult the Parliament, if only for the sake of form, on such an important and wide-ranging issue as education».²⁴⁶ Relations between the Parliament and the Council became strained to the point of causing sharp protests of the entire assembly, which unanimously approved a motion by the Socialist Group to denounce

²⁴⁴ Cf. note 142.

²⁴⁵ «Das Verfahren für parlamentarische Initiativberichte musste eingehalten werden, da der Rat das Parlament in dieser Angelegenheit nicht konsultiert hat». Commission des affaires culturelles et de la jeunesse, Réunion des 21 et 22 mars 1974, HAEU, PE0-20808.

²⁴⁶ «Entgegen unseren Erwartungen hat der Rat das Parlament nicht konsultiert, und sei es nur der Form halber, zu einem so wichtigen und weitreichenden Thema wie der Bildung». Ibid.

«such action which serves only to undermine further the institutional foundations of the Community and which amounts to utter disregard of Parliament».²⁴⁷

Predictably, the EP suggestions were not considered by the Council. Compared to the first meeting, the resolution of the second Ministries of Education Council cancelled any reference to a European cultural model, which was strongly supported by the Parliament.²⁴⁸ Guichard's departure from the French Ministry of National Education removed the leading proponent of this project from the political debate, while Dahrendorf's arrival at the head of the Directorate General for Research, Science and Education of the Commission resolutely imposed a new political agenda. As a result, the integration of Europe's cultural plurality while preserving its diversity became the recurring theme of EC education policies.²⁴⁹

Nevertheless, the Council proposed a comprehensive framework of guiding principles. At the explicit request of the new French Minister of National Education, René Haby, the common education policy was not subordinate to purely economic strategies, even if it was intimately linked to the EEC economic integration process. In turn, according to Dahrendorf's suggestions, the Council encouraged to highly value the traditions of each country and the specificity of national systems and policies; to this extent, the pursuit of harmonisation was explicitly abandoned. With a somewhat ambiguous formula, the participants argued that educational cooperation could not revolutionise the traditional EC institutions. Finally, the resolution appointed a committee composed of Member states' and EUCO's delegates to implement a practical strategy for an educational cooperation policy.

Despite the EP's dense and stimulating contribution to the educational cooperation issue, the Council and the Commission ostensibly relegated the Parliament to political marginalisation. Between 1973 and 1974, the structural parliamentary difficulty in exerting effective influence on the Council emerged distinctly. In this sense, the lack of a legal basis did not allow the parliament to cope with the changed political context of the period. Indeed, the French government was concerned about Parliament's excessive influence on education. Once again, the French authorities feared that the EP would intrusively dispute a domain they considered crucial to national interests on a political, economic, and social level. The Paris government demanded the complete prohibition of parliamentary activity in the field of education.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ «Une telle action qui ne sert qu'à saper davantage les fondements institutionnels de la Communauté et qui équivaut à un mépris total du Parlement». Relations Parlement-Conseil - Proposition de résolution déposée par le Groupe socialiste, 13 Nov. 1974, HAEU, PE0-4897.

²⁴⁸ Résolution des ministres de l'éducation, réunis au sein du Conseil du 06.06.1974, concernant la coopération dans le domaine de l'éducation, 20 Aug. 1974, HAEU, CM2/1974-1930.

²⁴⁹ Soledad García, *European Identity and the Search for Legitimacy* (London: Pinter, 1993), 19–20.

²⁵⁰ Coopération dans le domaine de l'éducation, 20 Feb. 1973, HAEU, CM2/1973-396.

Moreover, the EUCO assumed a hostile attitude that would continue throughout the 1970s. Some scholars have effectively identified the roots of this antagonism in the EC executive's concerns about Parliament's direct elections.²⁵¹ The emergence of a democratically elected and politically legitimised institution with substantial powers could produce a potential competition between the two bodies. Consequently, in an EP's traditional area of expertise like education policy, the Commission began handling political domains it had hitherto faced marginally. This hypothesis is confirmed by Dahrendorf's words concerning the parliamentary initiative on education:

«on behalf of the European Commission, I invite you to reflect on this issue to understand precisely whether we want at this point to abandon the system of control of the Commission by Parliament and move to a direct relationship between the Commission and Parliament in its tasks of preparing decisions and in part of its administrative duties».²⁵²

After 1974, the EP's relative political marginalisation concerning the practical construction of an EC education policy affected its political and organisational structure. The Parliament's commitment to educational issues diminished significantly. While not officially renouncing its consultative role, the limited influence on decision-making caused a general lack of interest in parliamentary debates. During a plenary session on education in September 1975, John Corrie, Scottish Conservative MEP, regretfully pointed out «so little interest in a debate on education».²⁵³ As a result, within the reorganisation of parliamentary activities, the Commission on Cultural Affairs and Youth was abolished, and the competence for educational affairs was transferred to the Social Commission.²⁵⁴ Although in 1973, the

²⁵¹ On 14 January 1975, the EP approved the Patijn report on the election of assembly representatives by direct universal suffrage: Election des membres du Parlement européen au suffrage universel (Schelto Patijn), 1973-1975, HAEU, PE0-1895. On the topic see: Giovanni Gozzer, *Scuole a confronto: sistemi e ordinamenti scolastici nell'Europa e nel mondo*, Educazione comparata e pedagogie 82 (Rome: Armando, 1984); Simone Paoli, 'La Forza Di Due Debolezze. Il Ruolo Del Parlamento Europeo Nella Nascita Di Una Politica Comunitaria Dell'istruzione (1957-1976).', in *Sfide Del Mercato e Identità Europea. Le Politiche Di Educazione e Formazione Professionale Nell'Europa Comunitaria.*, ed. Antonio Varsori (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2006), 11–52; Michael Shackleton, 'Transforming Representative Democracy in the EU? The Role of the European Parliament', *Journal of European Integration* 39, no. 2 (23 February 2017): 191–205, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2016.1277713>.

²⁵² «Au nom de la Commission européenne, je vous invite à réfléchir à cette question pour comprendre précisément si nous voulons à ce stade abandonner le système de contrôle de la Commission par le Parlement et passer à une relation directe entre la Commission et le Parlement dans ses tâches de préparation des décisions et dans une partie de ses fonctions administratives». Assemblée parlementaire européenne et Parlement européen avant l'élection directe, Procès-verbaux des séances plénières, Session du 22 au 25 avril 1974, HAEU, PE0-3143.

²⁵³ Assemblée parlementaire européenne et Parlement européen avant l'élection directe, Procès-verbaux des séances plénières, Session du 22 au 26 septembre 1975, HAEU, PE0-3161.

²⁵⁴ Assemblée parlementaire européenne et Parlement européen avant l'élection directe, Procès-verbaux des séances plénières, Session du 12 au 15 janvier 1976, HAEU, PE0-3165.

Parliament invested its institutional and political resources in the field of education, in 1976, in contrast, it deflected from a specific commitment. Thus, the Commission for Social Affairs, Employment, and Education was born, opposite to the previous orientation that included the educational domain together with culture, youth, and research.

The EP's exclusion from the "great game" was confirmed with the Council Resolution concerning an action programme in the field of education. In addition to defining the guidelines, including the potential funding for joint study and research programmes between institutes in different Member states, the Resolution established an Education Committee as the cornerstone of the new educational cooperation. The Committee was composed of Members states' and Commission's representatives and chaired by the Presidency of the Council. It coordinated the implementation of the action programme, constantly reporting to the Council and the Ministers of Education gatherings within the Council. The European Commission, in turn, was entrusted with implementing the individual measures at the Community level in collaboration with the Education Committee. Finally, the Ministers of Education undertook to meet periodically to set the general guidelines of common education policy and compare the respective national education policies.²⁵⁵

Thus, the EEC was assigned a mere supporting role in specific areas of university policy, while the Member states held all-embracing responsibility and competence in educational matters. In addition, the supranational intervention was further downsized by the decision-making process: the "invention" of the Education Committee was expedient to give national government representatives thorough political and institutional supremacy over the EEC in the field. In any case, the Parliament was excluded from formal involvement in the new Committee.

Despite the programme finally being drawn up, educational cooperation policies suffered a setback in the second half of the 1970s. On the economic side, the recession that began in 1973 due to the first oil shock led to a dramatic increase in unemployment, which became the dominant theme in the EC. As a result, reviewing the entire educational architecture of labour and employment became necessary. This process was far longer than the programme implemented by the Council in 1976.²⁵⁶ In addition, the enlargement of the member states in 1973 posed unprecedented challenges from an educational perspective. Indeed, British

²⁵⁵ 423ème session du Conseil et des ministres de l'éducation réunis au sein du Conseil, Bruxelles, 9 Feb. 1976, HAEU, CM2/1976-00011/001.

²⁵⁶ Anne Corbett, *Universities and the Europe of Knowledge: Ideas, Institutions and Policy Entrepreneurship in European Union Higher Education Policy, 1955-2005* (London: Springer, 2005), 327–8.

politicians strongly distrusted EU interference in education.²⁵⁷ Although willing to consider single joint measures from the economic development perspective, the British government would reject further attempts to influence its education system pervasively.

Furthermore, significant changes occurred in the European landscape. On one hand, alterations in domestic policies led to changes in crucial countries of the Communities. For instance, the election of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom in 1979 and the implementation of "Reaganomics" in the US since 1980 contributed to a shift towards a more "neoliberal" approach.²⁵⁸ Additionally, in Italy, the failure of the "historic compromise" between the DC and the Italian Communist Party, as well as the pentapartito centre-left alliance, resulted in the exclusion of communists from government positions.²⁵⁹ In West Germany, the Social Democrats and the Liberal Party alliance led by Helmut Schmidt was replaced by a Christian-liberal government under Helmut Kohl.²⁶⁰ Lastly, the election of socialist François Mitterrand as French President in 1981 strengthened the Franco-German relations, leading to a "grand design" to revitalise European integration.²⁶¹

In the new political scenario, the EP demanded additional powers in the cultural-educational sphere at the dawn of its first direct elections. In 1974, the departure of Ralf Dahrendorf from the European Commission as head of the directorate-general for Research, Science, and Education weakened the EUCO's position. The institutional dispute culminated with the appointment of the former Italian Minister of Education Mario Pedini as President of the newborn Parliamentary Commission for Youth, Culture, Education, Information, and Sport (CYCEIS) in 1979.²⁶² Even if this Commission «has a certain father, the European Parliament, but it has as a mother, a Treaty that offers no competence in the field of culture»,²⁶³ the absence of an equally prestigious counterpart in the Commission affected the balance between the respective roles. Despite the excellent personal relationship between Pedini and the Commissioner for Energy, Education and Research, Guido Brunner, Pedini's

²⁵⁷ Michael Heseltine, *The Challenge of Europe: Can Britain Win?* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989), 126–7.

²⁵⁸ Alan W. Cafruny and Magnus Ryner, *A Ruined Fortress?: Neoliberal Hegemony and Transformation in Europe* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

²⁵⁹ Martin J Bull, 'The Pentapartito', in *The Oxford Handbook of Italian Politics*, ed. Erik Jones and Gianfranco Pasquino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 296–308.

²⁶⁰ David P. Conradt and Russell J. Dalton, 'The West German Electorate and the Party System: Continuity and Change in the 1980s', *The Review of Politics* 50, no. 1 (1988): 3–29.

²⁶¹ David Ramiro Troitiño, Karoline Färber, and Anni Boiro, 'Mitterrand and the Great European Design—from the Cold War to the European Union', *Baltic Journal of European Studies* 7, no. 2 (2017): 132–47.

²⁶² Nombre des membres de la Commission, 20 July 1979, HAEU, PE1-6927.

²⁶³ «Ha un padre certo, il Parlamento europeo, ma per madre un Trattato che non offre alcuna competenza in materia di cultura». Mario Pedini, *Tra cultura e azione politica. Cinque anni al Parlamento europeo (giugno 1979-giugno 1984)* (Brescia: Arzaghetto, 2004), 22.

activism and political credibility strengthened parliamentary ambitions to the detriment of the unity of purpose between the Commission and Parliament.²⁶⁴

Pedini was a crucial figure in the first EP legislature. Previously, he had leading positions in the Parliamentary Assembly and the Italian Christian Democrats (DC), holding several Italian ministry chairs between 1969 and 1979. Pedini considered the “Italian issues” closely linked to the EC insofar «our crisis, the tragedy of the death of Aldo Moro, the uncertainties in our democracy, also affect, due to obvious reasons, the interests of the other Community partners».²⁶⁵ On the occasion of the first EP direct elections, Pedini urged «every Italian party to introduce a new measure of its will and its proposals: the European measure».²⁶⁶ The Christian-democratic thinkers began moving towards a supposedly pro-European stance after the Second World War ended.²⁶⁷ Accordingly, the European People's Party (EPP) was established in 1976 to reinforce the Christian Democrat parties' position within the EC institutions.²⁶⁸ Pedini stressed the importance of collaboration among Christian Democrats in the European context, particularly the EPP, as they could lead Europe towards a new era of cohesion.²⁶⁹ In the 1979 elections, which he considered «not just an electoral act; it should propose to us, in substance and by parliamentary means, the “constitution” of a renewed community», he was elected as an EPP MEP.

The elections coincided with an institutional stalemate on educational and cultural cooperation. Along with strained relations between the EUCO and the EP, certain national governments, such as Denmark and the UK, were particularly doubtful about strengthening collaboration in this area.²⁷⁰ Countries that were least enthusiastic about ceding cultural sovereignty to the EC found further justification for their longstanding legal reservations due

²⁶⁴ Laruffa, ‘Historians’ Affiliation’, 274. See also: Pedini, *Tra cultura e azione politica*, 262–4.

²⁶⁵ «La nostra crisi, la tragedia della morte di Aldo Moro, le incertezze della nostra democrazia, hanno anche effetti, per ovvie ragioni, sugli interessi degli altri partner comunitari». Pedini refers to the kidnapping and death of Christian Democrat leader Aldo Moro by a unit of the militant far-left organisation Red Brigades (BR) in 1978. Mario Pedini, *Rapporto sull'Europa: Momenti e fatti dell'unificazione* (Milano: Mursia, 1979), 206. Concerning the links between Italian Christian Democrats and European integration process in the 1980s see: Paolo Acanfora, ‘The D.C. and the “European Question” in the Transformations of the Cold War’, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 27, no. 3 (27 May 2022): 348–65.

²⁶⁶ Pedini, *Rapporto*, 206.

²⁶⁷ Jean Dominique Durand, ‘La DC e Le Proiezioni Internazionali: Una Certa Idea Del Mondo’, in Mario Pedini e l'impegno Internazionale. *A Cent'anni Dalla Nascita (1918-2018)*, ed. Paolo Borruso, Elisabetta Conti (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2021), 19–41: 34. Concerning Christian parties influence on the European integration process see the major study of Wolfram Kaiser, *Christian Democracy and the Origins of European Union*, New Studies in European History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

²⁶⁸ Thomas Jansen and Steven Van Hecke, *At Europe's Service: The Origins and Evolution of the European People's Party* (Berlin: Springer, 2011).

²⁶⁹ Pedini, *Rapporto*, 206.

²⁷⁰ Guy Neave, ‘The role of education in European integration’, *Il Politico*, 1986, 277–84: 279.

to the reduction in national education budgets caused by the economic crisis and population decline.²⁷¹

Consequently, the EC Education Ministers' meeting was repeatedly postponed from 1977 to 1980, despite several EP claims.²⁷² The summit was finally held on 27th June 1980, under CYCEIS' stubborn pressure, primarily to discuss the links between education and vocational training.²⁷³ During the meeting, the participants discussed one of the priorities defined in the 1976 programme of the Council, namely the cooperation between higher education institutions. This entanglement was strongly desired by EC actors who aspired to political and cultural unification of the European space for institutional, political, or ideological reasons. According to the Vice President of the European Commission Carlo Scarascia Mugnozza and the President of the European Parliament Emilio Colombo, a future political unification could only be achieved through a shared cultural belonging and the sharing of knowledge and experience among young European students.²⁷⁴ The same ideological vein, combined with the desire to find a joint pedagogical solution to the social and political radicalisation that was disrupting the continent, contributed to the revival of an EC educational cooperation. It was conceived as the development of knowledge concerning the European integration process and its European roots.

Accordingly, in 1980, Pedini urged the EP and the EUCO to give «European and Community recognition to schools' initiatives which spontaneously conduct their teaching according to European values».²⁷⁵ Thus, he suggested the Europeanisation of history teaching by appointing «a commission of one scholar from each EEC country to organise a conference in Strasbourg about a collective work on European history».²⁷⁶ To implement the project, Pedini entrusted the President of the Italian Historical Institute for Modern and Contemporary Age

²⁷¹ Guy R. Neave, Frans van Vught, *Prometheus Bound: The Changing Relationship between Government and Higher Education in Western Europe* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1991), 240–2.

²⁷² Question de l'heure des questions n° 81 (H-0254/79) de M. Price au Conseil: Politique commune de l'éducation, 29 Oct. 1979, HAEU, PE1-19230; PROPOSITION DE RESOLUTION (1) présentée par M. PEDINI, President, au nom de la commission de la jeunesse, de la culture, de l'éducation, de l'information et des sports avec demande de discussion d'urgence conformément à l'article 14 du Règlement sur la réunion du Conseil des ministres de l'Education, 1979, HAEU, PE1-2587.

²⁷³ 648ème session du Conseil (éducation), Bruxelles, 27 June 1980, HAEU, CM2/1980-00032/001.

²⁷⁴ L'éducation et la formation professionnelle des jeunes travailleurs, 8 Mar. 1977- 20 Mar. 1978, HAEU, CES-7670.

²⁷⁵ «Riconoscimento europeo e comunitario alle iniziative delle scuole che conducono spontaneamente il loro insegnamento secondo i valori europei». PROPOSITION DE RESOLUTION présentée par MM. PEDINI, HAHN et KAVANAGH, conformément à l'article 25 du Règlement sur l'avenir de la coopération communautaire en matière d'éducation, 1980, HAEU, PE1-3221.

²⁷⁶ «Una commissione di uno studioso per ogni Stato membro della CEE per organizzare una conferenza a Strasburgo in merito a un lavoro collettivo sulla storia d'Europa». Letter of Armando Saitta to Albert Soboul, 3 Feb. 1980, Archival Center of the Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa (ACSNP), Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXXIII, dossier Albert Soboul 1955-1982, 3.

in Rome, the historian Armando Saitta, with initiating contacts between scholars from the Member states.

1.3 Armando Saitta and the Italian Institute for Modern and Contemporary Ages as a “centre of European culture”.

On 22nd December 1979, Pedini and Saitta met for the first time in Rome. While Pedini was under public scrutiny for the double role at the Italian Senate and the EP,²⁷⁷ the Christian Democrat and Saitta discussed the cultural dimension of the EC:

«Today war, more than by the will of men, can break out by error of the machines that control the living space of nations. I return to these themes later with Prof. Saitta at the Chess. He is a great historian, and I am honoured by his friendship with such a reserved man like him. He gives me the dedication to the second volume of his history, an impressive work also for its bibliographic richness. I ask him what we can do to prepare, in the plan of history, the new citizen of Europe. Interesting ideas emerge».²⁷⁸

As Pedini emphasised, he had an opposite political background compared to Saitta; nevertheless, the same Christian Democrat politician emphasised that «Professor Saitta, although from a different political formation, is a faithful and generous friend».²⁷⁹

At first glance, according to the prevailing literature, the close relationship between Pedini and Saitta may appear surprising. Indeed, the criticism of the Catholic world concerning Saitta's work has been widely analysed. In 1963, as recently highlighted by Paolo Broggio,²⁸⁰ the Jesuit Giacomo Martina, one of the most authoritative Italian historians of the Church in the second postwar period, defined Saitta as the promoter of an insidious “new anti-clericalism”, which used a «finer and more insidious tactic» aimed at shifting «the attack

²⁷⁷ “Nella DC tutti vogliono il confronto con il PCI ma in due modi diversi”, *Corriere della Sera*, 13 Oct. 1979, 2.

²⁷⁸ «Oggi la guerra, più che per volontà degli uomini, può scoppiare per errore delle macchine che controllano lo spazio vitale delle nazioni. Torno su questi temi più tardi con il Prof. Saitta allo Scacchi. È un grande storico e sono onorato della sua amicizia con un uomo riservato come lui. Mi consegna la dedica del secondo volume della sua storia, un'opera impressionante anche per la sua ricchezza bibliografica. Gli chiedo cosa possiamo fare per preparare, sul piano della storia, il nuovo cittadino d'Europa. Emergono idee interessanti». Pedini, *Tra cultura e azione politica*, 49.

²⁷⁹ «Il prof. Saitta, pur di estrazione politica diversa dalla mia, è amico fedele e generoso». Pedini, *Tra cultura e azione politica*, 199. Pedini wrote these words while he was harshly attacked by public opinion regarding the presence of his name on the list of members of the P2 Masonic lodge in March 1981. On the topic see: Giorgio Galli, *La Venerabile Trama: La Vera Storia Di Licio Gelli e Della P2* (Turin: Edizioni Lindau, 2016).

²⁸⁰ Paolo Broggio, ‘Armando Saitta e l’attenzione Alla Storia Religiosa’, in *Cultura e Organizzazione. Armando Saitta e La Storiografia Italiana Del Secondo Novecento*, ed. Alessandro Laruffa and Marcello Verga (Rome: Viella, 2023), 185–206.

from the religious field to the political-economic-social field».²⁸¹ According to Martina, Saitta was a member of a Marxist historians' group which used to hide «his intentions under a humanitarian veil, preferring to let others speak, trying to persuade readers of their arguments through a skilful choice of texts».²⁸² The Jesuit historian criticised the theoretical assumptions that led the “Marxist” Saitta to identify the fundamental origins of the historical developments in Western Europe. Saitta, he argued, supported the predominance of the economic structure, the absolute need for class struggle and revolution, to exalt communism and produce a «misunderstanding of the Church, considered from a purely human point of view, as an association aiming at political hegemony».²⁸³ In Martina's interpretation, the list of events and historical phenomena that Saitta would have distorted, biased, or culpably omitted is extensive: from the political Counter-Reformation (and the related judgement on the Spanish Golden Age) to the origins of Italian communism, from Church-State relations to the revolutionary Terror, from the Jacobin triennium to the Stalin purges.

The catholics' accusation of Saitta for introducing Marxism into Italian schools was not entirely a novelty. In the early 1950s, the Jesuit journal “La Civiltà Cattolica” considerably disputed the first publication of “Il cammino umano”, a history textbook produced by Saitta between 1949 and 1955 for classical, scientific, and magistral high schools.²⁸⁴ In the socio-political conjuncture of the period, Saitta argued, the global economic crisis produced a revival of nationalistic and religious extremism, mass migrations, and social tensions. He emphasised the school and the history textbook, respectively, as the place and the instrument of inclusive education in a multicultural society. History could help identify the common interests and roots of peoples and cultures, as well as understand the capillary refractions between past and present, the global and the local. Hence, the compelling necessity of a national, but not nationalistic, history textbook. The declared objective was «to give the student an objective and unitary view of the history of men, who always transcend the narrow

²⁸¹ «Tattica più fine ed insidiosa [mirante a spostare] l'attacco dal campo religioso a quello politico-economico-sociale». Giacomo Martina, *Studio Ed Insegnamento Della Storia* (Roma: AVE-UCIIM Editori, 1965), 89–92.

²⁸² «Le sue intenzioni sotto un velo umanitario, preferendo far parlare gli altri, cercando di persuadere i lettori delle proprie tesi attraverso un'abile scelta di testi». Ibid.

²⁸³ «Incomprensione per la Chiesa, considerata da un punto di vista puramente umano, come una società che miri all'egemonia politica». Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Armando Saitta, *Il cammino umano. Corso di storia ad uso dei licei* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1952). “La Civiltà cattolica” was one of the most authoritative and influential Italian Catholic journals in the second post-war period. It aimed at offering clear indications and interpretations of Christian morality in a «period of crisis in ethical values and the disorientation of human consciences». During the decade 1945-1955, its primary concern was the arrival of the Communist doctrine in Italy even by a cultural shock in education. On the topic see: Luciano Trincia, ‘“La Civiltà Cattolica”, La Democrazia “Naturaliter Christiana” e La Paura Del Comunismo (1943-1948)’, *Studi Storici* 28, no. 2 (1987): 505–29.

confines of the country where they were born and where they live. Therefore, the history of human civilisation, not the history of Italy alone».²⁸⁵

At the time, Saitta's work was either enthusiastically hailed or harshly stigmatised as a Marxist paradigm gateway into the school curricula. The Italian Catholics depicted Saitta as the forerunner of a historical-critical conscience according to a left-wing and secular perspective in high schools, unacceptable in the eyes of the Jesuits. They did not reproach Saitta for little focusing on the religious phenomena and the history of the Catholic Church, but rather for his secularised and secularising perspective. Italian Catholics argued that, in Saitta's interpretation, the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation did not assume the same central role in the construction of European modernity compared to the contemporary manuals of the Waldensian Giorgio Spini.²⁸⁶

However, recent studies have extensively challenged this assumption. Francesco Torchiani has stressed that Saitta did not deploy prefabricated schemes in his textbook; instead, he paid remarkable attention to the history of social conflicts, economics and international relations, and minority political currents, while the freedom of critical judgement was not affected by Marxist "limitations".²⁸⁷ Furthermore, Torchiani has emphasised that Saitta aspired to a cultural renewal after the twenty-year fascist period. Between the absolute fidelity to tradition and a total renewal, the historian did not envisage «revolutionary therapies: it is only a matter of realising that the political, social, spiritual, and therefore also cultural and historiographical problems of the 1955 men are different from the struggle against positivism or the moral reaction to fascism».²⁸⁸ Saitta supported "integral" historiography, capable of encompassing «all the conspiring forces of historical reality».²⁸⁹ Hence, his idea of historiography was not

²⁸⁵ «Dare all'allievo una visione obbiettiva ed unitaria della storia degli uomini, i quali – nelle loro realizzazioni perenni – superano sempre gli stretti confini del paese ove son nati ed ove vivono. Dunque, storia della civiltà umana, non dell'Italia soltanto». Armando Saitta, *Il cammino della civiltà. Corso di storia ad uso degli istituti magistrali* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1953), III.

²⁸⁶ Giorgio Spini, *Disegno storico della civiltà italiana per licei classici: scientifici e istituti magistrali* (Naples: Cremonese, 1958).

²⁸⁷ Francesco Torchiani, 'Da «Movimento Operaio» al Sessantotto. Armando Saitta Organizzatore Di Cultura.', in *Le Carte e La Scuola. Lavori in Corso Nel Centro Archivistico Della Normale Di Pisa*, ed. Daniele Menozzi, Francesco Torchiani (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2018), 107–32:114.

²⁸⁸ «Si tratta soltanto di prender atto che i problemi politici, sociali, spirituali, e quindi anche culturali e storiografici, degli uomini del 1955 sono diversi da quelli che furono al momento della lotta contro i residui della cultura positivista o della reazione morale al fascismo». Armando Saitta, 'Il programma della «Collezione storica»', in *Momenti e figure della civiltà europea. Saggi storici e storiografici*, ed. Armando Saitta (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1991), vol. 5, 447.

²⁸⁹ «Tutte le forze cospirative della realtà storica». Saitta discussed and shared the concept of "integral historiography" with the Italian historian Delio Cantimori. Cantimori described Saitta as «a typically Italian scholar of the old school» who, after the Second World War, had had the merit of «sailing from idealism towards Marxism, without ever becoming Marxist». In a letter to Cantimori, Saitta confirmed his approach of a non-Marxist left with an initial Croceanism: «starting from Croce without arriving at Marx». On the topic see: Delio Cantimori, *Commemorazione di Luigi Russo nel novembre 1961*, in Saitta, *Momenti e figure*, vol. 1,

aseptic or descriptive, but “perennially adjectival, all problems”, and defined firstly through differences: the distance from “traditional” historiography; the simultaneous distrust of Marxist historiography, unable of examining the entire socio-political reality. In summary, according to Saitta, it was not possible to write a history of the ruling classes without considering the relations between capitalists and workers; at the same time, the history of the workers' movement could not be reduced to the internal history of the subaltern classes alone but had to open up the hegemonic classes.²⁹⁰

Similarly, Michele Maria Rabà has underlined the connections between “Il cammino umano” and the “denationalisation” of history textbooks rather than a strictly Marxist perspective.²⁹¹ He has shown Saitta’s accordance with calls for overcoming nationalism in textbooks expressed by the League of Nations in the 1920s and subsequently reaffirmed by UNESCO in the mid-1940s.²⁹² In addition, Vittorio Criscuolo has described the pervasive influence of the Italian Constituent Assembly on the textbook. He has argued that in the second post-war period, Saitta focused primarily on two themes: the history of France as the leading nation of European freedom and the ideal of European unity. As a result, Saitta contributed to the Italian public opinion during the Constituent Assembly through several French constitutional history studies that were included in his textbook.²⁹³ In 1965, in an article published in the magazine “Belfagor”, Massimo Legnani depicted both Saitta's and Spini's textbooks as works

137–48; Vittorio Criscuolo, *Voce dedicata ad Armando Saitta nel Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome: Treccani, 2017).

²⁹⁰ On Saitta’s historiographical paradigm see also: Vittorio Criscuolo, ‘La Genesi Dell’opera Storica Di Armando Saitta’, *Critica Storica* XXVIII, no. 4 (1991): 587–658. More recently, subaltern history founders like Partha Chatterjee have argued that workers are not subalterns, as they have had a voice in modern society. See: Partha Chatterjee, ‘Subaltern Studies and “Capital”’, *Economic and Political Weekly* 48, no. 37 (2013): 69–75.

²⁹¹ Michele Maria Rabà, ‘Un Manuale Di Storia per La “Nuova Italia”. Armando Saitta e Il Cammino Umano.’, in *Cultura e Organizzazione. Armando Saitta e La Storiografia Italiana Del Secondo Novecento*, ed. Alessandro Laruffa and Marcello Verga (Roma: Viella, 2023), 45–60.

²⁹² After the First World War, the League of Nations, through its International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, attempted to reshape the teaching of history in its member states. The League's supporters realised that its long-term success depended in part on supportive public opinion and that this, in turn, had implications for education. Aware of the strength of national loyalties, the League sought not to abolish the teaching of national history but to suffuse it with the spirit of the “international mind”. To this extent, the League promoted revision of history textbooks and curricula, retraining of teachers, and rethinking of teaching methods. On the topic, see: Ken Osborne, ‘Creating the “International Mind”: The League of Nations Attempts to Reform History Teaching, 1920–1939’, *History of Education Quarterly* 56, no. 2 (2016): 213–40. On the basis of that resolution, and on a proposal by the British Historical Association, the UNESCO promoted between 1945 and 1949 the publication of “A Model Plan for the Analysis and Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials as Aid to International Understanding”, a “Guide pour l'amélioration des manuels et des matériels d'enseignement”, and defined an agreement for the revision of school texts. On the topic see: Marcello Verga, ‘La Comunità Europea, La «politica Della Storia» e Gli Storici’, *Meridiana*, no. 46 (2003): 31–61: 43.

²⁹³ Criscuolo, ‘La Genesi’, 631–5.

«responding to the didactic and cultural aims of a teaching that adheres to the principles of the Republican Constitution».²⁹⁴

Correspondingly, Saitta's friendship with the Italian priest and Catholic intellectual Giuseppe De Luca can be read as a substantial opening to the Catholic world. A recent essay of Roberto Ricci has extensively analysed the close relationship between the two apparently opposite intellectuals.²⁹⁵ According to Ricci, Giuseppe De Luca was so impressed by the young Sicilian historian's first essay, "Dalla Res Publica Christiana agli Stati Uniti di Europa", that he wrote a review in the newspaper "L'Osservatore Romano" in April 1948.²⁹⁶ In the article, De Luca emphasised how a secular history of pacifist thought could also be useful for the Catholics, and particularly to those who «remaining faithful to the tradition of Christian thought, do not readily realise the stirrings of thought, born not only among the profane, but among the violators [...] history does not only know right ideas among its forces. Frequently, a world has arisen behind a wrong idea, the error as well as the fault is our soul and our history».²⁹⁷ As Gabriele De Rosa has effectively written, «De Luca saw in Saitta a skilful, intelligent interlocutor, who knew how all the suggestions, the tiredness, but also the greatness of the Italian "Mezzogiorno", where Greekness, holiness, monasticism, Madonnas, and the clergy drew on each other».²⁹⁸ Albeit the structural distance between a priest and a historian of profoundly secular training and convictions, De Luca genuinely appreciated Saitta's production, which resulted in the publication of Saitta's first monographic study on the Jacobin Filippo Buonarroti with the new "Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura" directed by De Luca.²⁹⁹ Subsequently, De Luca asked Saitta to focus on Gioacchino Ventura and Pierre-Simon Ballanche, representatives of nineteenth-century Catholic prophetism. Given these premises, we can presume that Saitta was interested in the religious dimension and the connections with the Catholic world played a significant role in his scientific production.

²⁹⁴ «Rispondenti alle finalità didattiche e culturali di un insegnamento aderente ai principi della Costituzione repubblicana». Massimo Legnani, 'L'antistoria nei manuali scolastici', *Belfagor* 20, no. 5 (1965): 596–99: 596.

²⁹⁵ Roberto Ricci, "«Con Viva Gratitudine e Rispettosa Amicizia». Le Lettere Tra Armando Saitta e Don Giuseppe de Luca", in *Cultura e Organizzazione. Armando Saitta e La Storiografia Italiana Del Secondo Novecento*, ed. Alessandro Laruffa and Marcello Verga (Rome: Viella, 2023), 25–44.

²⁹⁶ Armando Saitta, *Dalla Res Publica Christiana Agli Stati Uniti Europa* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1948); Giuseppe De Luca, "Per la storia del pacifismo", *L'Osservatore romano*, 7 Apr. 1948.

²⁹⁷ «Noi cattolici, rimanendo fedeli alla tradizione secolare del pensiero cristiano, non si rendono conto facilmente dei moti di pensiero, nati non solo tra i profani, ma tra i profanatori, e nati dove non c'è nessuna severità di pensiero, ma c'è, assai spesso, un vigore di fanatismo tale, che non lascia gli uomini migliori senza esitazione e seduce la gente comune». Ibid.

²⁹⁸ «De Luca vedeva in Saitta un interlocutore abile e intelligente, che sapeva cogliere tutte le suggestioni, le stanchezze, ma anche la grandezza di un Mezzogiorno tutto suo, dove grecità, santità, monachesimo, Madonne, clero attingevano l'uno dall'altro». Gabriele De Rosa, 'L'amico Saitta', in Saitta, *Momenti e figure*, V.

²⁹⁹ Armando Saitta, *Filippo Buonarroti. Contributi alla storia della sua vita e del suo pensiero* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1951).

Indeed, European pacifism was a crucial midpoint between Saitta and the Catholics. The Italian historian conceived the Europeanist ideal as a decisive goal of the second postwar period.³⁰⁰ He stressed the burden experienced by his generation due to the involution of the nation-state. Following the nineteenth century rise, it collapsed under the weight of two world wars and the spread of fascism. Notwithstanding, he emphasised how the same generation, regardless of political affiliation, found a common European language to face totalitarian oppression and imagine a new society based on respect for humans and the values of freedom. As a result, the dream born with the Ventotene Manifesto inspired the effort to rebuild Europe and dismiss nationalistic prejudice.

The Saitta's narrative on the postwar generation lies in his education. He was born in the small town of Sant'Angelo di Brolo, in the Sicily region. Following a childhood spent on the remote fringes "of great culture", in October 1935, he was admitted to the "Scuola Normale Superiore" of Pisa. Although, at the time, this university was dominated by the fascist intellectual Giovanni Gentile, Saitta was impressed by his professors Luigi Russo and Guido Calogero, who brought Benedetto Croce's lesson to Pisa.³⁰¹ Similarly, he appreciated Claudio Baglietto's and Aldo Capitini's "liberal-socialist and pacifist plots"; indeed, Saitta emphasised their dialogue with the Pisan students despite their exile in Perugia by fascism. Concerning the Marxist doctrine, the Sicilian historian valued the study of Antonio Labriola's texts, which in the "darkness" of the fascist regime, had made possible an initial approach to Marxism and the «choice» that came with the return to freedom.³⁰² Lastly, from 1943 onwards, the historian Carlo Morandi enriched Saitta's cultural and historiographical universe.

Morandi introduced Saitta to the Europeanist perspective. Scholars have broadly described Morandi's pro-European influence on a whole generation of young Italian students to mature their gradual escape from fascism.³⁰³ In those years, Morandi urged adopting a joint European policy to end the long civil war that had plagued the continent since 1870.³⁰⁴ The leading countries should have renounced their absolute aspirations and created a connecting political system to prevent European "pulverisation". He realised that single European states could not lead the world any longer; however, a united Europe could have had enormous potential if turned «into a force capable of submerging frontiers without destroying individual national

³⁰⁰ Saitta, *Dalla Res Publica Christiana*, IV–V.

³⁰¹ Armando Saitta, 'Luigi Russo', *Critica Storica* I, no.1 (1962), 115–121.

³⁰² Criscuolo, 'La genesi', 595–615.

³⁰³ Luisa Mangoni, *Primato, 1940-1943: Antologia* (Bari: De Donato, 1977), 3–7; Marcello Verga, *Storie d'Europa, Secoli XVIII-XXI* (Roma: Carocci, 2004), 197–198.

³⁰⁴ Carlo Morandi, *L'idea dell'unità politica d'Europa Nel XIX e XX Secolo* (Milano: Marzorati, 1948).

values».³⁰⁵ For that generation, seeking redemption after the mortification of fascism, Europe was an immediate hope and political practice.

Accordingly, Saitta argued that historical research from a European perspective entailed re-signifying history. Historical events assume new light when observed in a frame broader than the single national context. Saitta connected his interpretations analysing Andrea Luigi Mazzini, a mid-nineteenth-century Italian politician.³⁰⁶ Mazzini claimed that the Risorgimento was a European issue rather than an internal Italian process. As a result, he proposed to focus on «the general ideas and interests of European civilisation that direct and dominate in our days the particular ideas and interests of every country, of every civilised people».³⁰⁷ In this respect, Europe offered to Italy a valuable solution through a broad federation of peoples capable of absorbing local conflicts.

The federalist doctrine is a crucial feature in Saitta's conception of European pacifism. At the end of the Second World War, he recalled Saint Simon's and Thierry's attempt to bind the European nations into a single supranational political body after the Napoleonic wars in 1815.³⁰⁸ A strong need for a definitive end to the conflict emerged in that period to experiment a European politics. The war-ravaged Europe yearned for peace after the will to power of the dictator Napoleon. The reference to Napoleon's dictatorship was Saitta's direct anchor from the past to the present. In 1945, as in 1814, the people had finally "breathed" again. Consequently, Saitta urged to «give peace to Europe, to organise it so that it would no longer have to be shaken by the violent storms of war».³⁰⁹ The reorganisation of Europe could only be achieved through the expansive force of freedom: «Will we really have a liberal international of governments or, better still, of peoples?».³¹⁰ The war that emerged from the resurgence of national chauvinism and the brutal forms of Nazi fascism had demolished any pacifist option together with the intellectualistic pan-European process. Following the return of peace, the caesura between the vanquished and the victors risked generating new and more cruel distances between nations and people. Saitta urged thinking Europe to avoid renewed revanchist ambitions in the grip of the non-European superpowers. Europe, he argued, could

³⁰⁵ «In una forza capace di sommergere le frontiere senza distruggere i singoli valori nazionali». Morandi, *L'idea*, 4.

³⁰⁶ Armando Saitta, *L'opera di Andrea Luigi Mazzini «De l'Italie dans ses rapports avec la liberté et la civilisation moderne»*, in Armando Saitta, *Momenti e figure*, I, 45–99.

³⁰⁷ «Le idee e gli interessi generali della civiltà europea che dirigono e dominano i nostri giorni le idee e gli interessi particolari di ogni paese, di ogni popolo civilizzato». Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Henri de Saint-Simon e Agustin Thierry, *La riorganizzazione della società europea*, ed. Armando Saitta (Roma: Atlantica, 1945).

³⁰⁹ «Dare la pace all'Europa, organizzarla in modo che non debba essere più squassata dalle violente bufere della guerra». Ibid.

³¹⁰ «Avremo veramente una internazionale liberale di governi o, meglio ancora, di popoli?». Ibid.

represent a political community of democratic institutions and solidarity-based economic policies to limit the excessive disproportion of powers.

As Alessandro Guerra has recently pointed out, Saitta's statements concerning political Europe, the "process of European union", as a concrete project rather than a romantic refuge, recalled Benedetto Croce.³¹¹ Croce stressed that the Europeanisation process was «directly opposed to the competitions of nationalisms and stood against them and may one day liberate Europe from all the psychology that joins and sustains nationalisms and engenders similar ways, habits, and actions».³¹² Correspondingly, Saitta argued that Europe was the only political dimension to promote a concrete process of lasting peace. He accused the failure of international arbitration institutions, with the lacklustre proof given by the League of Nations and the "political alchemy" of the United Nations, paralysed by the continuous intertwining of vetoes and counter-vetoes.³¹³

After a long-term analysis of political modernity, Saitta specified his framework for the new European institutions. The pacifist ideal for Europe was directly connected with the European revolutionary period between the French revolution and the mid-nineteenth century. He indicated Robespierre as the main protagonist in making perpetual peace a concrete political objective, no longer a utopian projection but a political construction that would bring the world into a more stable balance. The citizens discover politics and decide to challenge their condition of servitude. Saitta's emphasis on Robespierre's words and people disliking armed missionaries in promoting political relations between states is emblematic of his thought.

Similarly, Saitta's idea of Europe was influenced by Federico Chabod. Chabod argued that defining Europe entailed Europeans' self-awareness of their history and belonging.³¹⁴ A highly controversial motif since it implies the composition of a difference: European consciousness meant identifying Europe as an original political and moral entity. Hence, the concept of Europe is built «by contrast, insofar there is something that is not Europe and acquires its characteristics and becomes precise in its elements, at least initially, precisely through a confrontation with this non-Europe».³¹⁵ Chabod's Europe did not yearn to restore its

³¹¹ Alessandro Guerra, '«Svegliare Le Menti e Le Coscienze a Un Sentire Europeo, e Non Più Semplicemente Nazionale». La Storia Europea Di Armando Saitta.', in *Armando Saitta e La Ricerca Storica Nell'Italia Del Secondo Novecento.*, ed. Alessandro Laruffa and Marcello Verga (Rome: Viella, 2023), 255–70: 261.

³¹² «[...] è direttamente opposto alle competizioni dei nazionalismi e sta contro di essi e un giorno potrà liberarne affatto l'Europa, tende a liberarla in pari tempo da tutta la psicologia che ai nazionalismi si congiunge e li sostiene e ingenera modi, abiti e azioni affini». Benedetto Croce, *Storia d'Europa nel secolo decimonono* (Bari: Laterza, 1964), 315.

³¹³ Saitta, *Dalla Res Publica Christiana*, 6.

³¹⁴ Federico Chabod, *Storia dell'idea d'Europa*, ed. Armando Saitta e Ernesto Sestan (Bari: Laterza, 1961), 21.

³¹⁵ «[...] per contrapposizione, in quanto c'è qualcosa che non è Europa ed acquista le sue caratteristiche e si precisa nei suoi elementi, almeno inizialmente, proprio attraverso un confronto con questa non Europa». Ibid.

dominion over the world and national colonialism disguised as “educational missionaries”; in contrast, this Europe ideal was aware of its surviving marginality, and without any hegemonic ambitions, it reworked its defeat by intersecting with the finiteness of nationalism.³¹⁶

However, Chabod and Morandi had two different ideas concerning the beginning of “thinking European”. Saitta seemed to lean toward Chabod's reasons for dating the eighteenth-century movement as the origin of European thinking; nevertheless, he did not wholly deny Morandi's statements for analysing Europe and its equilibrium from the nineteenth century onwards. In this respect, Saitta emphasised the revolutionary period as the first specific sense of Europeanism.³¹⁷ The balance was a united Europe efficiently valorising differences and taking a stand in the world. Refusing the “archaeological restoration” of a state-centred political system, Saitta's Europe was a living space of experience, “a conquest of the future”, confirming his enthusiasm for the united European framework. As a result, Saitta described a sort of European patriotism in an essay included in Max Beloff's work commissioned by the Council of Europe to animate the European conscience.³¹⁸

Thus, Saitta considered the nineteenth century a political battlefield where various hypotheses of Europeanism were confronted. On the one hand, the nostalgic, conservative, and reactionary Europeanism typical of Christian-rooted Europe supporters; on the other hand, Jacobin Europeanism was its counterpart. Within this juxtaposition of extremes emerged nationalist exasperation, transcending with the colonial conquest of the great European powers. Saitta wrote:

«This concept of the nation had arisen in clear polemic with the French supremacy of the various Guizot and Michelet, and with the cosmopolitan Jacobinism of Filippo Buonarroti; it borrowed infinite fragments from the pre-Romantic thought of Herder and the theocratic thought of De Maistre; but it was also and above all an incandescent intuition, a faith that Mazzini drew from the depths of himself. Nation, humanity: these are the two opposite poles».³¹⁹

Rather than rigid Marxism, Saitta's historiographical paradigm seemed characterised by a connection between the European dimension and the more innovative component of Marxist

³¹⁶ Federico Chabod, *L'idea di nazione*, ed. Armando Saitta e Ernesto Sestan (Bari: Laterza, 1961), 18.

³¹⁷ Armando Saitta, *L'idea di Europa dal 1815 al 1870*, in *Momenti e figure*, vol. V, 9–67.

³¹⁸ Armando Saitta, ‘L'idea di Europa dal 1815 al 1870’, in *L'Europe du XIXe et du XXe siècle, 1815-1870: problèmes et interprétations historiques*, ed. Max Beloff (Milan: Marzorati, 1959), 74–131.

³¹⁹ «Questo concetto di nazione era sorto in chiara polemica con il primato francese dei vari Guizot e Michelet, e con il giacobinismo cosmopolita di Filippo Buonarroti; mutuava infiniti frammenti e dal pensiero preromantico dello Herder e dal pensiero teocratico del De Maistre; ma era anche e soprattutto una intuizione incandescente, una fede che il Mazzini ricavava dal più profondo di sé. Nazione, umanità: ecco i due poli opposti». Saitta, *L'idea di Europa*, 48.

historiography, avoiding self-referential scrutiny. He urged to go beyond the Italian historicist tradition without, however, definitively dismissing its structure, «grasping the concrete thread of history at the precise moment of the confluence of the infinite contrasting forces and in the incessant dialectical osmosis of what is hegemonic and what is subordinate, of what is now, and what today is not but tomorrow will be».³²⁰ Time was ripe for Italian historiography to follow and adapt historicism to the new context; the historian should have been a “man among men”, aware and conscious of the most recent historiographical experiences to grasp the liveliest cues of renewed cultural needs.

This perspective on the European dimension earned the young Saitta admission to the school of the Italian Historical Institute for the Modern and Contemporary Age (IHIMCA) in Rome in 1946.³²¹ Significantly, Federico Chabod welcomed Saitta to the school as a member of the examining board. Chabod appreciated the young scholar’s profound culture, «not only Italian but European», an opinion that was positively confirmed during the presentation of the student’s first results.³²² Even the Institute’s commissioner Gaetano De Sanctis considered Saitta as a fundamental element of the School and the Institute; consequently, Chabod proposed Saitta for an international scholarship in Granada despite the young scholar’s displeasure.³²³ During his visiting scholarship in Spain, Saitta collaborated with the Institute, particularly with Chabod, before returning to Rome in 1953.

The young and eager Saitta perceived the IHIMCA as a decidedly fertile context for the European aspiration of his research. He rejoiced in returning to “discover Europe” after the horrors of war and studying in Paris to further his research on diplomatic relations between Italian states and France during the nineteenth century.³²⁴ Although national history was the pivot of IHIMCA’s scientific and institutional activity, according to Armando Saitta, the progressive “fascistisation” of culture failed in distorting the liberal architecture of Italian

³²⁰ «Cogliendo il filo concreto della storia nel momento preciso della confluenza delle infinite forze contrastanti e nell'incessante osmosi dialettica di ciò che è egemone e di ciò che è subalterno, di ciò che è ora e di ciò che oggi non è ma che domani sarà». Armando Saitta, *Il programma della «Collezione storica»* (Bari:Laterza, 1955), 447.

³²¹ Concorso alunni scuola storica, 4 July 1946, Italian Historical Institute for Modern and Contemporary Ages (IHIMCA), fund Alunni Scuola Storica, dossier Concorso 1946. On the topic see: Alessandro Guerra, ‘Fra via Caetani e l’Europa. Armando Saitta e l’Istituto Storico Italiano per l’età Moderna e Contemporanea’, *Annali di storia moderna e contemporanea*, no. 4 (2016): 77–106: 79.

³²² Verbale dell’adunanza del Consiglio direttivo del 22 ottobre 1947, IHIMCA, libro dei verbali dell’Istituto 1935-1964, 69–81.

³²³ Letter from Armando Saitta to Delio Cantimori, 4 Dec. 1952, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, folder VII, dossier «Delio Cantimori 1942-1961».

³²⁴ Letter from Armando Saitta to Gaetano De Sanctis, ... , IHIMCA, fund Armando Saitta, folder Presidenti Istituto, Direttori Scuola e membri del Consiglio, dossier Saitta.

historical production and its institutions.³²⁵ Despite the Institute's leading representatives, the historians Gioacchino Volpe and Giovanni Gentile, were utterly embedded in the fascist regime, the organisation of historical studies was not yet entirely subservient to fascism. Saitta believed that historical institutes of the period «arose in a particular political complex that is Italy with a fascist regime» but did not have fascist propaganda as their goal.³²⁶ He even praised Gentile and Volpe for defending intellectual freedom and guaranteeing the IHIMCA a European openness in opposition to fascism's ambitions of rigid national historiography:

«That Gentile and Gioacchino Volpe were fascists, dignitaries of fascism, no one denies. But what I deny in the most absolute, clearest way is that the School of Modern History or the transformation of the Historical Institute of the Middle Ages, or the creation or certain powers passed to the National Society for the History of the Risorgimento, were done with a deliberate intention to make these bodies fascist. This seems to me an absolute falsehood. And even if it is unconscious, falsehood always remains».³²⁷

Considering Saitta's bond with the Institute, it is not surprising that, in 1960, he was appointed as a member of the IHIMCA Executive Board.³²⁸ Taking note of Chabod's resignation for health reasons, the Board members considered Saitta "truly suitable" and hoped for a fast designation. The choice was influenced by Saitta's long-standing experience at the Institute and the support of President Raffaele Ciasca. At the same meeting, Ciasca illustrated the substantial funding allocated to publishing activities in view of the centenary of the Italy Unification in 1971. He stated that part of the funds would have been employed for a new publication dedicated to «illuminating the links between Europe and the formation of Italian unity and on central moments in Italian history from 1860 to the present day in its

³²⁵ The Institute's main task was publishing the sources of Italian history «from 1500 to the Great Victorious War», following a solid Risorgimento-marked approach that recalled the previous «National Committee for the History of the Risorgimento», founded in 1906. On the topic see: Giovanni Gentile, *Dal Comitato Nazionale per la Storia del Risorgimento al Regio Istituto Storico per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea - Relazione al Ministro dell'Educazione Nazionale* (Firenze: Stianti, 1935); Raffaele Ciasca, 'L'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea', *Studi Romani* 4, no. 1 (1956), 87–90.

³²⁶ «Sorgono in un certo complesso geografico politico che è l'Italia che ha un regime fascista». Armando Saitta, 'L'organizzazione degli studi storici', in *Federico Chabod e la «Nuova storiografia» italiana dal primo al secondo dopoguerra (1919-1950)*, ed. Brunello Vigezzi (Milano: Jaka Book, 1983), 511–519:517.

³²⁷ «Che Gentile, che Gioacchino Volpe siano stati dei fascisti, dei dignitari del fascismo, nessuno lo nega. Ma quello che nego nella maniera più assoluta, più netta, è che la Scuola di Storia Moderna o la trasformazione dell'Istituto Storico del Medioevo, o la creazione o certi poteri passati alla Società Nazionale per la storia del Risorgimento, siano stati fatti, che siano avvenuti con un proposito deliberato di fascistizzare questi enti. Questo mi pare che sia commettere un'assoluta falsità. E anche se è inconsapevole, falsità sempre resta». Ibid. For a different point of view see: Fabrizio Cossalter, Giuseppe Galasso, and Eugenio Di Rienzo, 'Discussione su Gioacchino Volpe', *Memoria e ricerca : rivista di storia contemporanea* 32 (2009), 1–17.

³²⁸ Verbale dell'Adunanza del Consiglio direttivo, 14 Feb. 1960 IHIMCA, libro dei verbali dell'Istituto, 1935-1969, 116.

relations with Europe and in how Europe has seen them».³²⁹ The new "Italy and Europe" series was prominently consistent with Saitta and his historiographic approach concerning the Risorgimento, to such an extent that he published a substantial number of essays.³³⁰

From that moment onward, Saitta assumed progressive relevance at the IHIMCA. In that period, he was sceptical concerning university and the 1968 protest movements.³³¹ As a result, he sought to focus on the Institute, a fertile context to develop his critical conception of national historiography accompanied by the historian's generous civil commitment.³³² Thus, he opted for the Institute as his scientific "tribune", which he imagined as a hub for continental culture and historiography.

Saitta's commitment to IHIMCA's activities was awarded the presidency on 15 March 1973.³³³ Describing the guidelines of his mandate, he stated his intention to make the Institute a propulsive centre of historical studies in the Italian and European context, strengthening the series "Italy and Europe", and establishing an international scientific committee for the Institute's publishing and cultural initiatives.³³⁴ The names of the newborn committee included Francesco Barone, Alessandro Galante Garrone, Eugenio Garin, Heinrich Lutz, and Albert Soboul, who subsequently would support the establishment of an international meeting to discuss the most significant issues of European historiography.³³⁵

It is worth noting the close relationship between Soboul and Saitta, which began as early as the mid-1950s through a historiographical convergence on the French revolution.³³⁶ The

³²⁹ «Illuminare sui nessi fra l'Europa e la formazione dell'unità italiana e su momenti centrali della storia italiana dal 1860 ad oggi nei suoi rapporti con l'Europa e nei modi come essi sono stati visti dall'Europa». Ibid.

³³⁰ Armando Saitta, *Il problema italiano nei testi di una battaglia pubblicistica. Gli opuscoli del Visconte de la Guéronniere*, (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea, 1963); Armando Saitta, *Alle origini del Risorgimento: i testi di un «celebre» concorso (1796)*, (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea, 1964); Armando Saitta, *Sinistra hegeliana e problema italiano negli scritti di Andrea Luigi Mazzini*, (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea, 1968).

³³¹ Saitta was critical of both the youth protest, which he considered confusing and unproductive, and the proposed university reform contained in the Gui law, although he recognised the need to adapt university teaching to the new requirements. On the subject see: Armando Saitta, 'Della miniriforma e altro ancora', *Critica Storica* VII, no. 4 (1968), 524–39.

³³² About Saitta's conception of the historians' role, see: Guerra, 'Fra via Caetani e l'Europa', 94–5; Criscuolo, 'La genesi', 648–51; Regina Pozzi, 'Armando Saitta storico della cultura francese dell'Ottocento', *Critica Storica* XXVIII, no. 4 (1991), 677–704.

³³³ Verbale dell'Adunanza del Consiglio direttivo, 16 Feb. 1973, IHIMCA, libro dei verbali dell'Istituto 1969–1990, 178–9.

³³⁴ Verbale dell'adunanza del Consiglio direttivo, 17 Nov. 1973, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series II, dossier Istituto di storia dell'età moderna e contemporanea; Associazione degli storici europei.

³³⁵ Verbale dell'adunanza del Consiglio direttivo, 26 Feb. 1974, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series II, dossier Istituto di storia dell'età moderna e contemporanea; Associazione degli storici europei.

³³⁶ In 1948, Soboul published his first article on Saint-Just's Republican Institutions. See: Albert Soboul, 'Les Institutions Républicaines de Saint-Just d'après Les Manuscrits de La Bibliothèque Nationale', *Annales Historiques de La Révolution Française* 20, no. 111 (1948): 193–262. Saitta considered crucial Soboul's article for a new interpretation of the revolutionary process that differed from Georges Lefebvre and centred on the programmatic relationship between the Robespierist group and the Sanculotto movement. See: Armando Saitta, *Problemi storiografici e orientamenti sulla Rivoluzione dell'89 in Francia e in Italia* (Roma: Elia, 1973) 33.

1970s marked the peak of their scientific collaboration: Soboul hegemonised the “Société des Études Robespierristes” and the journal of revolutionary studies, appointing Saitta as sole vice-President;³³⁷ simultaneously, Saitta in 1973 obtained the IHIMCA presidency and involved his friend Albert in the scientific council. They jointly organised the conferences in 1974 on "Jacobin and Napoleonic Italy" and in 1978 on "Transformations of the Countryside in the Napoleonic Age".³³⁸ Furthermore, they were both involved in the "Commission Internationale d'Histoire de la Révolution Française".³³⁹

In a passionate letter to his friend Soboul, Saitta confided the early contacts with the Christian Democrat MEP Mario Pedini. According to his formation, he started conceiving a European gathering of scholars based at IHIMCA:

«Tomorrow, I will know whether a project I have drawn up for the chairman of the Culture Committee of the European Parliament in Strasbourg will be viable or not: I will have this chairman, who is the former minister Pedini, for a working lunch, and the project should coalesce. Temporarily, I have proposed a commission of one scholar from each EEC country with the task of examining the concrete possibilities of a conference in Strasbourg on collective work on the history of Europe».³⁴⁰

Conclusions

Contrary to traditional literature, the analysis in this chapter shows an evident activity of the Parliamentary Assembly, and then the European Parliament, concerning educational cooperation long before the mid-1970s. At an early stage, between the 1950s and 1960s, the

Alessandro Guerra has shown that their friendship started on 12 July 1955 with the sending of a copy of the journal “Belfagor” with the text of Saitta's newly-obtained Pisan lecture in Modern History. See: Alessandro Guerra, ‘La Rivoluzione fra le lettere. Il carteggio fra Albert Soboul e Armando Saitta’, *Nuova rivista storica* 101, no. 1 (2017): 103–36: 111.

³³⁷ Letter of Albert Soboul to Armando Saitta, 29 Mar. 1977, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series II, dossier Albert Soboul 1955-1982.

³³⁸ Materials on the congresses "Jacobin and Napoleonic Italy" and "Transformations of the Countryside in the Napoleonic Age", 1974–1978, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, Series II, dossier Iniziative Istituzionali.

³³⁹ The “Commission Internationale d'Histoire de la Révolution Française” was proposed in 1960 at the International Congress of Historical Sciences in Stockholm on the initiative of Ernest Labrousse, Jacques Godechot, Walter Markov, and Albert Soboul, although its official establishment within the International Committee of Historical Sciences dates back to 1980. On the topic see: Michel Vovelle, ‘Rapport d’activité. Commission internationale d’Histoire de la Révolution française’, *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 310, no. 1 (1997): 651–54.

³⁴⁰ «Solo domani saprò se un progetto che ho elaborato per il Presidente della Commissione cultura del Parlamento europeo di Strasburgo sarà vitale o meno: avrò a colazione di lavoro questo Presidente, che è l’ex ministro Pedini, e il progetto dovrebbe coagulare. Per il momento ho proposto una commissione di uno studioso per ogni paese della CEE con il compito di esaminare le possibilità concrete di un convegno a Strasburgo su un’opera collettiva di storia dell’Europa». Letter of Armando Saitta to Albert Soboul, 3 Feb. 1980, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXXIII, dossier Albert Soboul 1955-1982.

EP made a decisive contribution to shaping the guidelines of a future common education policy. In addition to its proposals concerning vocational training, the EP was committed to emphasising the cultural function of education. In the context of a tricky balance with the other EC institutions, especially the Council and the Commission, the EP formulated several proposals for structured educational cooperation between the member states. He tried to absorb the impulses for change in education that 1968 had vehemently revealed. Furthermore, the EP contributed substantially, if not formally, to establishing the European University Institute in 1972.

In the first half of the 1970s, the context changed radically. A series of political shifts in the member countries, combined with increasing international economic competition, curved the debate on educational cooperation into predominantly economic terms. Education was increasingly considered a tool to increase labour productivity and economic growth. Instead, the cultural dimension of education, which the EP had always advocated, suffered a setback. Consequently, together with a breakdown of the institutional balance within the EC in favour of the Council and the Commission, the EP was progressively marginalised concerning educational cooperation and its competencies more generally.

However, the 1979 elections gave new legitimacy to the parliament. The EP entered the crucial 1980s as CE's only democratically elected institution. Consequently, it regained the power to influence the member states' agenda. Thanks to some prominent MEPs, especially the Italian Christian Democrat Mario Pedini, the EP was once again a major player in the design of educational cooperation. The Parliamentary Commission for Youth, Culture, Education, Information, and Sport (CYCEIS) positively influenced the ongoing debate among the Ministers of Education of the member states between 1979 and 1980.

In this context, Pedini thought of involving some historians to “rethink” history teaching from a European perspective. He commissioned the Italian historian Armando Saitta, President of the Italian Historical Institute for Modern and Contemporary Age in Rome, to form a group of interested scholars. The choice was not random. Pedini knew Saitta from his previous positions in the Italian government, first as Minister of Education from 1976 to 1978, then as Minister for Cultural and Environmental Heritage from 1978 to 1979. Saitta was a well-known figure in Italian historiography. In particular, his European approach to history and his focus on school teaching were broadly appreciated.

For his part, Saitta was deeply tempted by Pedini's proposal. His distinctly European-oriented background and passion for education made him perfect for the job. After a 30-year university career, Saitta had the opportunity to develop a European cultural and educational

policy. He could crown a path that, over the years, led him to be highly critical of the academy after 1968. Saitta strongly believed in history as a civil and political value and in the historian as the civil leader of society. Pedini's invitation was the perfect opportunity to formalise his thinking. The last part of the chapter shows that Saitta had numerous contacts with the Catholic world, despite being repeatedly accused of anti-clerical Marxism. As a result, he was involved in Pedini's new project.

2. “A brief generational review”: the preliminary phase of the AEH (1980-1983)

This chapter analyses the AEH's preliminary stages and the close collaboration with the MEP Pedini and the EC. It addresses the preparation of the first congress in 1983 to elaborate a “new” paradigm concerning European history and contribute to “Europeanise” history teaching. The first section includes Saitta’s and Pedini’s project in a general context of EC institutions’ interest in the history of European integration. Specifically, it addresses whether similar historians’ networks were attached to the EC in the same period and their main features. The second paragraph examines the preliminary phases of the 1983 congress. It focuses on the negotiations between the historians and the EC “entrepreneurs” concerning the narrative of Europe and the Europeanness building. By scrutinising the preparation of the 1983 conference, this section investigates the organisers' shared features and the divergences. Finally, the third part scrutinises the 1983 congress addressing the different perspectives on its goals and the disputes concerning its approach.

2.1 Not the only one: similar networks of historians in the early 1980s

The “joint venture” between Pedini and the historians did not emerge out of the blue. The cultural and political eagerness developed around Mitterrand’s “great design” fostered new contemporary historical research initiatives and projects on European integration.³⁴¹ Mitterrand had a leading role in directing the course for the European integration process. He orchestrated economic integration in the 1980s, focusing on economic affairs and developing his vision for the institutional setting of the future European Union (EU). Specifically, Mitterrand’s European policy was based on some pillars, namely the common currency, the development of a Social Europe, and a free trade area between Europe and Africa. Recently, some scholars have critically argued that Mitterrand’s ideal EU consisted of a deep-rooted Western Europe with France at its core and a loose association with Central and Eastern Europe.³⁴²

³⁴¹ Laruffa, ‘Historians’ Affiliation’, 277; Antonio Varsori, ‘From Normative Impetus to Professionalization: Origins and Operation of Research Networks’, in *European Union History: Themes and Debates*, ed. Wolfram Kaiser and Antonio Varsori (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2010), 6–25:10.

³⁴² Troitiño, Färber, and Boiro, ‘Mitterrand and the Great European Design—from the Cold War to the European Union’.

Accordingly, in 1980, René Girault launched the international research project on «the perception of power politics in western Europe».³⁴³ This project aimed at analysing the power relations between Western Europe, the United States, and the Soviet Union to relaunch a Western-based integration process in the new global scenario. They argued that the era of inter-European conflicts had ended, and a new phase of history had begun in Western Europe. The birth of the EC institutions was a noticeable sign of this transformation, possibly the most important. From 1982 to 1992, four major international conferences were held involving scholars from different fields, such as diplomatic, military, economic, and political history. As a result, an informal transnational network of historians from EC countries was created. They laid the groundwork for analysing post-war European nations through a multinational research approach.

The project had four national groups led by senior historians, who coordinated several young scholars concerning the research activities. The international conferences provided an avenue for senior and junior scholars to exchange ideas and perspectives, resulting in a decade-long collective experience that facilitated the formation of an informal transnational network of historians. These scholars shared common interests and research methodologies, and supported a multinational research approach in analysing and interpreting the history of post-war European countries. Leading figures such as Girault, Ennio Di Nolfo, Brunello Vigizzi, Josef Becker, Franz Knipping, Donald Watt, and Geoffrey Warner all supported this approach.³⁴⁴

Consequently, the research results led these historians to revise the interpretation of post-war European processes. During its initial phase, the project primarily focused on comprehending why the four significant Western European states had surrendered their status as "great powers" to the US and the Soviet Union between the 1930s and 1950s.³⁴⁵ The project's emphasis was linked to the decline of Europe's crucial position in global affairs and the impact of the Cold War. In this context, Girault highlighted the significance of the "power perception".³⁴⁶

The international research programme partially reassessed the research project. The group of historians led by Girault understood that post-war Western European history could not be

³⁴³ Ennio Di Nolfo, *Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy and the Origins of the EEC, 1952-1957* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 1. See also notes 101–2.

³⁴⁴ Varsori, 'From Normative Impetus', 9.

³⁴⁵ Anne Deighton, *Building Postwar Europe: National Decision-Makers and European Institutions, 1948-63* (New York: Springer, 2016), ix.

³⁴⁶ René Girault, 'On the Power of Old and New Europe', in *Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy and the Origins of the EEC, 1952-1957*, ed. Ennio Di Nolfo (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 553–62.

restricted to the Cold War and Europe's decrease in power; instead, they claimed to include another pivotal process, namely European integration. Girault's analysis had an impact on several historians from France and other European countries who participated in the project. As there was a growing emphasis on European integration, the third volume in the series was titled "The Origins of the EEC 1952-1957," reflecting this shift in focus.³⁴⁷

European integration was shaped as a possible escape from American hegemony. Raymond Poidevin referred to Robert Shuman's idea of Europe as the "Third Force".³⁴⁸ Despite the suggestion of an integrated Western Europe as an alternative to the American hegemony appears repeatedly in the volume, a prevailing national interests emerges. Josef Becker cited Max Kohnstamm to argue that «the first law of politics is that structures are born only out of necessity. And the necessity itself must be perceived».³⁴⁹ The origins of the European Community confirm this assumption since, as asserted by Girault and other historians involved in the project, European integration seemed to reinforce an American-dominated security system more than an escape attempt.³⁵⁰

The rise of the European integration theme in public debates, the work of various disciplines such as economics, law, political science, and sociology, and the emergence of an EC framework for research administration and expertise were intimately intertwined. These phenomena contributed to the shift of a considerable number of issues from the national level to the European arena.³⁵¹ In historical research, these issues were primarily connected to financial capabilities and the acquisition of influential positions. Historians could not ignore the new configuration of a new space where grants and symbolic recognition were allocated.³⁵² Furthermore, the rise of the European question in public debates and the multiplication of works from neighbouring disciplines on Europe and its history forced historians into the topic. Research projects, publications, and university training courses related to Europe were developed firstly by a small minority and then by an increasing number of historians.

In this context, in 1982, the Liaison Committee of European Historians (LCEH) was born. Its creation was partly the result of an EC policy. In the early 1960s, a "University Information -

³⁴⁷ Varsori, 'From Normative Impetus', 10.

³⁴⁸ Raymond Poidevin, 'Introductory Remarks to the Debate', in *Great Britain*, ed. Di Nolfo, 546–50: 546.

³⁴⁹ Josef Becker, 'Power in Europe? Introductory Remarks', in *Great Britain*, ed. Di Nolfo, 7–16: 15.

³⁵⁰ Concerning the US influence on the European integration history, see: Kiran Klaus Patel, 'The Community and its world', in *Project Europe: A History*, ed. Kiran Klaus Patel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 231–243.

³⁵¹ Bénédicte Zimmermann, *Les Sciences sociales à l'épreuve de l'action: Le savant, le politique et l'Europe* (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2004), 6.

³⁵² Le Boulay, 'Investir', 89–90.

Youth - Adult Education” division within the “Press and Information” department was created.³⁵³ Jean Moreau, the first head of the division, set up several actions concerning the university sector, including a survey to identify dissertations on the integration process, research grants for young academics, and the organisation of colloquia on European themes. From the 1960s, these activities led to the networking of lawyers, economists, and political scientists working on the integration process. At that time, historians were excluded due to the lack of interest in European integration history.³⁵⁴ However, in 1982, the European Commission's Secretary General, Émile Noël, encouraged the division to engage in historical studies and analyse the integration process from a historical perspective.³⁵⁵

Incidentally, it is worth noting that the Liaison Group was not the unilateral result of a voluntarist policy of the Commission. Indeed, the first proposal to set up a permanent liaison group of European historians was made by historians, notably by René Girault. Moreover, the German historian Walter Lipgens committed to establishing a group that could overcome the obstacles of accessing archives related to European integration. In September 1977, Lipgens gathered international relations specialists of different nationalities to assess the accessibility of the archives.³⁵⁶ Consequently, the European Commission decided to make available archives that were thirty years old or more, albeit with restrictions for "sensitive" documents, notably from Euratom. In 1978, the Commission created a service for the “Historical Archives” and appointed the archivist Hans Hofmann as its director. After being recorded on microfilm, the archives were transferred to EUI.³⁵⁷ Morgane Le Boulay has described a form of “collusive transaction” between the EUI, particularly the History department, which acquired privileged access to the archives, and the Commission, which was interested in research on European integration.³⁵⁸

³⁵³ European Commission et al., *The European Commission 1958-72 : History and Memories of an Institution*, ed. M Dumoulin (Bruxelles: EU Publications Office, 2014), 535. The department was common to the EEC, the ECSC and Euratom, then attached solely to the European Commission from 1967 onwards.

³⁵⁴ Interview with Lastenouse-Bury, Jacqueline, 21 Jan. 2004, HAEU, INT713. Among the 1217 theses and dissertations listed by the division from 1957 to 1977, only two history theses were written by American doctoral students. Most of them concerned the fields of law, political science, or economics. On the topic see: E. H. Siemers-Hidma and J. P. Siemers, *European Integration. Select International Bibliography of Theses and Dissertations, 1957-1977 / Europäische Integration (Siemers Eur Integration 1957-1977)* (Leiden: Brill | Nijhoff, 1979).

³⁵⁵ Interview with Noël, Emile, 9 July 1991, HAEU, INT030.

³⁵⁶ Walter Lipgens, *Sources for the History of European Integration (1945-1955) : A Guide to Archives in the Countries of the Community* (Florence: European University Institute, 1980).

³⁵⁷ Communication de M. Van Der Meulen sur les archives historiques des Communautés Européennes, Compte rendu et rapports (avril 1982) du Colloque multinational des professeurs d'histoire contemporaine, tenu à Luxembourg les 28 et 29 janvier 1982, HAEU, CEUE_PICP-1115.

³⁵⁸ Le Boulay, ‘Investir’, 112.

In the early 1980s, Jacqueline Lastenouse, a member of the Directorate for Information, established a connection between the EUCO and the historians Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, Michel Dumoulin, Hans-Peter Schwarz, and Carl Becker.³⁵⁹ The scholars claimed EUCO's support in historical research, particularly the opening of EC archival sources. In 1982, when the European Commission had just finalised the archives' opening to the public, the Directorate-General for Information and the Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg organised a colloquium on the issue, bringing together Commission officials and historians.³⁶⁰ Among them, Hans-Peter Schwarz complained about historians' hurdles in European studies compared to international relations specialists from economics, law, and political science, because of their dependence on archives. Others, such as Donald Watt, Raymond Poidevin, René Girault, and Walter Lipgens, denounced the restrictions placed on the thirty-year rule in the Commission's draft and demanded to be closely associated with the archivists. In this context, Girault proposed to create a network of historians to support historical research on European integration, «advise the Communities on the scientific actions to be undertaken with its support», and «help researchers make better use of the research resources available such as the archives».³⁶¹ The creation of a Liaison Group and the partnership with the Commission enabled these historians to federate and defend their interests within this institution and to cooperate, or compete, with the EUI.³⁶²

Thus, the LCEH establishment was a midpoint between the European Commission and the historians. The contribution to a European network of scholars working on the history of European integration was a crucial opportunity for the University Information Service. Its officials were a small team in a weak position within the Commission, they were far from being considered a priority, and they have long been regarded as «charlatans» by their colleagues.³⁶³ In the 1960s and 1970s, they experienced difficulties in implementing their mission with academics. The University-Information Service hoped to gain legitimacy in the academic world and within the Commission by promoting international academic networks. The officials involved in the project strengthened their links with academia and enhanced

³⁵⁹ Interview with Jacqueline Lastenouse, 25 July 2016, HAEU, INT1063, 19.

³⁶⁰ Compte rendu et rapports (avril 1982) du Colloque multinational des professeurs d'histoire contemporaine, tenu à Luxembourg les 28 et 29 janvier 1982 sur "Etude du début de la construction européenne - Apport des sources et archives 1946-1952", HAEU, CEUE_PICP-1115.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Academic profile of the European University Institute, 1994, HAEU, EUI-813. Concerning the competition between the academics and the EUI, see: Jean-Marie Palayret, 'Une Grande École Pour Une Grande Idée. L'institut Universitaire Européen de Florence et Les Vicissitudes d'une Identité "Académique" de l'Europe (1948-1990)', in *Institutions Européennes et Identités Européennes*, ed. Marcel T. Bitsch, Wilfried Loth, Raymond Poidevin (Bruxelles: Bruylant, 1998), 470–502: 479.

³⁶³ Interview with Jacqueline Lastenouse, 25 July 2016, HAEU, INT1063, 15.

their careers. Specifically, Jacqueline Lastenouse played a crucial role in the group meetings and performed as «an interface between the house [the Commission] and the academic world».³⁶⁴

Broadening the outlook, the commitment to a history of European integration allowed the University Information Service and the supporters of common education and research policy to demonstrate the usefulness of their action. Through the collaboration with this group of “expert” historians, mainly supporting the writing of a book on the fiftieth anniversary of the Rome Treaty and playing the role of “historical testimonies”, the Commission was challenging the European Parliament, which in that period was a competitor in education and research.

Hence, in 1982, the EUCO and the Luxembourg University Centre organised the “International Conference of Professors of Contemporary History” in Luxembourg, focused on 1946-1952 European integration’s sources.³⁶⁵ EUCO’s President Gaston Thorn stressed that the conference’s primary objective was to make European institutions more transparent and to bring the European integration process out of «the closed world of official communications and diplomatic compromises».³⁶⁶ He remarked:

«It is certainly not a question of "propaganda" for European unification under the guise of scientific research. It would be regrettable to deliberately "reorient" the studies carried out according to a grand "European" political design to "manufacture Europeans" as it would be to continue considering the facts solely from a national perspective, in order to maintain patriotism, as was systematically done in the last century and continues to be done all too often».³⁶⁷

At the same time, he recognised that:

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 4.

³⁶⁵ International Conference of Professors of Contemporary History: Luxembourg, 28-29 January 1982, Study of the Beginnings of European Integration: the Value of Source Material and Records 1946-52, Report and Papers, avr. 1982, HAEU, CEUE_PICP-1115.

³⁶⁶ International Conference of Professors of Contemporary History: Luxembourg, 28-29 January 1982, Study of the Beginnings of European Integration : the Value of Source Material and Records 1946-52, Report and Papers, avr. 1982, HAEU, CEUE_PICP-1115, 5.

³⁶⁷ «Il ne s’agit certes pas de faire de la “propagande” pour l’unification européenne sous la couvert de la recherche scientifique. Il serait aussi regrettable de “réorienter” délibérément les études faites en fonction d’un grand dessein politique “européen” pour “fabriquer” des “européens” que de continuer à considérer les faits dans la seule perspective nationale, pour entretenir le patriotisme, come cela c’est fait systématiquement au siècle dernier et continue trop souvent à se faire». Ibid.

«to make Europe is therefore inevitably to pose a conflict of legitimacies, even if these legitimacies ultimately rest [...] on the same citizens expressing themselves at different levels. [...] There is no reason, other than the fear of change and the cultural and psychological weight of the past, to think that Europe could be governed by the simple cooperation of national powers».³⁶⁸

Lastly, he stressed that:

«It is, however, this original "European" situation that constitutes the chance and the condition for the success of integration in its later phases; this "cultural revolution" is inconceivable without a new reflection, at the level of scientists, opinion leaders and, ultimately, the mass of the public. Researchers and teachers, especially in the historical field, have an essential and fascinating role to play in this dramatic and necessary rethinking».³⁶⁹

Thorn's proposal for collaboration was adopted at the Luxembourg conference, and Girault subsequently proposed the formation of a liaison committee of historians. The participants unanimously approved the committee and appointed two historians from each Member State or applicant country. Girault's document outlined the committee's duties, which included disseminating studies on postwar European history, providing scientific advice to the EC, and promoting conferences for historians in the field.³⁷⁰

The historians of the Liaison Group favoured the study of international relations. They attached significant value to "historical events", namely the "stages" of European integration, and questioned the role of the economy or decision-makers. They employed a multidisciplinary approach, which brought them closer to new socio-cultural history stemming from the *Annales*, which triumphed internationally at the end of the 1970s.³⁷¹ In this context, investment in the integration process allowed these historians to renew their research field while employing their specific skills on a new research object. The

³⁶⁸ «Faire l'Europe, c'est donc poser inévitablement un conflit de légitimités, même si ces légitimités reposent en dernier ressort [...] sur les mêmes citoyens s'exprimant à des niveaux divers. [...] Il n'y a aucune raison, sinon la peur du changement et le poids culturel et psychologique du passé, pour penser que l'Europe, elle, serait gouvernable par la simple coopération de pouvoirs nationaux». Ibid.

³⁶⁹ «C'est pourtant cette mise en situation "européenne" originale qui constitue la chance et la condition du succès de l'intégration dans ses phases ultérieures; cette "révolution culturelle" est inconcevable sans une réflexion nouvelle, au niveau des hommes de science, des leaders d'opinion et, en fin de compte, de la masse du public. [...] Les chercheurs et les enseignants, en particulier dans le domaine historique, ont un rôle essentiel et fascinant à jouer dans cette dramatique remise en question indispensable». Ibid.

³⁷⁰ International Conference of Professors of Contemporary History: Luxembourg, 28-29 January 1982, Study of the Beginnings of European Integration: the Value of Source Material and Records 1946-52, Report and Papers, avr. 1982, HAEU, CEUE_PICP-1115, 145.

³⁷¹ On the topic, see: Lynn Hunt, 'French History in the Last Twenty Years: The Rise and Fall of the *Annales* Paradigm', *Journal of Contemporary History* 21, no. 2 (1 April 1986): 209-24, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002200948602100205..>

Commission's endorsement enabled the LCEH to collectively address historical European integration studies. By conceiving a new strand of history, they legitimised both the EC and their historiographical strand. Arguably, with different actors, this reasoning was similar to Pedini and Saitta.

2.2 “Europeanise” European history: the preparatory conference in 1981

Within this fervour, Mario Pedini stated that a discussion on Europe's roots to update history teaching programmes from a European perspective was particularly apt.³⁷² During the fourteenth congress of the Italian Christian Democrats in 1980, Pedini emphasised the responsibility of the Christian Democrats in a time of great crisis affecting the whole world.³⁷³ In the years of “eastern imperialism”, the Christian Democrat MEP urged a reconsideration of a society based solely on economics and science and a reflection on the failure of the materialistic economic model. According to Pedini, the Christian Democrats should address the «crisis of a man who cannot live on progress alone, but needs to rediscover values that our tradition and thought have been and are bearers of».³⁷⁴ Thus, Italy should increasingly integrate to the EEC, which, Pedini proudly boasted, «was a proposal of Democrazia Cristiana, was born from the intelligence of De Gasperi, came from our philosophy, and around which we mobilised the Italian voters, who responded so well to that proposal on our behalf».³⁷⁵

Pedini's thought was included in the long-term paradigm of the Italian Christian Democracy (DC). From the second postwar period until the mid-1950s, the “degasperian” majority within the Christian Democratic Party began a process of national and international identity building.³⁷⁶ This construction had a threefold purpose: first, to effectively counter the growing influential communist ideology and the resurgent nationalism; secondly, to ensure Italy an international role after the fascist regime; and finally, to legitimise the hegemony and political

³⁷² Letter of Mario Pedini to Armando Saitta, 3 July 1980, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXVII, dossier Mario Pedini 1976-1988.

³⁷³ Mario Pedini speech at the XIV Congress of the Italian Christian Democracy, Istituto Luigi Sturzo (ILS), Democrazia Cristiana fund, series 4 “Congresso nazionale 1946-1990”, folder 14 “Congresso nazionale, roma 15-20 febbraio 1980”.

³⁷⁴ «Crisi dell'uomo che non può vivere solo di progresso, ma che ha bisogno di riscoprire valori di cui la nostra tradizione e il nostro pensiero sono stati e sono portatori». Ibid.

³⁷⁵ «Fu proposta di Democrazia Cristiana, nacque dall'intelligenza di De Gasperi, viene dalla nostra filosofia, e intorno alla quale abbiamo mobilitato gli elettori italiani, che hanno in nome nostro tanto ben risposto a quella proposta». Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Paolo Acanfora, *Miti e Ideologia Nella Politica Estera DC* (Bologna: Società editrice il Mulino, 2013), 47–48.

choices of the DC as the only party to embody and defend the original Italian identity. As a result, the DC developed a varied framework of theoretical-ideological references, symbolic and mythical universes, and a set of propaganda tools to obtain the masses' consensus.³⁷⁷ Consistent with the Catholic world's reflection of the early twentieth century laying on popularism and political Catholicism, the Christian Democracy tried to realise the dialogue between national and international dimensions. In their intentions, the discussion should have led to the founding pillars of the nation itself rather than the nation's submission to a supranational partnership. According to the DC perspective, rethinking the nation's concept in the new global scenario was a coherent progress.

Paolo Acanfora has accurately described the three identities that the DC tried to elaborate for Italy in the second postwar period.³⁷⁸ The first identity focused on the "Latin" concept of the nation and its construction process. Tradition and history had given the country a heritage of characters and values rooted in Roman law and Christianity. The Latin civilisation that sprang from these foundations had Italy as its primary representative. Thus, it was crucial to valorise Italy's "Latin" feature and the consequent natural vocation for a universal mission of civilisation, mediation, and pacification between different peoples and cultures. In an ill-defined international context, the DC tried to conceive an identity consistent with the party's crucial pillars to regain a significant supranational status.

However, the Paris Treaty signed in 1947 revolutionised the DC aspirations. The two-blocs system clipped Italian wings in restoring its international power and, consequently, the "Latin" nation. As a result, the Christian Democrats shifted to a second identity model, blurring the concept of Latin civilisation within the broader Western society. The Roman and Christian foundations were transferred to the western civilisation. The Italian identity, therefore, was entirely embedded within the more general concept of the West. By exploiting these features, Italy could enter the new Western bloc in a strong position with specific autonomies related to its "Latin" mediation skills and civilisation.

Italy's transformation from a Latin nation to a Western nation ended with the country's entry into the Atlantic Alliance in 1949. Subsequently, Italian politicians accentuated the community aspects of the Alliance to the detriment of the purely military features. They emphasised creating a supranational community, the natural evolution of the national dimension, heir to the characteristics, values, and traditions of the Latin, Roman-Christian, and democratic civilisation. From the early 1950s, the need for a new identity emerged as the

³⁷⁷ Kaiser, *Christian Democracy*, 248–9.

³⁷⁸ Acanfora, *Miti*, 50–3.

bipolar system and the impossibility to concretise community demands within the Atlantic Alliance became clear. Like the previous attempts, the emerging identity did not dispute the earlier acquisitions; instead, it would allow Italy to conquer autonomy and international prestige. Until that time, Europe had remained in the background in De Gasperi's and the Christian Democrat majority's projects; instead, in the early 1950s, the pro-European project regained vigour, and De Gasperi recognised that Atlanticism progressively became the background to develop the pro-European strategy.³⁷⁹

European civilisation was a new development of the Latin civilisation with shared principles and values. The image of Italy as a European nation was a logical evolution; furthermore, in the DC, it was widely accepted that the European identity could effectively penetrate the conscience of the Italian people and arouse consensus and participation. The Italian Christian Democrats, particularly committed to the integration process for a Christian-and-Roman rooted Europe, self-represented as the only political force to build a Europe consistent with its fundamental and traditional characteristics.³⁸⁰

The revival of Europeanism in the Italian Christian Democrats during the 1980s relied on the original idealism rooted in the Christian Democratic leadership since the first phases of the integration process.³⁸¹ The DC's commitment to Europe, and especially to European integration, was repeatedly evoked at party assemblies, along with the explicit, ritual, and liturgical reference to the fathers of Europe. This position remained a constant for the whole decade, deployed as a response to the political, institutional, and ideological crisis of Europeanism. The reports and speeches produced by political leaders, minor delegates and European deputies at the national congresses reveal how Europeanism was depicted as an essential trait of the party. The declared objective was to present the DC to public opinion as Europe's "true" political force in Italy.³⁸²

Pedini's will to "Europeanise" European history and history teaching was part of this strategy. Specifically, Europe's "new" history was expected to foster the idea that the integration process could only develop with Christian Democratic leadership. Prominent Italian Christian

³⁷⁹ «Lo sfondo, il contesto di riferimento su cui sviluppare la strategia europeista». Acanfora, *Miti*, 238.

³⁸⁰ There were also minority strands within the DC that dissented from De Gasperi's interpretation. For example, Giovanni Gronchi, who for a long time remained attached to the Latin identity of the Italian nation, before arriving at a European third-worldism freed from any military pact; and Giuseppe Dossetti, close in many respects to the identity and supranational ideas of De Gasperi, but distant in political and diplomatic methods as well as in ideological approach. On the topic see: Maurizio Serio, *Il mito della democrazia sociale: Giovanni Gronchi e la cultura politica dei cattolici italiani, 1902-1955* (Catanzaro: Rubbettino, 2009); Carlo Masala, 'Born for Government: The Democrazia Cristiana in Italy', in *Christian Democracy in Europe Since 1945*, eds. Michael Gehler, Wolfram Kaiser (London, 2004), 88–102.

³⁸¹ Acanfora, *The D.C.*, 355.

³⁸² Ibid.

Democrats leaders stressed the contradictions of the “Socialist wind” which was judged as “schizophrenic” for being Europeanist in Strasbourg and nationalist in its countries.³⁸³ This debate revived the competition between the Socialists and the Christian Democrats that had characterised Italy during the five-party coalition.³⁸⁴ Furthermore, the European dimension was the battlefield with the Communists. As Pedini stressed:

«The question, therefore, dear friends, is this: can there be an Italian Communist Party that accepts a non-Soviet, non-dictatorial edition of communism? I do not exclude, indeed, I hope that history may give such an answer, but we cannot run adventures today that would also compromise that historical evolution [...] I believe we still need what Moro called the “strategy of attention” towards communism, but to bring it into the government today would mean, in my opinion, not only risking Italian freedom but interrupting this process of its possible evolution in a European sense».³⁸⁵

The actions of the European People's Party parliamentary group allowed the Christian Democrats could validly portray themselves as the most dependable and dynamic political party in Europe to the public.³⁸⁶ As Jacopo Cellini has argued, European integration, or European unity, was an architrave of the public rhetoric of European Christian Democrats. Europe had to become an integrated political community to influence the international system, which meant speaking with a sole voice and implementing a common foreign policy.³⁸⁷ After a significant contribution during the second postwar period,³⁸⁸ European Christian Democrats played an essential role in European integration in the 1960s and the

³⁸³ Speech by Paolo Cirino Pomicino, 4 May 1982, ILS, Democrazia Cristiana fund, series 4 “Congresso nazionale 1946-1990”, folder 15 “XV Congresso nazionale, Roma 2 - 6 maggio 1982”; Speech by Paolo Barbi, 3 May 1982, ILS, Democrazia Cristiana fund, series 4 “Congresso nazionale 1946-1990”, folder 15 “XV Congresso nazionale, Roma 2 - 6 maggio 1982”.

³⁸⁴ Acanfora, ‘The D.C.’, 35. See also: Gennaro Acquaviva, Michele Marchi, and Paolo Pombeni, *Democristiani, cattolici e Chiesa negli anni di Craxi* (Padova: Marsilio, 2018).

³⁸⁵ «La domanda di fronte alla quale ci troviamo, quindi, cari amici, è questa: può esistere un Partito Comunista Italiano che accetti una edizione del comunismo non di tipo sovietico e non dittatoriale? Non escludo, anzi auspico che la storia possa dare una risposta di questo genere, ma noi non possiamo correre oggi avventure che comprometterebbero anche quella evoluzione storica [...] Occorre ancora, io credo, quella che Moro chiamava la “strategia dell’attenzione” verso il comunismo, ma portarlo oggi nel governo vorrebbe dire, a mio giudizio, non solo rischiare la libertà italiana, ma interrompere questo processo di una sua possibile evoluzione in senso europeo». Mario Pedini’s speech at the XIV Congress of the Italian Christian Democracy, Istituto Luigi Sturzo (ILS), Democrazia Cristiana fund, series 4 “Congresso nazionale 1946-1990”, folder 14 “Congresso nazionale, roma 15-20 febbraio 1980”.

³⁸⁶ Acanfora, ‘The D.C.’, 356.

³⁸⁷ Jacopo Cellini, ‘The Idea of Europe at the Origins of the European People’s Party. The Making of the European Manifesto and of the EPP’s Political Programme’, *JEIH Journal of European Integration History* 24, no. 1 (18 July 2018): 79–94:89.

³⁸⁸ Wolfram Kaiser and B. Leucht, ‘Informal Politics of Integration, Christian Democratic and Transatlantic Networks in the Creation of ECSC Core Europe’, *Journal of European Integration History* 14, no. 1 (2008): 35–49; Kaiser, *Christian Democracy*, 163–190.

1970s. Some of the most forward-thinking documents about the future of the Community in the period, like the Bertrand report (14 October 1974) and the Tindemans report (29 December 1975), were signed and conceived by Christian Democrats.

Once DC recovered its conventional concepts and stances concerning continental integration, the party could restart its mission and the European issue acquired a national and patriotic character for the Italian Christian Democrats. The DC MEP Pietro Adonnino defined the integration process as an essential element for a country undoubtedly part of Europe. He emphasised that «we think of our Community policy not as a privileged aspect of our international relationships, but rather as a dimension of our national policy».³⁸⁹ The two-level twine aimed at promoting the Christian Democrats' Europeanist mission. Subsequently, educating about the European idea and the unitary political vision seemed essential to develop a European identity and belonging. In the words of the EPP group leader Paolo Barbi, «to illuminate, guide, and mobilise public opinion, it is necessary to push the national governments along the path of a new Messina, and a renewed and common commitment to developing the Community».³⁹⁰ The reference to the Messina Conference of 1955 and the Treaties of Rome in 1957 conveyed the desire to uplift an institutional process that could disentangle the EC from its stalemate.³⁹¹

Accordingly, some days after the long-postponed 1980 EC Education Ministers summit,³⁹² Pedini invited Saitta to realise an initiative to «Europeanise our history programmes».³⁹³ Saitta gathered three Italian historians, namely Francesco Barone, Alberto Boscolo, and Luigi De Rosa, to start the new project. The choice of scholars involved in the initial phase was not accidental. Among the innovations that Saitta introduced during his presidency of the IHIMCA, he established a Scientific Council with a deliberately interdisciplinary structure to examine and scrutinise the Institute's publishing and cultural initiatives.³⁹⁴ It was composed of

³⁸⁹ «Pensiamo alla nostra Comunità non come un aspetto privilegiato delle nostre relazioni internazionali, ma piuttosto come una dimensione della nostra politica interna». Speech by Pietro Adonnino, 25 Feb. 1984, ILS, Democrazia Cristiana fund, series 4 “Congresso nazionale 1946-1990”, folder 16 “XVI Congresso nazionale, Roma 24 - 28 febbraio 1984”.

³⁹⁰ «Per illuminare, guidare e mobilitare l'opinione pubblica è necessario spingere i governi nazionali sulla strada di una nuova Messina e di un rinnovato e comune impegno per lo sviluppo della Comunità». Speech by Paolo Barbi, 3 May 1982, ILS, Democrazia Cristiana fund, series 4 “Congresso nazionale 1946-1990”, folder 15 “XV Congresso nazionale, Roma 2 - 6 maggio 1982”. Quoted in Acanfora, ‘The D.C.’, 356.

³⁹¹ Acanfora, *The D.C.*, 356.

³⁹² Cf. notes 264–265.

³⁹³ «Europeizzare i nostri programmi di storia». Letter of Mario Pedini to Armando Saitta, 3 July 1980, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXVII, dossier Mario Pedini 1976-1988.

³⁹⁴ Saitta wrote: «The Institute has no intention of neglecting any cultural force in its field of competence, nor of ignoring any topic worthy of investigation, in the hope of thus helping to dispel those dark shadows that have today largely rendered research in Italy sterile and impotent» (l'Istituto non intende trascurare nel campo di sua competenza alcuna forza culturale, né ignorare alcun tema degno di essere indagato, nella speranza di

Italian and foreign professors of modern and contemporary history as well as historians of other fields, philosophers, archivists, and all the figures involved in the historical studies. The prestigious list included Barone, a theoretical and moral philosopher who dealt with the history and philosophy of science, whom Saitta met at the “Scuola Normale Superiore” in Pisa.³⁹⁵ Similarly, the President of the IHIMCA involved Boscolo, a medievalist expert on the relations between Sardinia and Spain in the Aragonese period, with whom Saitta had collaborated since his time as director of the journal *Movimento Operaio*.³⁹⁶ Finally, De Rosa ensured the contribution of economic history from a European perspective: in 1972, he founded, together with Peter Mathias, the “Journal of European Economic History”, committed to “reknit” the common threads of European economic history both at the national and at the European Economic Community levels.³⁹⁷ The ancient historian Franco Sartori, a close collaborator of Saitta in his journal “*Critica Storica*”, did not participate due to family reasons.³⁹⁸

The four Italian historians promoted the idea of an international congress to analyse «the links that have developed over the centuries between the different countries of the Community».³⁹⁹ Both Saitta and Boscolo reported about some meetings with «Pedini and other members of the European Parliament interested in promoting historical activities to cope with the nationalistic prejudices still prevailing in the EC».⁴⁰⁰ The objective of the conference was to examine the evolution of European civilization from Ancient Greece to the European Communities, with the participation of scholars from Spain, Portugal, and EC countries. The organising committee adopted a forward-thinking approach considering the congress as the initial point of a «revision of national histories in the light of the European Communities».⁴⁰¹

contribuire così a far diradare quelle cupe ombre che oggi hanno in buona parte reso sterile e impotente la ricerca in Italia). Armando Saitta, ‘Introduzione’, in *Annuario dell’Istituto Storico Italiano per l’Età Moderna e Contemporanea* 25–26 (1973–1974), 44.

³⁹⁵ Barone taught at the “Scuola Normale Superiore” in Pisa from 1958 to 1974. See: Silvestro Marcucci, ‘Ricordo di Francesco Barone’, *Studi Kantiani* XVIII (2005), 251–78.

³⁹⁶ Annamaria Oliva et al., *Ricordando Alberto Boscolo: Bilanci e Prospettive Storiografiche* (Roma: Viella, 2016), 234–236.

³⁹⁷ Redazione, ‘Storici e storici’, *Nuova rivista storica* XC, 1, (2006), 251–278.

³⁹⁸ Letter of Armando Saitta to Franco Sartori, 12 Dec. 1980, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983.

³⁹⁹ «I legami che si sono sviluppati nel corso dei secoli tra i diversi paesi della Comunità». Report of the meeting held on 22 January 1980, 24 Jan. 1980, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983.

⁴⁰⁰ «Pedini e altri membri del Parlamento Europeo interessati a promuovere iniziative storiografiche per superare i pregiudizi nazionalistici ancora imperanti nelle Comunità Europee». Report of the meeting held on 22 January 1980, 24 Jan. 1980, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983, 1.

⁴⁰¹ Report of the meeting held on 22 January 1980, 24 Jan. 1980, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983, 2.

Pedini encouraged historians to take the initiative. He appreciated the proposal of an international congress to discuss «themes from which the deep ties that have developed over the centuries between the various countries of the Community can emerge».⁴⁰² During a meeting with Saitta and Boscolo, Pedini ensured the EEC support for the «European-oriented revision of history teaching methods».⁴⁰³ In this respect, he suggested establishing a special committee of historians focused on the issue.

The Christian MEP came personally forward in a context of significant attention to history teaching from a European perspective. In 1979, the liberal MEP Markus Irmer urged the EUCO to promote common methods and didactics concerning the history of contemporary Europe and enhance the efforts for the Europeanisation of history teaching.⁴⁰⁴ The following year, expressing its position about the 1980 EC Education Ministers meeting, the EP stressed its commitment to «the promotion of teaching concerning European Communities and Europe» and highlighted «the importance of educational and cultural policies in the preparation of the 1981 EEC financial programme».⁴⁰⁵ In the same period, Pedini, on behalf of the EEP Group, and the liberal Bangemann, on behalf of the Liberal and Democratic Group, jointly proposed a resolution to the Parliament concerning the establishment of a museum on the history of European integration.⁴⁰⁶ The document described the integration as «a process of global relevance, based on the principles of the European civilisation» that «has already produced a fundamental positive shift in the Community of the Western European countries».⁴⁰⁷ However, the EP was significantly concerned with the lack of awareness «of the citizens, and particularly of our young people», and it «fervently deplored the absence of a centre in Europe where this development [of European integration] can be systematically documented, used, and made variously accessible to the public, in particular to the entire educational sector».⁴⁰⁸ Accordingly, the Parliament supported the idea of a European

⁴⁰² «I temi da cui possono emergere i profondi legami maturati nel corso dei secoli tra i vari paesi della Comunità». Report of the meeting held on 22 January 1980, 24 Jan. 1980, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983, 1.

⁴⁰³ «Revisione con taglio europeo dei metodi di insegnamento della storia». Pedini, *Tra cultura e azione politica*, 136.

⁴⁰⁴ Question de l'heure des questions n° 44 (H-0313/79) de M. Irmer a la Commission: Coordination de l'enseignement de l'histoire européenne, 3 Mar. 1979, HAEU, PE1-19290.

⁴⁰⁵ Résolution du Parlement européen sur la réunion prévue du Conseil des ministres de l'éducation, 648ème session du Conseil (éducation), Bruxelles, 27 June 1980, HAEU, CM2/1980-00032/001.

⁴⁰⁶ PROPOSITION DE RESOLUTION présentée par M. M. BANGEMANN au nom du groupe libéral et démocratique et par M. M. PEDINI au nom du groupe du parti populaire européen (Groupe démocrate-chrétien) conformément à l'article 25 du Règlement sur la réalisation d'une exposition d'information sur le thème "L'Europe en mouvement" en tant que premier pas dans la voie de la création d'un musée de l'unification européenne, 19 Sept. 1980, HAEU, PE1-2968.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

integration museum and decided to organise an exhibition in Strasbourg to take the first step toward an overview of European unity.⁴⁰⁹

Simultaneously, Pedini committed to ensuring EEC funds for Saitta's project. He wrote letters to Theo Hustinx, head of the EUCO Division for Information, Youth, and Education, and the EUCO Secretary General Emile Noël to inform them about the initiative and demand a partnership.⁴¹⁰ Hustinx answered that:

«Concerning the project of organising a conference of historians, I was recently confirmed by Mr Noël that the Secretariat General of the Commission intends to submit a proposal for financing the initiative in the autumn of this year.

I would be grateful if, in the meantime, you could provide the Commission with further information so that a complete evaluation of the project is possible».⁴¹¹

As a result, the Christian MEP urged the four Italian historians to prepare a provisional programme for the first conference in Strasbourg in 1982. Saitta, Barone, De Rosa, and Boscolo drafted a list of possible speeches:

⁴⁰⁹ The "House of European history" would only open in 2017 following a parliamentary proposal in 2007. Today, the structure of the museum generates conflicting visions. See: Pieter Huistra, Marijn Molema, and Daniel Wirt, 'Political Values in a European Museum', *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 10, no. 1 (2014); Anastasia Remes, 'Memory, Identity and the Supranational History Museum: Building the House of European History', *Memoria e Ricerca*, no. 1/2017 (2017).

⁴¹⁰ Letters of Mario Pedini to Theo Hustinx and Emile Noël, 19 June 1980, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress.

⁴¹¹ «Per quanto riguarda il progetto di organizzazione di una conferenza di storici, mi è stato recentemente confermato dal Sig. Noël che il Segretariato Generale della Commissione ha intenzione di presentare una proposta di finanziamento dell'iniziativa nell'autunno di quest'anno. Le sarei grato se, nel frattempo, ella potesse fornire alla Commissione informazioni ulteriori in modo da rendere possibile una valutazione più completa del progetto». Letter of Theo Hustinx to Mario Pedini, 27 June 1980, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXVII, dossier Mario Pedini 1976-1988.

«It is agreed that the conference mentioned above, with the theme “Foundations and Realities of Europe”, will be divided into nine papers, namely:

- 1) The contribution of Greece to European civilisation;
- 2) The contribution of the Roman and Christian ages to the formation of Europe;
- 3) Birth and development of medieval Europe;
- 4) The nation-states and the European system;
- 5) The origins of modern criticism and the impact of geographical discoveries;
- 6) The age of revolutions and capitalism;
- 7) Liberalism, Socialism and the Modern States;
- 8) Control imperialism and the apogee of Europe;
- 9) Formation, process and development of the European Community».⁴¹²

The programme reflected the accordance between Pedini's perspective and the historiographical paradigm proposed by the conference's organisational committee. As described above, the Italian Christian Democrats and, generally speaking, the EPP committed to appearing as the “true” Europeanist force; therefore, they considered crucial to analyse European integration as a long-term process rooted in the Antiquity and successively, in Christendom. Mary Anne Perkins has effectively discussed the Europe-as-Christendom as a grand narrative of European identity.⁴¹³ She has described this narrative in an intermediate position between national and European identity as well as between diversity and unity. It was sustained by social-cultural traditions and mythologies which combined the legacy of ancient Greece and Rome with Christianity. However, the idea of a European “spirit” and a common civilisation and culture representing the apex of human development has been challenged over the last two centuries by nationalism, totalitarian ideologies, and the rising political and economic status of non-European powers.⁴¹⁴

In this context, Europeanness building needed an identity-consciousness intervention. As Tony Judt has argued, drawing distinctions among and between Europeans has been one of the defining obsessions of the continent's inhabitants.⁴¹⁵ Patrick Pasture has confirmed Judt's argument stressing how the most enduring representation of Europe is that of a remarkably divided continent, which has nevertheless finally managed to overcome its “anathema”.⁴¹⁶ In this respect, it appears that Europe finally overcame its “demons” by choosing the path of

⁴¹² Report of the meeting held on 22 January 1980, 24 Jan. 1980, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983, 1.

⁴¹³ Mary Anne Perkins, *Christendom and European Identity: The Legacy of a Grand Narrative since 1789*, *Christendom and European Identity* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 6–7.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁴¹⁵ Judt, *A Grand Illusion?*, 46.

⁴¹⁶ Patrick Pasture, *Imagining European Unity since 1000 AD* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 5.

institutional integration through the European federation: thus, European integration is conceived as an “escape from history”. Consequently, the essential dimension of the European identity is the motto “unity in diversity”.⁴¹⁷

Accordingly, the early historiography of European integration was characterised by a robust normative overdrive. From a Hegelian perspective, European integration appeared as the linear ascendancy of federalist idealism over the nation-states and their internecine wars.⁴¹⁸

Walter Lipgens, the first holder of the Chair in European Integration History at the European University Institute from 1976 to 1979, was one of the founders of this historiographical strand.⁴¹⁹ He was a Catholic historian and an active member of the European Movement and the German Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and he strongly supported Chancellor Konrad Adenauer’s policy concerning Western integration. He claimed that the formation of a geographically limited core Europe, namely the ECSC and the EEC, represented a significant attempt to overcome the nation-state. Lipgens urged the school teacher to depict European integration as «the most successful peace movement to date».⁴²⁰ He was specifically interested in the contributions of the resistance movements and the European movements to the European idea.⁴²¹ Nevertheless, he failed to establish causal ties between these movements’ proposals and the core European integration process, including France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg.

In this respect, Saitta and the rising group of historians gathered around a revision of history teaching about Europe represented a notable exception. Saitta depicted the European aspiration as a generational fact: his generation had believed in the sacredness of the fatherland and had experienced the enormous destructive charge behind nationalist exasperation.⁴²² Resistance to Nazi fascism had been the first form of Europeanist language where that same generation had learnt to measure its ideals. Saitta was fascinated by the Ventotene Manifesto, from the Spinellian legacy that constituted a compass for the

⁴¹⁷ Pasture goes further and describes this representation as a myth. He debates if Europe is such a divided continent and if Europe is really more apt at coping with diversity. See Pasture, *Imagining*, 6–10.

⁴¹⁸ Kaiser, *Christian Democracy*, 5.

⁴¹⁹ Wolfram Kaiser, ‘U’ Berzeugter Katholik Und CDU-Wa“hler”: Zur Historiographie Der Integrationsgeschichte Am Beispiel Walter Lipgens’, *Journal of European Integration History* 8 (2002): 119–28.

⁴²⁰ «Die bis heute erfolgreichste Friedensbewegung». Walter Lipgens, ‘Der Zusammenschluß Westeuropas. Leitlinien Für Den Historischen Unterricht’, *Geschichte in Wissenschaft Und Unterricht* no. 34 (1983): 345–72: 351.

⁴²¹ Walter Lipgens, P. S. Falla, and A. J. Ryder, *A History of European Integration: 1945-1947* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

⁴²² Armando Saitta, *Allocuzione inaugurale del prof. Armando Saitta, Presidente dell’Istituto Storico Italiano per l’Età Moderna e Contemporanea*, in Istituto Storico Italiano per l’Età Moderna e Contemporanea, ed., *L’Europa. Fondamenti, formazione e realtà*, I vol. (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per l’Età Moderna e Contemporanea, 1984), p.XIV.

reconstruction of Europe in the immediate post-World War II period. Saitta promoted peace in the continent as a requirement to recover the ancient utopia of Europe as a catalyst for global peace.⁴²³ He argued that the first concrete attempt at European unity and peace could be observed starting from the 1789 Revolution in France and the three-year Jacobin period in Italy to the whole European revolutionary period in the first half of the nineteenth century.⁴²⁴ Consequently, he was committed to defining a functional methodology for a collective history rather than a sum of individual national cultures.⁴²⁵ In this view, the history of Europe should have reflected on the common space and the richness of differences, reconstructing the complex path of formation of the European identity and highlighting convergence as well as contradictions and conflicts.

Accordingly, the four Italian historians charged by Pedini decided to involve scholars from every EEC member or candidate. Specifically, they listed an international committee of historians which could organise an international congress about Europe and its historical formation. Saitta and the other Italian historians conceived the congress as a first step to «study, from antiquity to the present day, the process of formation - despite national differences and contrasts - of a European heritage of civilisation, culture, and associated life».⁴²⁶ However, «to ensure that the programme of work of the Strasbourg Congress is the result of the views of historians belonging to all the sponsoring countries and not just a few Italians, it was decided to convene a conference in which one historian from each country belonging to the European Community would participate».⁴²⁷ As a result, Saitta and the other Italian historians stated that:

⁴²³ Adriano Prosperi, 'In Memoria Di Armando Saitta', *Critica Storica* XXVIII, no. 4: 561–9.

⁴²⁴ Alessandro Guerra, *Armando Saitta. Due storie d'Europa* (Rome: Università La Sapienza, 2018), 187–204.

⁴²⁵ Guerra, 'Fra via Caetani e l'Europa', 105.

⁴²⁶ «La recherche, depuis l'antiquité jusqu'à nos jours, du procès de formation - malgré les différences et les contrastes nationaux - d'un patrimoine européen de civilisation, de culture et de vie associée». Letter of Armando Saitta to Rudolf Vierhaus, 4 Sept. 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress - Letters.

⁴²⁷ «Afin que le programme des travaux du congrès de Strasbourg soit le résultat des vues des historiens appartenant à tous les pays commanditaires et non pas de quelques italiens seulement, on a décidé de convoquer une conférence à laquelle prendra part un historien pour chaque pays appartenant à la Communauté Européenne». Ibid.

«It is also agreed that an international commission should promote and organise the conference mentioned above:

Spain: Federico Udina

France: Albert Soboul

England: Charles Wilson

Holland: Bernard Slicher Van Bath

Portugal: Oliveira Marques

Germany: Heinrich Lutz

Belgium: Hermann Van der Wee

Denmark: Kristof Glamann

Prof. Boscolo reserves one name for Greece; Prof. De Rosa one for Ireland».⁴²⁸

The list included prominent scholars that the four members of the Italian commission met during their careers. The intense professional and friendly relationship between Soboul and Saitta has already been mentioned.⁴²⁹ The latter invited his colleague to participate in «the scheduled historiographical preparatory conference on Europe, within the cultural activities of the EEC [...] I have an official letter from the Secretary General of the executive Commission Noël; therefore, I can start to mobilise».⁴³⁰ Similarly, Heinrich Lutz was a member of the IHIMCA Scientific Council and a close collaborator of Saitta. Although willing to participate, Lutz raised a bureaucratic problem. Formally, he was a professor in Austria; thus, he advised the organising committee to involve his colleague Rudolf Vierhaus, an early modern researcher who specialised in the Enlightenment, for the Federal Republic of Germany.⁴³¹ As a result, the promoting committee decided to invite Vierhaus as the West German representative since «...your international reputation and the great value of your

⁴²⁸ «Si concorda, poi, che a promuovere e a organizzare il convegno di cui sopra debba essere una commissione internazionale della quale sarebbe opportuno facessero parte per:

Spagna: Federico Udina

Francia: Albert Soboul

Inghilterra: Charles Wilson

Olanda: Slicher Van Bath

Portogallo: Oliveira Marques

Germania: Heinrich Lutz

Belgio: Hermann Van der Wee

Danimarca: Kristof Glamann

Il prof. Boscolo si riserva di indicare un nome per la Grecia; il prof. De Rosa uno per l'Irlanda».

Report of the meeting held on 22 January 1980, 24 Jan. 1980, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983, 2.

⁴²⁹ Cf. notes 327–330.

⁴³⁰ «Il programmato convegno storiografico sull'Europa, entro l'ambito dell'attività culturale della CEE [...] Ho la lettera ufficiale del Segretario Generale della Commissione esecutiva Noël, dunque posso iniziare a muovermi». Letter of Armando Saitta to Albert Soboul, 26 July 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress - Letters.

⁴³¹ Letter of Heinrich Lutz to Armando Saitta, 25 Aug. 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress - Letters.

essays make your collaboration to this project precious and at the same time ensure the complete autonomy of culture, without any subordination to the political demands of the moment»;⁴³² simultaneously, they involved Lutz as an Austrian representative «because of the high scientific level of Prof. Lutz [...] and because of the fundamental role Austria played in the elaboration of a common European civilisation in the modern age».⁴³³

It is worth noting that many scholars involved were economic historians. Kristof Glamann, Professor Emeritus of Economic History at the University of Copenhagen, was included in the International Advisory Board of the “Journal of European Economic History” founded by De Rosa and Peter Mathias.⁴³⁴ The latter was a notable admirer of the English representative, Charles Wilson, professor of Modern History at Cambridge University, who was considered the forerunner of establishing corporate history as a subject worthy of academic attention in the UK.⁴³⁵ Comparably, the Dutch Bernard Slicher van Bath was regarded as the initiator of quantitative social history in his native country and internationally renowned for agrarian history;⁴³⁶ and the Belgian Herman Van der Wee from KU Leuven was specialised in financial and banking history in the Middle Ages.⁴³⁷ The only exceptions were Oliveira Marques, who focused on Medieval Portuguese history, and Federico Udina Martorell, director of the Aragon Crown Archive in Barcelona. It follows that significant attention was paid to the economic features of Europe’s formation path.

⁴³² «Votre renommée internationale et la grande valeur de ces essais font que votre collaboration à ce projet soit précieuse et lui assurent en même temps la complète autonomie de la culture, sans aucune subordination aux exigences politiques du moment». Letter of Armando Saitta to Rudolf Vierhaus, 4 Sept. 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress - Letters.

⁴³³ «Sia per l’alto livello scientifico del prof. Lutz [...] sia per la funzione fondamentale avuta dall’Austria nell’elaborazione di una comune civiltà dell’Europa nell’età moderna». Theoretically, Lutz could not be invited since Austria entered the European Union in 1995. Thus, the members of the organising committee explained why they decided to waive the EEC membership requirement. Report of the conference held on 5–6 november 1981 to prepare an international congress on Europe and its historical formation, 8 Nov. 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983, 1.

⁴³⁴ Cf. note 391.

⁴³⁵ Wilson’s most renowned work is his multi-volume history of Unilever. He focused on business history, particularly corporations and trade. See: Peter Mathias, *Wilson, Charles Henry, 1914–1991*, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁴³⁶ B. H. Slicher van Bath, *The Agrarian History Of Western Europe: A.D. 500-1850* (London: Arnold, 1966).

⁴³⁷ Van Der Wee focused on the institutional aspects of Western European monetary and financial history and quantitative social history. In the context of an international project surrounding the history of banking in pre-industrial Europe, he studied the role of sixteenth-century Antwerp merchants in developing new financial techniques. His major publication was a study on the economic development of Antwerp and its European hinterland during the early modern period. See: Hermann Van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market and the European Economy: Fourteenth-Sixteenth Centuries* (Berlin: Springer, 1963).

adhered with enthusiasm to the conference despite his imminent visiting fellowship at Princeton University. See: Letter of Hermann Van Der Wee to Armando Saitta, 8 Aug. 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983.

The economic focus was a common feature with the LCEH. The Liaison Committee founders shared an interest in the modern or contemporary history of international relations.⁴³⁸ The work of Girault, Poidevin, and Dumoulin focused on national economies and economic and financial relations between nation-states.⁴³⁹ Hans-Peter Schwarz and Alan Milward cultivated proximity with political science, which they taught at some point in their careers. They were sometimes linked to each other by various cooperation networks such as the Centre de Recherche Relations Internationales, founded in Metz in 1971 by Poidevin, the University of Saarland, where Lipgens taught since 1979, the Luxembourg historian Gilbert Trausch, and Dumoulin.⁴⁴⁰ However, apart from Lipgens and Poidevin, who were attached to the “Centre Universitaire des Hautes études européennes” of the Université Robert Schuman in Strasbourg since 1980, none of them was strictly a specialist in European integration.

Saitta’s project and the LCEH presented other similarities in the first phase. For instance, both the LCEH and the project coordinated by Saitta received financial funding from the EUCO. The former was supported by the Commission's Secretary General, Emile Noël, who encouraged the activities of the University Information Division and personally invested in promoting European studies.⁴⁴¹ He guaranteed the financing of LCEH's colloquia and meetings; simultaneously, this position obliged Liaison Committee’s historians “with” the Commission to meet its formal requirements. Notwithstanding, the LCEH members remained primarily part of the academic world and strived to preserve their “reputation”, while struggling to obtain funding.

Correspondingly, Saitta and Pedini received official support from Noël and the Commission. The Secretary-General wrote to Saitta:

⁴³⁸ Le Boulay, ‘Investir’, 112.

⁴³⁹ Wilfried Loth, ‘La Contribution Du Groupe de Liaison à l’histoire Des Institutions Européennes’, in *Les Institutions Européennes Font Leur Histoire*, ed. Michel Mangelot and Sylvain Schirmann (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2012), 47–58: 50.

⁴⁴⁰ Jean-Claude Allain, ‘In Memoriam: Raymond POIDEVIN (1928-2000)’, *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains*, no. 198 (2000): 3–5: 4.

⁴⁴¹ Interview with Lastenouse-Bury, Jacqueline, 21 Jan. 2004, HAEU, INT713.

«I have the honour to inform you that the Commission has decided to award a grant of ECU 8000 to the Italian Historical Institute for Modern and Contemporary Age to express its interest in organising a meeting of European historians to prepare a congress on the subject of “The Founding and Reality of Europe”, planned for 1982».⁴⁴²

The functionary of the Commission, Marcell Von Donat, further specified that «this amount represents the first part of the Commission's contribution to this event, and the competent services have initiated the procedure for the allocation of a supplementary sum, also from the credits of the 1981 budget».⁴⁴³

The preparatory conference was held in Rome on 5 and 6 November 1981. Pedini and twelve scholars from every EC member or applicant state joined the organising committee.⁴⁴⁴ The ancient historian Michele Sakellariou and Dublin Trinity College's professor Douglas McLernon were appointed, respectively, for Greece and Ireland. Participants agreed upon a survey of history teaching in the European Community and urged to extend the history of Europe beyond the “sum” of national histories or political subordination.⁴⁴⁵ The “new” methodological approach should scrutinise pillars, convergences, and conflicts in the European formation process. Soboul and Sakellariou demanded the definition of Europe's geographical and chronological boundaries drawing on the mediaeval European past. Accordingly, the conference should exceed the EC borders to consider the broader context of European society's development. Charles Wilson highlighted the divisions rooted in European “unity” and the distinctive characters; as specified by Rudolf Vierhaus and Francesco Barone, those characters lay primarily in the classical and Christian legacy. Heinrich Lutz, Hermann Van der Wee, and Luigi De Rosa suggested embracing the peculiar trait and divergences through a “markedly problematic” methodology rather than a chronological order.⁴⁴⁶ As a result, the participants drafted a programme of 13 lectures for the international congress “Europe: origins, formation, and reality”:

⁴⁴² «Mi pregio di informarla che la Commissione ha deciso di attribuire all'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea una sovvenzione di 8000 ECU al fine di manifestare il suo interesse per l'organizzazione di un incontro di storici europei incaricati della preparazione di un congresso sul tema “Fondamento e realtà dell'Europa”, previsto per il 1982». Letter of Émile Noël to Armando Saitta, 13 July 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983. The European Currency Unit (ECU) was the former currency unit of the European Communities, from its adoption on 13 March 1979 (replacing the “European Unit of Account”, EUA) to its replacement by the euro on 1 January 1999. At the time, 8000 ECU were roughly 10 million Italian liras.

⁴⁴³ Letter of Marcell Von Donat to Armando Saitta, 7 July 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983.

⁴⁴⁴ Heinrich Lutz from Austria was the only exception. Cf. note 427.

⁴⁴⁵ Report of the Roman meeting to prepare an international congress on Europe and its historical formation, 6 Nov. 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress, 1.

⁴⁴⁶ Laruffa, ‘Historians’ Affiliation’, 277.

- «1) The idea of Europe and its cultural and political components
- 2) Europe in the historical perspective: convergences and divergences
- 3) Europe and others
- 4) The legacy of the ancient world
- 5) The legacy of the Middle Ages
- 6) Commercial capitalism between the Middle Ages and the modern age
- 7) European agrarian structures: continuity and transformation
- 8) The Industrial Revolution as a factor in the construction of Europe
- 9) The legal tradition in the construction of Europe
- 10) Churches and religious freedom in Europe
- 11) The birth of modern science and technology in Europe
- 12) The revolutions of the modern age and the formation of Europe
- 13) Elites and ideologies in Europe (eighteenth-twentieth centuries)».⁴⁴⁷

The plan substantially diverged from the previous draft. Despite Saitta and Soboul stressing the importance of minimum chronological order, the congress framework seemed to follow mainly a thematical order. Significantly, a noticeable accent concerning problems and contradictions in Europe's formation path was evident in the first three lectures. A smaller emphasis on antiquity and nation-states and simultaneous greater attention to the idea of Europe, power systems, and specific topics like science, religion, and the juridical field emerged. The programme remained steadily hinged on the economic dimension, especially on capitalism, rural structures, and the Industrial Revolution as the cornerstones of Europe's economic development.

It is worth noting the cancellation of two fundamental lectures: firstly, "Control imperialism and the apogee of Europe"; secondly, "Formation, process and development of the European Community". Concerning the former, critical literature has extensively discussed the connections between states, Europe, and the significance of empire. Several authors have underlined how the focus on nation-states tends to obscure the enduring relevance of

⁴⁴⁷ 1) L'idea di Europa e le sue componenti culturali e politiche 2) L'Europa nella prospettiva storica: convergenze e divergenze 3) L'Europa e gli altri 4) L'eredità del mondo antico 5) L'eredità del Medioevo 6) Il capitalismo commerciale tra Medioevo ed età moderna 7) Strutture agrarie europee: continuità e trasformazione 8) La rivoluzione industriale come fattore di costruzione dell'Europa 9) La tradizione giuridica nella costruzione dell'Europa 10) Chiese e libertà religiosa in Europa 11) La nascita della scienza moderna e la tecnologia in Europa 12) Le rivoluzioni dell'età moderna e la formazione dell'Europa 13) Elites e ideologie in Europa (sec. XVIII-XX). Report of the Roman meeting to prepare an international congress on Europe and its historical formation, 6 Nov. 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress, 3.

empire.⁴⁴⁸ Patrick Pasture has stressed that most of European states developed global empires in the Americas, Asia, and Africa. The empire remained the fundamental political organisation in Europe also in the so-called age of nationalism, namely the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, even if major empires in and around Europe collapsed. Critical scholars have adopted the distinction between colonial and “continental” empires. From this perspective, Europe’s unification was pursued not only by federalists but also by empire-builders like Napoleon, Bismarck, and Hitler, who considered Central and Southeastern Europe as colonial territories. Interestingly, imperialism was frequently a liberal ambition rather than a reactionary goal: the leading imperialists were the British, and liberal nationalists were also promoting empire-building within Europe.⁴⁴⁹ Given the above, it is surprising that the organising committee cancelled the empire issue in analysing Europe’s formation path.

Likewise, it is astonishing that the European Community was removed from the natural destination of the long-term European search for peace and unity. Despite the close collaboration between the organising committee and the EC bodies, European integration disappeared from the speeches. The new programme reflected a broader ambition than the “simple” glorification of the integration process. As Saitta would then specify, «humanity is not just about the sale of a few refrigerators or the free movement of an agricultural product».⁴⁵⁰ Rather, «there is also a cultural dimension in the EEC, and it is precisely this dimension, this cultural depth, that we, modestly, in the smallness of our forces, want to [...] emphasise, broadening the dimension and strengthening the substance».⁴⁵¹ In his view, the congress should have been «a comrade to help the common effort, particularly wakening minds and brains to a European feeling, and no more simply national».⁴⁵²

Despite the conference was not intended to glorify the EC, the organisers aimed at a strong public dimension. The historians gathered in Rome emphasised the importance of publicising

⁴⁴⁸ Jan Zielonka, *Europe as Empire: The Nature of the Enlarged European Union* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2007); Stella Ghervas, ‘Antidotes to Empire: From the Congress System to the European Union’, in John W. Boyer, Berthold Molden, ed., *EUtROPEs. The Paradox of European Empire*, (Paris: Parisian Notebooks, 2014); Pasture, *Imagining*, 62–88/185–196; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Empires between Islam and Christianity, 1500-1800* (New York: SUNY Press, 2018).

⁴⁴⁹ Pasture, *Imagining*, 10. See also: Jane Burbank, Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 182. Matthew Fitzpatrick, *Liberal Imperialism in Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 1–24.

⁴⁵⁰ «L’umanità non si riduce soltanto alla vendita di qualche frigorifero o alla libera circolazione di un prodotto agricolo». Saitta, *Allocuzione inaugurale*, XV.

⁴⁵¹ «Anche nella CEE sussiste e agisce una dimensione culturale ed è proprio questa dimensione, questo spessore culturale, quello che noi, modestamente, nel piccolo delle nostre forze, vogliamo [...] mettere in evidenza, allargando la dimensione e rafforzando lo spessore». Ibid.

⁴⁵² «Un compagno che aiuta all’impresa comune, che soprattutto svegli le menti e le coscienze a un sentire europeo, e non più semplicemente nazionale». Ibid.

the event through brochures and the mass media. Significantly, the initiative was scheduled in Strasbourg under the EEC patronage as part of the 25th anniversary of the Rome Treaty «to make a sincere and factual contribution to the new reality that is being developed between Brussels, Strasbourg, and Luxembourg».⁴⁵³

To this extent, the revision of the congress' program represented a negotiation between the “entrepreneurs” of Europeanness within the EC institutions and the noninstitutional actors.⁴⁵⁴ The “entrepreneur” Pedini was mainly an individual actor, even if he repeatedly stressed that historians' collaboration began at the initiative of CYCEIS during its presidency.⁴⁵⁵ He was convinced of the necessity to arouse a sense of Europeanness among citizens for political purposes; therefore, he attempted to develop institutional initiatives for this goal. Differently from large-scale actions conducted by EUCO officials, like creating new policies, Pedini combined the domestic level of the Italian Christian Democrats and the European dimension with a specific strand of historians. The EP partnership and especially the EUCO financial support were decisive since they granted both official legitimacy and the material resources to implement the project.

Correspondingly, Saitta and the other historians partially accepted the role of noninstitutional actors entrusted with the EC legitimation and depiction to a large portion of the European public. Indeed, these historians maintained a certain distance from the EC institutions. For instance, the EUI and the LCEH were not EC institutional organisations but had very close links with the European Commission. In contrast, Saitta's group “negotiated” a certain autonomy. One could observe a phenomenon of “interpellation” by Pedini and the historians' response to his call.⁴⁵⁶ However, the invitation did not encompass strict and fixed recommendations; as a result, the frame in which the institutional and noninstitutional actors collaborated was relatively flexible and left room for negotiation. Noninstitutional actors could also be “entrepreneurs” of Europeanness on their own and ask EC for support.⁴⁵⁷ To

⁴⁵³ «Per dare un contributo sincero e fattivo alla nuova realtà che si sta elaborando tra Bruxelles, Strasburgo, e Lussemburgo». Report of the Roman meeting to prepare an international congress on Europe and its historical formation, 6 Nov. 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress, 4.

⁴⁵⁴ Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 1–11; Sassatelli, *Becoming Europeans*, 9.

⁴⁵⁵ Letter of Mario Pedini to Pieter Dankert, 15 avr. 1983, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXVII, dossier Mario Pedini 1976-1988. Despite Pedini's statements, there is no evidence in the CYCEIS documents that his proposal was officially approved.

⁴⁵⁶ Patel, ‘Integration by Interpellation’, 538–554.

⁴⁵⁷ This was the case of the French historian Jean-Baptiste Duroselle who imagined a history of Europe and of Sylvia Bourdon, a private actor who created an association in order to encourage Europeans citizens to participate in the selection of the iconography of the euro. See Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 8–9.

this extent, promoting Europeanness between Pedini and the historians' group became a process beyond the EC institutional limits.

The following paragraph analyses this process and its outcome: What were the means to promote Europeanness? What representations of Europe do they propose? What was the connection between geographical Europe and the EC?

2.3 The 1983 congress for a “new” history of Europe

In 1982, meetings to organise the congress became more frequent. In March, Pedini, Saitta, and Von Donat met three times in Brussels to address the practical, scientific, and political issues related to the event.⁴⁵⁸ During the same period, Pedini was committed to raising awareness of the importance of vocational training. He stressed the impact of technological research, the globalisation of the economy, and the Europeanisation of educational policies.⁴⁵⁹ Consequently, he urged the EUCO to develop and expand common university programmes that also contributed to the recognition of European diplomas and professional titles.⁴⁶⁰

Pedini's convictions were part of a more general will to find a pedagogical solution to the social and political radicalisation that was disrupting the continent.⁴⁶¹ Although the main efforts were directed at renewing primary and secondary education,⁴⁶² the debate involved even university teaching.⁴⁶³ A European dimension in education became crucial for developing knowledge concerning European integration and promoting widespread idealistic participation in Europeanist goals and values. From the mid-1970s, the universities of the EC member states established an unprecedented number of cooperation agreements among each other.⁴⁶⁴ This phenomenon produced a twofold effect. On the one hand, it enhanced demand

⁴⁵⁸ Pedini, *Cinque anni*, 277.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid, 343.

⁴⁶⁰ Question écrite n° 0197/82 de MM. Pedini, Filippi et Del Duca à la Commission des Communautés européennes: Programmes universitaires communs, 18 Mar. 1982, HAEU, PE1-11763.

⁴⁶¹ Hans Daalder and Edward Shils, *Universities, Politicians and Bureaucrats: Europe and the United States* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), 489–510.

⁴⁶² In this respect, it is interesting to note how civil society organisations increasingly called for a European education, both as an antidote to political and communal violence and as a means for the affirmation of a new European civic and moral vision. It is worth mentioning a petition addressed to the European Parliament by the Belgian section of the European Confederation of Ex-Combatants asking the EEC «to reintroduce morality and civic education lessons in all primary and secondary schools [...] and to contemplate a teaching of history that would enable children to understand the significance of common historical events». See: Pétition 4/80 de la section belge de la Confédération européenne des ex-combattants. Éducation moral et civique dans les écoles primaires et secondaires, 28 Mar. 1980, HAEU, PE1-73156.

⁴⁶³ Mario Cati Ferraro, 'Tradizione e Identità Culturale Europea', in *Educare All'Europa Oggi*, ed. Maria Mazzaperlini (Roma: Japadre, 1989), 87–104:95.

⁴⁶⁴ Alan Smith, 'Higher Education Co-Operation 1975-1985: Creating a Basis for Growth in an Adverse Economic Climate', *European Journal of Education* 20, no. 2/3 (1985): 267–92.

for EEC financial co-participation that came directly from the National Rectors' Conferences; on the other hand, it prompted national governments to ask for EEC support for the spontaneous and frenetic international activity of their universities. As a result, the European Commission proposed a programme that would provide «start-up funds to higher education institutions to encourage the development of common curricula».⁴⁶⁵ The proposal was also addressed to university courses jointly organised and offered by institutions in different member states, which would enable students or teachers to spend a study period abroad and provide for teaching subjects related to the European integration process.

In this context, the CYCEIS presented a Resolution proposal concerning the teaching of European history.⁴⁶⁶ Its new President, Bouke Bremer, highlighted that «the members of the European Parliament, and in particular those of the commission on culture, education are aware of the need to promote, at all levels, a better understanding of our continent's reality through a more objective knowledge of the past».⁴⁶⁷ Consequently, «the task of historiographers and history teachers in the educational institutes of the Community countries in this direction is a weighty responsibility and deserves the full support of committed Europeans».⁴⁶⁸ Thus, the CYCEIS decisively intervened in the debate:

⁴⁶⁵ Lettre signée par le secrétaire général Emile Noël, en date du 24 janvier 1976, à Nicolas Hommel, secrétaire général du Conseil des Communautés européennes. Mise en oeuvre du programme d'action au niveau communautaire en matière d'éducation, 28 Jan. 1976, HAEU, EN-423.

⁴⁶⁶ PROPOSITION DE RESOLUTION présentée par M. GENDEBIEN conformément à l'article 47 du Règlement sur l'enseignement de l'histoire européenne, 26 Oct. 1982, HAEU, PE1-4180.

⁴⁶⁷ «Les membres du Parlement européen et notamment ceux de la commission culture, éducation sont conscients de la nécessité qu'à tous les niveaux soit promue une meilleure compréhension de la réalité de notre continent à travers une connaissance plus objective du passé». Letter of Bouke Beumer to Armando Saitta, 11 avr. 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier European Parliament.

⁴⁶⁸ «La tâche des historiographes et des enseignants de l'histoire dans les Instituts d'enseignement des pays communautaires d'oeuvrer dans cette direction est particulièrement lourde de responsabilité et mérite tout l'appui de la part des européens convaincus». Ibid.

«A - In view of the widespread dissemination by certain media of simplified or distorted, and even nationalistic, interpretations of the history of the Member States of the Community;

B - In view of the inadequate information of a considerable part of the European population with regard to the history of Europe and in particular the building of the Community,

Requests:

(a) that a course on the history of the other Member States, developed above all from an economic, social, cultural and artistic point of view, be organised in all schools of all levels in each Member State;

(b) that these courses also include a profile of the history of European integration and the functioning of the Community institutions;

(c) that the Commission, in consultation with specialised institutes and the competent authorities of the Member States, publish works and brochures intended for such teaching; [...]].⁴⁶⁹

In this context, Saitta was entrusted with the presidency of a special committee involving the historians, the EUCO official François Fontaine, and Pedini to practical schedule the congress. Due to organisational issues, it was postponed to May 1983 and relocated to Rome.⁴⁷⁰ The promoting committee was distressed about the high costs in Strasbourg. Concisely, Saitta stated that «we can confirm the choice of Strasbourg, a costly city, only if the event will take place under the direct management of the EEC; otherwise, I will have to choose an Italian city».⁴⁷¹ However, the congress was not included in the celebrations plan for the 25th anniversary of the Rome treaties;⁴⁷² as a result, the organising committee relocated the event to Rome in May 1983.⁴⁷³

Nonetheless, the congress received significant financial support. Firstly, Pedini obtained a contribution of 35.000 ECU from the European Commission.⁴⁷⁴ Jean Degimbe, General

⁴⁶⁹ PROPOSITION DE RESOLUTION présentée par M. GENDEBIEN conformément à l'article 47 du Règlement sur l'enseignement de l'histoire européenne, 26 Oct. 1982, HAEU, PE1-4180.

⁴⁷⁰ Letter of Armando Saitta to Albert Souboul, 21 Apr. 1982, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983.

⁴⁷¹ «[...] nous pouvons confirmer le choix de Strasbourg, ville très chère, seulement si la manifestation se déroulera sous la gestion directe de la CEE; dans le cas contraire je serai obligé de choisir une ville italienne [...]». Letter of Armando Saitta to Silcher Van Bath, 13 Jan. 1982, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983 - Correspondence.

⁴⁷² 25ème anniversaire des Traités de Rome - célébration du 25 mars 1982 à Strasbourg, 1982, HAEU, PE1-26469.

⁴⁷³ Letter of Armando Saitta to Kristof Glamann, 8 Apr. 1982, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983 - Correspondence.

⁴⁷⁴ Letter of Jean Degimbe to Armando Saitta, 22 Apr. 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983 - Financial contributions and scientific report. The sum was roughly equivalent to 45 million Italian liras.

Director of the DG Occupation, Social Affairs, and Education, explained that the contribution would have been supplied for 80% before the event and 20% after receiving a detailed financial report. Secondly, Saitta, taking advantage of his IHIMCA presidency and his vast network of contacts in Italy, asked for and obtained funding from various ministries, the Italian National Council for Research, and the Sapienza University of Rome.⁴⁷⁵ On the whole, the organising committee could rely on roughly 90 million Italian liras, an enormous sum for the period.⁴⁷⁶ As a result, they could provide the speakers with transportation and accommodation, and a funding contribution for the publication of the proceedings.⁴⁷⁷

To ensure a consistent political value to the congress, the organising committee involved a broad range of high-ranking EC institutions. Firstly, the committee obtained new support from the EUCO's Secretary General Emile Noël and the head of the Information, Youth, and Education, Division, Theo Hustinx.⁴⁷⁸ Correspondingly, EP President Pieter Dankert and CYCEIS President Beumer granted patronage to the initiative. The former was pleased with Pedini's influence on the European Commission and exhorted Pedini to represent the EP in «the most active way» since the conference «could draw valuable conclusions for a better perception of the solidarity of European countries through history teaching».⁴⁷⁹ The latter praised Saitta for «the goal of your institute to contribute to overcoming the nationalistic prejudices that still exist in national historiographies».⁴⁸⁰

Pedini emphasised the political significance of the congress, «from which could arise a broad political proposal».⁴⁸¹ Particularly, he encouraged the creation of a European association of history teachers.⁴⁸² The idea was ecstatically received by Saitta, who described the suggestion in a letter to his Greek colleague Sakellariou: «[...]an association of university and high school history teachers from all the countries of the European Community could emerge from

⁴⁷⁵ Financial report of the 1983 congress, 10 June 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983 - Financial contributions and scientific report.

⁴⁷⁶ Saitta was high-performing at obtaining funding for his institute, which, at the height of his presidency, could count on an annual funding of approximately 700 million Italian liras. This was due both to his position in a public institution and the political contacts he acquired during his career. The Institute's financial documentation is available at the IHIMCA archive.

⁴⁷⁷ Newsletter to the speakers of the 1983 Europe's congress, 26 June 1982, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe Congress 1983 - Correspondence.

⁴⁷⁸ Letter of Theo Hustinx to Mario Pedini, 3 July 1982, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXVII, dossier Mario Pedini 1976-1988.

⁴⁷⁹ Letter of Pieter Dankert to Armando Saitta, 15 Apr. 1983, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXVII, dossier Mario Pedini 1976-1988.

⁴⁸⁰ Letter of Bouke Beumer to Armando Saitta, 11 avr. 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier European Parliament.

⁴⁸¹ «Da cui può nascere un'ampia proposta politica». Pedini, *Cinque anni*, 277.

⁴⁸² Ibid, 280.

our Congress[...]».⁴⁸³ As a result, he decided to distribute a preliminary registration form attached to the congress invitation «to draw the attention of historians and history teachers in the countries concerned to the desirability of setting up their community-based association».⁴⁸⁴ However, Saitta claimed that «this is a project to be developed and disseminated with the utmost discretion, to avoid any misunderstanding about a political influence on the association which in fact does not exist».⁴⁸⁵

This crucial point suggests a threefold scenario. Firstly, Pedini had a different idea about this initiative than Saitta and the other historians. He argued that «with a historiography based on the truth cult [...] we could enhance shared values of a new culture which could be the base of a new politics in our old continent».⁴⁸⁶ Pedini's statement can be read in light of the draft "European Act"⁴⁸⁷ and the debate developed within the Italian Christian Democratic Party to revisit the function of the Atlantic Alliance in the new global context.⁴⁸⁸ The landslides within the Soviet system, starting with the Polish crisis of 1981, suggested new scenarios for Europe and a potential revision of the traditional Western European project.⁴⁸⁹ Accordingly, the European Christian Democrats argued that the events in Poland called for a reawakening of Europeanist consciousness. A draft treaty to take the first step in a political union of Europe was proposed at the meeting of the European Union Christian Democrats (EUCD), held in Brussels between 12 and 13 January 1982.⁴⁹⁰ The final resolution stated that the EUCD and the European People's Party wanted the "Warsaw Coup", as they supported the "Prague Coup" before it, to raise awareness of European peoples of the necessity and urgency of the political union of Europe.⁴⁹¹ In this context, Pedini brought attention to the political

⁴⁸³ «[...] de notre Congrès pourrait sortir une association des professeurs d'histoire, universitaires et de lycée, de tous les pays de la Communauté Européenne [...]». Letter of Armando Saitta to Michele Sakellariou, 8 June 1982, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg congress.

⁴⁸⁴ «D'attirer l'attention des historiens et des professeurs d'histoire des pays concernés sur l'opportunité de créer leur propre association communautaire». Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ «Il s'agit d'un project à développer et à diffuser avec une extrême discrétion, pour éviter tout malentendu au sujet d'une influence politique sur l'association qui en fait n'existerait point». Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ «Con una storiografia basata sul culto della verità [...] possiamo rafforzare i valori condivisi di una nuova cultura che sia alla base di una nuova politica nel nostro vecchio continente». Mario Pedini, 'Inaugural speech by Mario Pedini, European parliamentarian', in *L'Europa. Fondamenti, formazione e realtà*, ed. Italian Historical Institute for the Modern and Contemporary Age (Rome: Alpha Print, 1984), I vol., XXVIII.

⁴⁸⁷ This Act is better known either as the Genscher-Colombo Plan, in reference to the names of its supporters, the German and Italian Foreign Ministers, or, in France, as "project germano-italien". The Italian Foreign Minister Emilio Colombo, member of the Christian Democracy, was a fervent supporter of European integration from its very first steps and he was President of the European Parliament from 1977 to 1980. See: Deborah Cuccia, 'The Genscher-Colombo Plan: A Forgotten Page in the European Integration History', *Journal of European Integration History* 24, no. 1 (2018): 59–78.

⁴⁸⁸ Acanfora, 'The D.C.', 350.

⁴⁸⁹ Paolo Giuntella, 'Siamo Tutti Un Po' Polacchi, Ma Anche Salvadoregni', *La Discussione*, 2 January 1982.

⁴⁹⁰ The EUCD was established in 1965 as the continuation, on the European continent, of the Nouvelles Equipes Internationales, the first shape of Christian Democratic internationalism. See: Kaiser, *Christian Democracy*, 314.

⁴⁹¹ Giovanni Rotondi, 'Il Partito Popolare Europeo Rilancia l'unità Politica', *La Discussione*, 8 January 1982.

implications of the conference by highlighting how the economy-driven European integration process came to a standstill.⁴⁹² He urged the participants «to recover Europeanism and take a stand in the new global society» and argued «the universality of humanist and Christian messages that qualifies Europe' to break the deadlock».⁴⁹³

In contrast, the excessive politicisation of the historiographical initiative did not convince Saitta. He argued that a close connection with the EEC was altogether limiting, both due to the geographically restricted dimension of the Community, and he was reluctant «to formalise any possible link between our project, which is a purely cultural fact, and international institutions of a governmental or otherwise political nature».⁴⁹⁴ During the organisation of the congress, Saitta wrote to his friend Soboul that he wanted to choose participants independently of political constraints; therefore, he indicated to Pedini the names of the organising committee.⁴⁹⁵ On the one hand, Pedini asserted without hesitation that «the function of the historian is an indispensable contribution for noble political ends»;⁴⁹⁶ on the other hand, Saitta emphasised a markedly Europeanist vision in contrast with the politicians, hoping that the «technocratic drives of the great functionaries»⁴⁹⁷ would be replaced by the «passions of the peoples, their need to realise their self-awareness [...] to understand the variety, the multiplicity of voices that should agree».⁴⁹⁸

These diverging perspectives suggest a marked difference between Saitta's project and similar attempts in the period. It is pointless to cite the EUI, which was structurally created by the EC and strictly supervised by the political bodies. Instead, we could argue that from the very beginning, Saitta's group and the LCEH experienced the same ambivalent connections with the EC bodies: meeting expectations (and maintaining funds) while preserving scientific autonomy. The historians of the Liaison Committee secured a place in the Commission's networks by emphasising their usefulness for the construction of Europe. As early as the

⁴⁹² Pedini, 'Inaugural speech', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, XXVII.

⁴⁹³ «Recuperare l'Europeismo e prendere posizione nel nuovo scenario globale»; «l'universalità del messaggio umanista e cristiano che qualifica l'Europa per rompere lo stallo». Ibid, XXVIII.

⁴⁹⁴ «A istituzionalizzare sotto qualsiasi forma un eventuale legame tra il nostro progetto, che è un fatto puramente culturale, e istituzioni internazionali di natura governativa o comunque politica». Letter of Armando Saitta to the colleagues interested in a European association of history teachers, 16 Dec. 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association - Promoting Committee.

⁴⁹⁵ «Togliere la scelta dei partecipanti ai politici»; i nomi dei membri del possibile comitato organizzativo». Letter of Armando Saitta to Albert Soboul, 3 Feb. 1980, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXVII, dossier Albert Soboul 1955-1982.

⁴⁹⁶ «La funzione dello storico è indispensabile concorso a nobile fine politico». Pedini, 'Inaugural speech', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, XXVI.

⁴⁹⁷ «Spinte tecnocratiche dei grandi funzionari». Armando Saitta, 'Europe and the others', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, *L'Europa*, XXVII.

⁴⁹⁸ «Passioni dei popoli, il loro bisogno di realizzare una propria autocoscienza [...] per comprendere la varietà, la molteplicità delle voci che devono accordarsi». Saitta, 'Europe and the others', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, XXVII.

creation of the group, they put forward an interest in the history of integration from the point of view of the “decision-makers”. Saitta’s group, instead, proved to be more rigid from the outset, accepting collaboration with the EC “entrepreneurs” but holding the line on the academic freedom of the project. During the preparation of the congress, the scientific aspiration of Saitta's group and the expectations of the institutional representatives found several points of convergence, which made the event possible.

At some point, these two groups of historians had troubled contacts. As part of his congress invitation campaign, Saitta sent a letter to Walter Lipgens and Donald Watt, two of the founders of the Groupe. Lipgens, in very cordial tones, replied that at short notice, he was unable to attend the congress, but he would be pleased to share the experience.⁴⁹⁹ Accordingly, he sent to Saitta the text of his speech at the founding colloquium of the LCEH that had just been held in Luxembourg, hoping for future collaboration between the two. In contrast, Watt stressed that «the procedure you have so far followed is both inefficient and lacking in the normal courtesy which one expects between scholars and colleagues».⁵⁰⁰ He criticised the choice of Charles Wilson as British representative since «nearly all this time he has been settled in Italy, which is not the best place to advise you on the best modern work now in progress in Britain».⁵⁰¹ At the same time, Watt was surprised that none of the LCEH members was involved in the decision-making process of Saitta’s and Pedini’s project. Arguably, Watt aspired to outline an early form of LCEH hegemony in the relations between historians and the European Communities. Nevertheless, Saitta moved forward in the organisation of the congress since Watt’s remarks were «deliberately insulting the promoters of our initiative, guilty of incomprehensible offences against the European Historians Group for Liaison with the European Communities».⁵⁰²

Besides Watt, other scholars and teachers criticised the approach of the congress. Maria Angela Moltini, a history teacher from Genoa, was negatively surprised by the participation of speakers only from Western Europe. She wondered why the organising committee chose «to pose and solve problems in a unified manner at the level of countries that already participate (or have applied for membership) in the European Economic Community instead

⁴⁹⁹ Letter of Walter Lipgens to Armando Saitta, 14 Apr. 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier EEC questionnaire.

⁵⁰⁰ Letter of Donald Watt to Armando Saitta, 14 Apr. 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier EEC questionnaire.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² «Insultando deliberatamente i promotori della nostra iniziativa, colpevoli di incomprensibili reati contro il Gruppo di storici europei per il collegamento con le Comunità europee» Report of the prof. Armando Saitta concerning the congress “Europe: origins, formation, reality”, 14 July 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Financial contributions and scientific reports.

of an attempt to involve the countries of Europe?». ⁵⁰³ Consequently, Moltini asked Saitta how they could define the congress and the future association as an exclusively cultural initiative, without any political ideology and conditioning, since the starting point is the EEC and the invitation did not describe the economic conditioning nor the project's financial support. Comparably, Carmelo Capizzi, professor of Medieval history in Rome, pointed out the astonishing lack of a report on Turkish domination in Europe. ⁵⁰⁴ Finally, Guido Oldrini, a researcher in the History of Philosophy, was concerned about the absence of Soviet-bloc scholars. ⁵⁰⁵

Saitta resolutely answered that a Western-Eurocentric approach was inevitable. He stressed that the organising committee could not enlarge «in a completely uncontrollable manner the geographical area of the speakers». ⁵⁰⁶ Saitta referred to the compromise with the EC “entrepreneurs”, which were utterly interested in the political dimension of the initiative. As a result, he described the immediate involvement of the Soviet-bloc scholars as a «stratospheric utopia»; ⁵⁰⁷ nevertheless, he was willing to a subsequent collaboration. Citing the Hegelian approach, he stated that they considered «the possible association of professors from the EEC countries with the thesis; it is up to those in COMECON to allow me to bring the antithesis as well, and so perhaps we will arrive at the synthesis». ⁵⁰⁸

Comparably, Saitta was rigid concerning the congress lectures. In a lively letter, Van Bath criticised his topic about the history of the European rural structures from the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. ⁵⁰⁹ Instead, he preferred a comparison of Europe and Latin America with a specific focus on the connections between the Church and the States. ⁵¹⁰ Saitta rejected the

⁵⁰³ «Porre e risolvere problemi in modo unitario a livello di paesi che già partecipano (o hanno presentato domanda di ammissione) alla Comunità Economica Europea anziché un tentativo che tenda a coinvolgere i paesi dell'Europa?». Letter of Maria Angela Moltini to Armando Saitta, 22 Apr. 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Invitations and Honour Committee.

⁵⁰⁴ Letter of Carmelo Capizzi to Armando Saitta, 5 Apr. 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Invitations and Honour Committee.

⁵⁰⁵ Letter of Guido Oldrini to Armando Saitta, 2 Apr. 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Invitations and Honour Committee.

⁵⁰⁶ «In maniera completamente incontrollabile l'area geografica dei relatori». Letter of Armando Saitta to Carmelo Capizzi, 15 Apr. 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Invitations and Honour Committee.

⁵⁰⁷ «Utopia stratosferica». Letter of Armando Saitta to Guido Oldrini, 15 Apr. 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Invitations and Honour Committee.

⁵⁰⁸ «L'eventuale associazione di professori dei paesi CEE come la tesi; sta a quelli del COMECON di darmi la possibilità di dar vita anche all'antitesi e così forse giungeremo alla sintesi». Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Letter of Silcher Van Bath to Armando Saitta, 28 May 1982, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe congress - Correspondance.

⁵¹⁰ Van Bath was a specialist of Euro-Latin America agrarian relations and the previous year he had participated in a conference in Leiden with a speech on this topic. See: B. H. Slicher van Bath, 'The Absence of White Contract Labour in Spanish America during the Colonial Period', in *Colonialism and Migration; Indentured Labour Before and After Slavery*, ed. P. C. Emmer, Comparative Studies in Overseas History (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1986), 19–31; B. H. Slicher van Bath, 'A Summary of the Study of Caribbean and Latin

proposal since «the topics of the congress should be exclusively European, which has already led us to refuse a speech on the relations between Europe and North America».⁵¹¹ He decisively reaffirmed his position with Manuel Alvar, stressing that «the Dutch Slicher Van Bath [...] wants to talk about the Church in Latin America: that is unacceptable; I should then also make bets in the direction of Asia and Africa. No!».⁵¹²

From Saitta's statements one could infer two significant elements. First, Saitta was firmly hinged on a Eurocentric perspective. He refused to assess Europe's various routes of exchange during its historical path and to include the continent in a broader history of trans-Atlantic and global cooperation in a longer chronological span. Saitta was reluctant to focus on the multiplicity of interconnections with other international organisations, non-governmental platforms, and other actors crowding the international stage, complementing Europe's development. Similarly, he was sceptical about world histories, from UNESCO to the USSR's Academy of Sciences, which did not properly consider the «complex reality of Europe» because they were fuelled by opposing ideological drives or Third Worldism.⁵¹³ Rather, Saitta aimed at recovering the European continent as the driving force of history in the new global context, avoiding the pattern of the opposite blocs that characterised international organisations like the International Committee of Historical Sciences (ICHS).⁵¹⁴

American History in the Netherlands, 1970-1987', *Boletín de Estudios Latinoamericanos y Del Caribe*, no. 44 (1988): 19-28.

⁵¹¹ «Le thèmes du congrès devaient concerner exclusivement le cadre européen, ce qui nous a déjà amenés à refuser un thème sur les relations entre Europe et Amérique du Nord». Letter of Armando Saitta to Silcher Van Bath, 26 June 1982, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe congress - Correspondance.

⁵¹² «L'olandese Slicher Van Bath [...] vuole parlare della Chiesa in America Latina: è inaccettabile; allora dovrei fare delle scommesse anche in direzione dell'Asia e dell'Africa. No!». Letter of Armando Saitta to Manuel Alvar, 5 Aug. 1982, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe congress - Correspondance.

⁵¹³ «La complessa realtà dell'Europa». Armando Saitta, 'L'Associazione degli storici europei', *Critica Storica* no. XXII, 2-3 (1985), 322. Saitta referred to the publication of the *Journal of World history*, primarily known as "Cahiers d'histoire mondiale", supervised by Lucien Febvre. "World history" in UNESCO's original formulation aimed to "restore" those people colonised and dispossessed whose histories had been dismissed as irrelevant to the grand story of human progress. This work of recovery that spurred UNESCO's project on the history of mankind's scientific and cultural development in 1963, which focused on the distinctive contributions to "progress" of each individual "civilization". Simultaneously, Saitta criticised the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union since it included a specific Institute for World History. See: Sunil Amrith and Glenda Sluga, 'New Histories of the United Nations', *Journal of World History* 19, no. 3 (2008): 251-74; Poul Duedahl, 'Selling Mankind: UNESCO and the Invention of Global History, 1945-1976', *Journal of World History* 22, no. 1 (2011): 101-33; Michael D. Bukharin et al., 'Foundation of the institute of world history of the academy of sciences of the USSR', *Вестник Российской академии наук* 89, no. 11 (13 November 2019): 1162-68.

⁵¹⁴ From the Stockholm congress in 1960 to the Stuttgart congress in 1985, the ICHS was mainly characterised by the antagonism between the Atlantic and the Soviet blocs. Despite a surface context of scientific cooperation, this opposition produced significant effects on the congresses and other ICHS' activities. See: Karl Dietrich Erdmann, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, and Agnes Blänsdorf, *Toward a Global Community of Historians: The*

Secondly, the congress' organising committee, despite being vigilant about its scientific autonomy, was obliged to observe some political compromises. The historians could not even consider the possibility of involving Soviet-bloc historians since it implied the loss of EC's partnership and funds. Seemingly, this could be regarded as a taken-for-granted assumption; however, it is worth noting that the negotiations between the EC "entrepreneurs" and the historians produced notable contradictions in this case, which had substantial consequences in the development of the Association after the congress.

This dichotomy was revealed during the congress held on 3-7 May 1983 in Rome. The EUCO's representative François Fontaine strongly stressed «the European Commission's effort to provide Europeans with the awareness of their common civilisation» since «the cultural mosaic of our current structures affects our political actions».⁵¹⁵ He emphasised the cultural dimension of European integration from its beginnings, aimed at conceiving new political rules for peaceful coexistence between peoples. Similarly, Pedini focused on the European Parliament's desire to gather men of culture around the Europe project to design, for the political purposes of integration, a new citizen with a more vivid sense of European history and culture.

Saitta, instead, on behalf of the organising committee, highlighted that the historians were not politicians; nevertheless, their contribution to the "Europe of dreams", and the primary goal of the congress, was the overcoming of nationalist prejudices.⁵¹⁶ By analysing Europe's long-term path from ancient times until then, historians yearned to integrate EEC member states' historiographies into a common European language. Saitta stressed the obstacles of the integration process in the period; however, he stated that «the optimism of historians must never fail».⁵¹⁷ In these few words, Saitta revived and expanded his historian's conception as a man of culture, the moral and intellectual guide of the European community engaged in developing civil awareness.⁵¹⁸ He foregrounded the historian's craft as «not just a monk leafing through yellowed papers and compulsive documents, but a comrade who helps the common enterprise, who above all awakens minds and consciences to a European, and no

International Historical Congresses and the International Committee of Historical Sciences 1898-2000 (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), 243–4.

⁵¹⁵ «L'effort de la Commission européenne pour donner aux Européens la conscience de leur civilisation commune»; «la mosaïque culturelle de nos structures actuelles affecte nos actions politiques». François Fontaine, 'Inaugural speech by François Fontaine on behalf of Gaston Thorn', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, XXI.

⁵¹⁶ Armando Saitta, 'Inaugural speech by prof. Armando Saitta, President of the Italian Historical Institute for the Modern and Contemporary Ages', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, XIV.

⁵¹⁷ «L'ottimismo proprio degli storici non deve mai venir meno». Ibid.

⁵¹⁸ Criscuolo, 'La Genesi', 548–9.

longer merely national feeling».⁵¹⁹ Accordingly, he constantly focused on history teaching, remembering his first professorships in secondary schools as «the most lively and stimulating moments of my long career».⁵²⁰

To this extent, both the EC “entrepreneurs” and the historians agreed on the educational value of the conference. Saitta emphasised the congress’ openness «not only to those who write about history but also to those who work in schools, in history teaching at all levels».⁵²¹ Similarly, Fontaine highlighted that «this new approach to history of this assembly should, in particular, take concrete form in terms of teaching, so that the next generation is not trapped, as we have been, in a fragmented, national, or even dynastic vision, but can, on the contrary, be enriched by a pluralist knowledge of the profound riches of Europe».⁵²² As Pedini stated, the congress was particularly apt «at a historical juncture of such dramatic alternatives, to turn to a more serious study of our history, to a better didactics of it, [...] capable not of altering facts for polemical purposes but of reconstructing them in their reality and meaning».⁵²³ The possible impact of the congress was widely stressed by the Italian Minister of Education, Franca Falcucci, who hoped that the congress materials would transform critical disciplines in the cultural, scientific, and technological education of young people.⁵²⁴ This enthusiasm reflected significant political changes in the EUCO and the leading EC governments. On the one hand, with the alternation between the British labour Roy Jenkins and the Luxembourger liberal Gaston Thorn at the head of the Commission, for the first time, the educational competence was led by a socialist and was associated with a Directorate General comprising social and employment issues.⁵²⁵ Paradoxically, however, the British Labour member Ivor Richard, chair of the new Directorate Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs, Education, and Training, seemed to have a less progressive

⁵¹⁹ «Non soltanto un monaco che sfoglia carte ingiallite e compulsi documenti ma anche un compagno che aiuta all’impresa comune, che soprattutto svegli le menti e le coscienze a un sentire europeo, e non più semplicemente nazionale». Saitta, ‘Inaugural Speech’, in *L’Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, XV.

⁵²⁰ «I momenti più vivi e stimolanti della mia lunga carriera». Ibid.

⁵²¹ «Non soltanto a coloro che scrivono di storia, ma anche a coloro che operano nel campo della scuola, nell’insegnamento storico a tutti i livelli». Ibid.

⁵²² «Cette nouvelle approche de l’histoire que cette assemblée s’est donnée pour ambition devrait notamment se concrétiser au plan de l’enseignement, de façon que la prochaine génération ne soit pas prisonnière, comme nous l’avons été, d’une vision parcellaire, nationale, voire dynastique, mais puisse au contraire s’enrichir de la connaissance pluraliste des richesses profondes de l’Europe». Fontaine, ‘Inaugural speech’, in *L’Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, XXII.

⁵²³ «In una congiuntura storica di così drammatiche alternative, indirizzarsi al più serio studio della nostra storia, ad una migliore didattica della stessa, [...] capace non di alterare i fatti a fini polemicici ma di ricostruirli nella loro realtà e nel loro significato». Pedini, ‘Inaugural speech’, in *L’Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, XXVIII.

⁵²⁴ Franca Falcucci, ‘Inaugural speech by senator Franca Falcucci, Minister of Education’, in *L’Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, XX.

⁵²⁵ Commissione Europea, ‘Una politica dell’istruzione per l’Europa’, *Documentazione europea* no.4 (1982).

conception of educational and training processes in comparison with his liberal predecessors Dahrendorf and Brunner.⁵²⁶ On the other hand, the rise of personalities belonging to the left-wing strands of the Christian Democrats, or the main parties of European socialism at the highest levels of the German and French Ministries of Education, showed a favourable climate for the emergence of socially-oriented EC proposals and decisions. Specifically, the election of François Mitterrand to the French Republic presidency and the formation of a government led by Pierre Mauroy with the votes of socialist, communist, and radical deputies seemed to lend new centrality to democratic and progressive demands in education.⁵²⁷

However, the congress suggested a monolithic Europe-as-Christendom perspective rather than a new or pluralist approach. From the first lectures, an unabashedly eurocentric strand emerged. Edouard Will (France) and Federico Udina Martorell (Spain) initiated the conference analysing modern Europe's «distant but still active» roots. Will examined the legacy of the ancient world, stressing the Renaissance filter through which historians looked at the classical age.⁵²⁸ Correspondingly, Martorell analysed the mediaeval heritage by emphasising several key elements: firstly, the development of trade and the creation of monetary exchange systems; secondly, the formation of representative institutions; and thirdly, the emergence of universities. Yet, he pointed out an identification between Christianity and Europe during the Carolingian age. Martorell argued that St. Augustine, St. Benedict, and particularly Charlemagne laid down the foundations of Europe, underlining the continuous link among holy Fathers, humanists, and contemporary philosophers.⁵²⁹

It follows that both scholars upheld Eurocentric ideas. Will embraced the Greece-Rome-Europe model, which has been characterised by postcolonial literature as a Eurocentric "Aryan model".⁵³⁰ Meanwhile, Martorell regarded Charlemagne as Europe's Christian progenitor.⁵³¹ During the tenth century, Charlemagne's wars of expansion were transformed into religious crusades to convert conquered peoples and erode local cultures.⁵³²

⁵²⁶ Paoli, *Il sogno*, 174.

⁵²⁷ Jean Lacouture, *Mitterrand, une histoire de Français.: Tome 2, Les vertiges du sommet* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 191–201.

⁵²⁸ Edward Will, 'The heritage of Ancient age', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, 29–48.

⁵²⁹ Federico Udina Martorell, 'Medieval heritage in the formation of europe', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, 49–65.

⁵³⁰ Enrique D. Dussel, Javier Krauel, and Virginia C. Tuma, 'Europe, Modernity, and Eurocentrism', *Nepantla: Views from South* 1, no. 3 (2000): 465–78.

⁵³¹ Alessandro Barbero, *Charlemagne: Father of a Continent* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004).

⁵³² Benjamin Lieberman, *Remaking Identities: God, Nation, and Race in World History* (Washington: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013).

As a result, Christianity was seen as a unifying force for the continent, defeating rival empires like those of the Islamic and Scandinavian regions.⁵³³

Following this approach, the European cultural history panel addressed the essentialness of Christianity and Europe in developing supranational ideals, science, and national languages. Contributions by Kay Hørby (Denmark), Fritz Krafft (West Germany), and Manuel Alvar (Spain) analysed individual aspects or moments in European cultural history. The first heeded the presence of a supranational, especially Europeanist, perspective in the fifteenth and sixteenth-century political Humanism.⁵³⁴ By analysing three classics of Renaissance political thought, notably Nicolò Machiavelli's "Il Principe", Erasmus' "Institutio Principis Christiani", and Thomas More's "Utopia", Hørby argued that Humanist thinkers tried to connect Christian culture and classical thought.

In a similar vein, Krafft analysed Europe as the birthplace of modern science and technology. The German scholar identified three distinguishing elements of the scientific "revolution" in early modern Europe: firstly, the Christian conception of nature, which conceived the dichotomy of God-nature and man, in contrast to the pagan juxtaposition of divine nature versus man; secondly, the recognition of a geometric procedure for comparing different-sizes quantities within medieval nominalism; thirdly, the upturn of the Neoplatonic translation of the world's structure into mathematical terms by Renaissance syncretism.⁵³⁵ Finally, Alvar focused on the links between linguistic unification, nation-building, and religion from the early modern age to the French Revolution in Italy, France, and Spain. Particularly, he emphasised the conscious use of language as an instrument of governability on behalf of élites' centralising power.⁵³⁶ His speech considered a European viewpoint within the 1980s' debate on the links between nations and language, especially in formerly colonised countries.⁵³⁷

In this regard, the process through which élites intertwined with nations, languages, and ideologies was at the core of Rudolf Vierhaus' (West Germany) contribution. He stated that élites represented a clear-cut feature of contemporary Europe; furthermore, struggles among

⁵³³ On the topic see: Pasture, *Imagining*, 11–31.

⁵³⁴ Kai Hørby, 'The Europeanism of political Humanism between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, 130–43.

⁵³⁵ Fritz Krafft, 'Europe: birthplace of modern science', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, 207–30.

⁵³⁶ Manuel Alvar, 'State language and creation of nationality', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, 145–92.

⁵³⁷ See: J. J. Smolicz, 'Is the Monolingual Nation-state Out-of-date? A Comparative Study of Language Policies in Australia and the Philippines', *Comparative Education* 20, no. 2 (1 January 1984): 265–85; Debi Prasanna Pattanayak, 'Diversity in Communication and Languages; Predicament of a Multilingual Nation State: India, a Case Study', in *Language of Inequality*, ed. Nessa Wolfson, Joan Manes (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1985), 399–407.

contrasting élites had been European history's progress driver. Vierhaus dwelt on three significant utterances to depict his élites outlining. Firstly, he stressed the heterogeneity of élites in the European context due to functional shifts and exigency. Secondly, he pointed out Enlightenment as the first modern ideology including the masses into a whole educational programme hinged on "citoyennes". Thirdly, he shed light on the élites' pluralism which allowed a peaceful century from the Vienna Congress to the WWI.⁵³⁸

The final conference's lectures on overarching European history traits recalled Vierhaus' milestones. Charles Wilson (United Kingdom) tackled convergences and divergences within the long-term debate about nation-states in European history. He stressed two main topics: the role of nation-states within European history and culture's implications for European heritage. In his view, nation-states in the early modern age begat opposite outcomes. On the one hand, the new political entity spawned a permanent state of war; on the other hand, this framework led to unprecedented material progress, economic growth, and capital accumulation. As a counterpoint, Wilson foregrounded the unifier patchwork of a shared cultural heritage, noticeably in Italy and the Netherlands.⁵³⁹

Correspondingly, Helmut Coing (West Germany) devoted his essay to the common European heritage in law. Addressing the European legal history debate of the period,⁵⁴⁰ he stated that, after the "renaissance" of the twentieth century, Western Europe rediscovered the pillars of Roman law and shaped canon law. As a result, the legal doctrines of the "Aufklärung", centred on rationalist natural law and a new model of society, swept across the continent, laying the ground for codifications and declarations of rights. Coing argued that the legislative architecture required by the industrial society had been added to the traditional juridical framework in the last two centuries. Subsequently, European law separated from religion and formed an autonomous magistrature, unlike Islamic or Chinese jurisprudence. Nonetheless, Coing's rushed to clarify that his purpose was to outline the European conscience through juridical inheritance rather than emphasise Western civilisation superiority.⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁸ Rudolf Vierhaus, 'Élites and ideology in Europe', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, 341–60.

⁵³⁹ Charles Wilson, 'Europe in a historical perspective: convergences and divergences', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, 387–99. Wilson's point of view recalls the "mysticism" of European cultural heritage as defined by Jacinthe Ruel. See: Jacinthe Ruel, 'Quale Identità per l'Europa? La Comunità Europea e La Retorica Della Cultura e Dell'identità (1970-98)'.

⁵⁴⁰ Gino Gorla and Luigi Moccia, 'A "Revisiting" of the Comparison between "Continental Law" and "English Law" (sixteenth-nineteenth Century)', *The Journal of Legal History* 2, no. 2 (1 September 1981): 143–56.

⁵⁴¹ Helmut Coing, 'The juridical tradition in the construction of Europe', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, 364–84.

To the same extent, the greek historian and former President of Greece Constantin Tsatsos advocated European self-awareness. He argued that Europe was not merely a geographical concept, but a historical product rooted in the idea of freedom. He pointed out that the classical legacy, Christian teachings, and the influence of barbaric cultures were the three fundamental pillars that shaped European civilization and its values of freedom. However, during the early modern period, conflicts between nation-states resulted in a fragmented portrayal of Europe. Concluding, Tsatsos stated that the common spiritual foundations and social structures of Europe were resilient to such disputes and differences.⁵⁴²

Tsatsos' lecture contained a fundamental issue of the whole congress: the links between Europe and the "others". Europeans confronted severe obstacles concerning identity consciousness: in Tsatsos' argument, such consciousness seemed achievable only through a sense of boundary or difference, which inevitably excluded the "other" to some extent. Yet, at the same time, the "spirit of Europe" was historically, philosophically, and politically linked to the principle of diversity-in-unity and thus to the acceptance of diversity as an inescapable condition.⁵⁴³ Consequently, an essential component of the idea of Europe appeared, in turn, its greatest threat. In the wake of post-structuralism and post-modernism, Tsatsos stressed the grand narrative of the civilisation-versus-barbarism polarity alongside the Europe-as-Christendom leitmotiv.⁵⁴⁴ The values of individuals, freedom and the rule of law were described as a prerogative of the European and Christian cultures. Europe seemed to be not Islamic, not Russian, and only Jewish, to the extent in which the traditions of Judaism and Christianity could not be separated. In this respect, Europe was primarily defined by "others", whose contribution to Europe's own culture was frequently disregarded.

Accordingly, in the closing intervention, Armando Saitta underpinned the relevance of comparison with "others" in Europe's self-consciousness.⁵⁴⁵ He argued that, since the first glimmers of European conscience in classical Greece, Europeans marked the diversity of other continents. He notably expressed the cases of Asia, the United States, and Russia. Concerning European-Asian connections, Saitta described the shift from eighteenth-century opposition between European progress and Asian immobilism to the nineteenth-century conception of Asia as naturally intended for Europe's colonialism. Concerning the United

⁵⁴² Constantin Tsatsos, 'Idea of Europe and its political and cultural features', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, 5–28.

⁵⁴³ Mary Anne Perkins, *Christendom and European Identity: The Legacy of a Grand Narrative since 1789* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 187. From a post-structural theory, David Campbell argues that this paradox can be found in every construction and consciousness of identity. See: David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 9.

⁵⁴⁴ Perkins, *Christendom and European Identity*, 328.

⁵⁴⁵ Armando Saitta, 'Europe and the others', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, 401–23.

States, although initially spoiled by immaturity, European thinkers like Jérôme-Adolphe Blanqui, Alexis de Tocqueville, and Étienne Cabet progressively included the “New World” into a new type of civilisation. A further interpretation involved Russia, considered from time to time either an integrated strand of Europe or, adversely, a peril for European society's survival. In the eighteenth century, Leibniz first posed Russia as a political problem; later, in the age of the Restoration, one could note a widespread sympathy for Russian Tsar Alexander I for removing Napoleon Bonaparte. However, in the 1830s, Russia was portrayed as a liberticidal and threatening power.⁵⁴⁶

Prominently, Saitta advocated what Mary Anne Perkins has defined as the “spirit of Europe”.⁵⁴⁷ The idea of a European “spirit”, namely a common civilisation and culture representing the apex of human development, has been challenged over the last two centuries by the triumphs of nationalism, totalitarian ideologies with a global reach, and the rising political and economic status of non-European powers. Saitta highlighted its perdurable effectiveness in shaping the identity consciousness of Europeans. However, he disapproved of the “internal” perspective of nationalism to define Europe; instead, he supported the “external” view of Europeanism, which constructed the idea of Europe by defining the excluded “others” and vice versa.

Transferring this argument to the conclusions, Saitta raised a few political issues. He stressed that, on the one hand, the revolutionary crisis of 1848 destabilised the Europeanism that emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century; on the other hand, the early-twentieth century irruption of Japan on the world stage and the reversal of “traditional” relations between Europe and the United States, sealed the end of Eurocentrism.⁵⁴⁸ The global political system had shifted from bipolar to tripolar; Saitta urged Europeans to reveal Europe as a protagonist «not through the drives of technocrats and the calculations of politicians but the passions of the peoples».⁵⁴⁹ Although he acknowledged the regional and supranational influences of nation-state centrifugal forces, he advocated for historians to prioritise Europe as the primary object of historical research and education. Thereupon, the conference aimed at «the formulation of a new history of Europe» via a meeting association for EEC countries’ historians and history teachers from schools to universities.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁶ Laruffa, ‘Historians’ Affiliation’, 280.

⁵⁴⁷ Perkins, *Christendom and European Identity*, 328.

⁵⁴⁸ Laruffa, ‘Historians’ Affiliation’, 280–1.

⁵⁴⁹ «Non attraverso le spinte dei tecnocrati e i calcoli dei politici, ma le passioni dei popoli». Saitta, ‘Europe and the others’, in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, 419.

⁵⁵⁰ «La formulazione di una nuova storia d’Europa». Armando Saitta, ‘The Association of European Historians’, *Critica Storica* no. XXII, 2–3(1985), 321.

Conclusions

The initiative of Pedini and Saitta was by no means unique as a collaboration between the EC and the historians in the 1980s. In the same period, we can observe several attempts by some historians to gain credit with EC institutions. The EUI had already been part of the EC structure since the previous decade. In the early 1980s, strong impulses came from France to study the history of the European integration process. First, the Girault group and then the LCEH aimed to take advantage of the openness of the EC archives to start a stable, and in many respects exclusive, collaboration with the EC. For its part, the Commission was strongly interested in supporting partnerships with groups of historians, particularly for studying the integration process. The framework of the EC in the 1980s was going through a delicate moment due to the start of the single market, the entry of new countries, and the crisis of the Soviet bloc. History was seen as a powerful tool for legitimisation and membership in the EC. Consequently, the groups mentioned above were widely supported and financed.

In this context, Pedini and the group of historians led by Saitta tried to elaborate a proposal for Europeanising history teaching in the member states. The first step was a comprehensive conference on the roots of Europe and its civilisation. Pedini and Saitta managed to obtain patronage and conspicuous funding both from the EC and the Italian government through a dense network of contacts. However, they had different expectations for the conference. Pedini considered the congress as the initial stage of an overall political process involving the Italian and European Christian Democrats, especially their Europeanist vocation in opposition to the communist “monster”. On the other hand, Saitta insisted on the scientific and cultural autonomy of the initiative, which in his view, aimed to bring Europe back to the focus of historical research at a time of increasing marginalisation of the continent. Notwithstanding, the common interest in promoting the initiative, respectively for political and scientific reasons, led to a solid commitment to holding the conference.

The analysis of the meeting, predictably, reveals a robust Eurocentric approach. The lectures focused on Europe as the cradle of civilisation and the Europe-as-Christendom paradigm. Despite several criticisms received by the organising committee regarding the lack of a global vision and the absence of scholars from the Soviet bloc, the conference was held according to a pre-determined programme that extolled the “spirit of Europe”. Through lectures from

ancient to contemporary history, the participants emphasised the value of the European continent and outlined the “other” as a criterion for defining Europe.

Regardless of the organisers’ political or scientific intentions, the primary goal of the conference was to bring together as many scholars and teachers as possible to lay the foundations of the future Association of European Historians.

3. The AEH's official establishment detaching from the EC (1983-1985).

This chapter analyses the path to the AEH's official establishment. It challenges the existing literature arguing that the 1983 congress was a turning point rather than a kick-off in the AEH foundation. The first section examines the progressive distance between the historians and the EC "entrepreneurs", and the different aims and interests concerning European history. Specifically, it assesses whether the crucial shift in education among the EC member states affected the links between the group led by Saitta and the EC institutions. This process is further explored in the second paragraph, which shows the historians' detachment from educational matters and the focus on Europeanness building through the struggle against national revivals. However, did these historians sever the connections with the EC entirely? To answer the query, the third section scrutinises a last attempt at collaboration between the EC and the AEH historians, namely the European Historical Institute. Following the failure of this project, the AEH was officially established in 1985 and tried to go beyond the EC boundaries and the Iron Curtain. The final paragraph discusses the initial composition of the AEH, especially the possible "East enlargement" and whether it sought to promote Europeanness despite the intricate ties with the EC.

3.1 On the way to Brussels? The path to the AEH's foundation.

The reactions to the congress confirmed the different perspectives of Pedini and Saitta. The former was unsatisfied and wondered if the congress was «a new disillusion on my overly advanced initiatives?».⁵⁵¹ He was particularly disappointed with the number of participants and the inattention of the press, which resulted in a «decidedly subdued initiative».⁵⁵² As a result, despite a lively debate, Pedini regretted that «we are far from a new history of Europe».⁵⁵³ Conversely, the latter emphasised how «all speeches were highly scientifically valuable with frequent entirely new material and contributed to sharpening that European sense of the historiographical problem, which was one of the congress' goals».⁵⁵⁴ He stressed

⁵⁵¹ «Una nuova delusione sulle mie iniziative troppo avanzate nel tempo?». Pedini, *5 anni*, 398.

⁵⁵² «Un'iniziativa decisamente sottotono». Ibid.

⁵⁵³ «Siamo lontani dall'Europa di una nuova storia». Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ «Tutte le relazioni sono state di altissimo valore scientifico con materiale spesso del tutto nuovo e hanno contribuito ad affinare quel senso europeo del problema storiografico che era uno degli scopi del congresso». Armando Saitta's Report concerning the congress: Europe: origins, formation, and reality, and about a possible

that the congress attracted the interest of many scholars, as evidenced by the continuous requests for publication of the proceedings and the enthusiastic letters addressed to the organisers. Consequently, «the core aim of the initiative, namely to make people reflect on the need to create a history of Europe that is not a mere sum of the various national histories, has been fully achieved».⁵⁵⁵ Saitta enthusiastically claimed that «numerous participants insisted on the opportunity to realise a truly new history of Europe».⁵⁵⁶

The “negotiation” between the historians and the EC “entrepreneurs” had produced conflicts before the congress, but its practical course exacerbated the distances. Pedini ascertained the failure of the political goals. Despite the EC bodies' partnership and funding, the prominent institutional personalities forsook the physical presence. The EUCO President Thorn, the EP President Dankert and the CYCEIS President Beumer delegated their contributions to some representatives. Von Donat, one of the strongest supporters of the initiative, in the immediate aftermath stated that «the broad cultural perspectives of the EP should focus on the EEC financial criticism rather than occasional initiatives».⁵⁵⁷ Comparably, despite the organisers' intentions, the public dimension of the congress was substantially missing, and the press showed little interest.⁵⁵⁸ As a result, public opinion remained largely excluded from the topics and the proposals arose. In the background, Pedini was seriously concerned about the imminent national elections in Italy that loomed high risk for the DC; as a result, he seemed to dismiss the congress rapidly.⁵⁵⁹

In contrast, the historians of the organising committee remarked the initiative's usefulness, especially considering the political context of the period. Franco Sartori argued that «EEC quarrels do not bode well. Perhaps this situation, if properly exploited, can help our project in the sense that it could be interpreted as an invitation to recognise common points and agree

association of the European Community's historians, 5 June 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress, 5–6.

⁵⁵⁵ «Il principale scopo dell'iniziativa, ovvero il far riflettere sulla necessità di realizzare una storia dell'Europa che non sia la semplice somma delle varie storie nazionali, è stato pienamente raggiunto». Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶ «Numerosi partecipanti avevano insistito sull'opportunità di realizzare un'effettiva nuova storia dell'Europa». Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ «Le ampie prospettive culturali del PE dovrebbero concentrarsi sulla critica finanziaria della CEE piuttosto che su iniziative occasionali». Pedini, *Cinque anni*, 399.

⁵⁵⁸ The only three articles about the congress appeared on the Italian newspapers “Il Tempo”, “Il Mattino”, and “La Stampa”. They were all three written by members of the organising committee. See: Luigi De Rosa, “Convegno europeo a Roma”, *Il Mattino*, 3 May 1983, 10; Armando Saitta, “L'Europa autocoscienza”, *Il Tempo*, 3 May 1983, 3; Francesco Barone, “Europa della cultura”, *La Stampa*, 17 May 1983, 3.

⁵⁵⁹ Pedini, *5 anni*, 405–6. The 1983 general elections in Italy were held on 26 and 27 June 1983. The elections set forth the Christian Democrats excel over the Italian Communist Party; however, the DC's sharp decline brought the gap between the two opponents to only three percentage points, or just over one million votes, for the first time in the history of the Italian Republic. See: Pasquale Scaramozzino, ‘Analisi delle elezioni politiche del 1983’, *Il Politico* 48, no. 3 (1983): 505–42.

on history above rivalries and conflicts».⁵⁶⁰ Similarly, Saitta highlighted that «despite the contrasts that ripple across the surface of the EEC were also reflected in the conference [...] it was characterised as a cultural initiative outside of any ideology or political influence; but it is also a political initiative if by politics is meant working concretely [...] towards a more intimate coexistence of peoples, enriched both in their individual national heritages and in a single common heritage».⁵⁶¹ Furthermore, Charles Beazley enhanced the idea of a “new” common history of Europe to cope with the political struggles that emerged in the early 1980s.⁵⁶²

To some extent, politicians and historians agreed that history could challenge the systemic crisis of Europeanism. The desire to overcome Eurosclerosis produced two significant political attempts to relaunch the integration process. On the one hand, Altiero Spinelli's initiative and the EP's collaboration led to the Draft Treaty on the European Union. It emerged in 1980, following a relatively long gestation period until the Parliament formally adopted it in 1984. The Draft Treaty was the first example of a treaty drafted outside a diplomatic framework. The launch of the initiative and its continuation remained firmly in the hands of European parliamentarians, despite the strong competition from the intergovernmental approach.⁵⁶³ Altiero Spinelli, one of the authors of the Ventotene Manifesto (1941), was best known as a leader of the European federalists and a MEP of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). However, while drafting the Treaty, he followed a path that included a broad spectrum of political positions instead of taking an exclusively federalist or left-wing perspective. The work of the first elected European Parliament represented one of the most notable challenges of the European constituent method to the intergovernmental approach. For this study, it is worth noting that the Treaty explicitly emphasised the common European heritage to enhance European feeling and citizenship.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶⁰ «I litigi nella CEE non lasciano presagire nulla di buono. Forse questa situazione, se adeguatamente sfruttata, può aiutare il nostro progetto, nel senso che potrebbe essere interpretata come un invito a riconoscere i punti in comune e ad accordarsi sulla storia al di sopra delle rivalità e dei conflitti». Letter of Franco Sartori to Armando Saitta, 19 May 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 4, dossier Association of European Historians - Letters of members.

⁵⁶¹ «I contrasti che increspano la superficie della CEE si sono riflessi anche sul convegno [...] esso si è caratterizzato come iniziativa culturale al di fuori di ogni ideologia o influenza politica; ma è altresì iniziativa politica essa stessa, se per politica s'intende lavorare in concreto [...] alla sempre più intima convivenza dei popoli, ricchi allo stesso tempo dei loro singoli patrimoni nazionali e di un unico patrimonio comune a essi tutti». Saitta, “L'Europa autocosciente”, 3.

⁵⁶² Letter of Charles Beazley to Armando Saitta, 19 May 1983, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 4, dossier Association of European Historians - Letters of members.

⁵⁶³ Juliane Kokott, ‘The European Convention and Its Draft Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe: Appropriate Answers to the Laeken Questions?’, *Common Market Law Review* 40, no. 6 (1 December 2003).

⁵⁶⁴ Jean-Paul Jacque, ‘Draft Treaty Establishing the European Union, The’, *Common Market Law Review* 22 (1985): 19–42.

On the other hand, the Genscher-Colombo plan, which resulted from a convergence of Italian and German politicians, culminated in the Stuttgart Declaration, approved in 1983 by the European Council. It represented the first significant attempt to address the problem of institutional reforms and the Community's transformation into a European Union. The joint Italo-German initiative had its roots in the convergence of two different backgrounds, namely the many economic and institutional bottlenecks affecting the EC at the beginning of the 1980s and the slow but steady improvement of the relationship between Bonn and Rome. Once again, among the focal points of the declaration, the governments converged on increasing cooperation on cultural issues.⁵⁶⁵

Notwithstanding, according to the Christian Democrats, the new international scenario enhanced a resurgence of nationalism. Speaking to the DC National Council as Italian Foreign Minister, pro-European Emilio Colombo noted how «individual countries are withdrawing from the communitarian conception, increasingly moving towards the renationalisation of their politics».⁵⁶⁶ He explicitly referred to the EEC's agricultural price dispute between Italy, France, and Germany. Acanfora has effectively described how the Italian government was upset since Mitterrand's France started to defend its national privileges concerning agriculture, and German chancellor Schmidt proved unwilling to assume any financial commitments.⁵⁶⁷ Simultaneously, Thatcher's actions in the UK opened an internal front within the EC to review the budget conditions and the role of Britain.⁵⁶⁸ The Benelux countries, although significant Christian Democratic participation, adopted a policy of «myopic egoism and anachronistic nationalism».⁵⁶⁹

According to Saitta, the 1983 congress suffered this “nationalism revival”. He pointed out that «some scholars have not properly calibrated the delicate relationship [...] between their original scientific research and the dissemination of the results of others' more recent

⁵⁶⁵ Deborah Cuccia, ‘The Genscher-Colombo Plan: A Forgotten Page in the European Integration History’, *Journal of European Integration History* 24, no. 1 (2018): 59–78.

⁵⁶⁶ «I singoli Paesi si allontanano dalla concezione comunitaria, orientandosi sempre più verso la rinazionalizzazione della politica». Speech by Emilio Colombo, 4 May 1982, ILS, Democrazia Cristiana fund, series 4 “Consiglio Nazionale 1944-1993”, folder 155 “Seduta del 4 giugno 1983”. The quote can be found even in Acanfora, ‘The DC’, 352.

⁵⁶⁷ Acanfora, ‘The DC’, 352. See also: Graham Avery, ‘Common Agricultural Policy: A Turning Point’, *Common Market Law Review* 21 (1984): 481–504.

⁵⁶⁸ Acanfora, ‘The DC’, 352. See also: Jorgen Rasmussen, “‘What Kind of Vision Is That?’ British Public Attitudes towards the European Community during the Thatcher Era”, *British Journal of Political Science* 27, no. 1 (1997): 111–55.

⁵⁶⁹ «Egoismo miope e nazionalismo anacronistico». Speech by Paolo Barbi, 3 May 1982, ILS, Democrazia Cristiana fund, series 4 “Congresso nazionale 1946-1990”, folder 15 “XV Congresso nazionale, Roma 2 - 6 maggio 1982”. The quote can be found even in Acanfora, ‘The DC’, 352.

research, particularly in the international arena».⁵⁷⁰ Most importantly, several speakers «did not sufficiently resist the understandable inclination to consider their topic from a nation-oriented historiographical view rather than from a community-European perspective».⁵⁷¹ Saitta denounced the criticism about the congress coming from England, a certain lack of interest from Denmark, the «Italian extreme left's rush forward in the rejection of a Community Europe for a wider Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals».⁵⁷² In this context, Saitta urged to establish an association of history professors within the EEC, especially since «the majority of those who enthusiastically joined the initiative was overwhelming».⁵⁷³

Before the 1983 conference in Rome, the organising committee sent 10,000 questionnaires concerning the possible establishment of an association composed of university and secondary school history teachers in the EEC area.⁵⁷⁴ Half of these were sent to Italian teachers, where the organising committee had the most widespread contacts; the remaining half was distributed among the EEC countries, with the addition of Spain and Portugal. However, in Italy, the organising committee was able to reach a significant number of secondary school teachers; instead, in other countries, it was limited to university teachers «due to the impossibility of an adequate address book for secondary teaching».⁵⁷⁵ The organising committee received 1,500 replies, representing 15% of the teachers involved. Among them, 12% responded favourably to the association project; in comparison, the remaining 3% expressed their opposition «largely because they would like an association of history teachers from the whole of Europe and not only from EC Europe».⁵⁷⁶

Following the congress, on 6th May 1983, the organising committee gathered 76 professors and school teachers to analyse the survey data.⁵⁷⁷ Most were Italian, while the remaining scholars were French, German, English, Danish, Belgian, and Spanish. Despite some

⁵⁷⁰ «Qualche studioso non ha ben calibrato il delicato rapporto [...] tra la propria originale ricerca scientifica e la divulgazione dei risultati della più recente ricerca altrui, particolarmente in ambito internazionale». Armando Saitta's Report concerning the congress: Europe:origins, formation, and reality, and about a possible association of the European Community's historians, 5 June 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress, 5.

⁵⁷¹ «Non hanno opposto una sufficiente resistenza alla comprensibile inclinazione di considerare l'argomento affidatogli con un'ottica storiografica limitata alla propria nazione anzichè con un'ottica comunitaria-europea». Ibid.

⁵⁷² «La corsa in avanti del rifiuto di un'Europa comunitaria per una più vasta Europa dall'Atlantico agli Urali da parte dell'estrema sinistra italiana». Saitta, «L'Europa autocosciente», 3.

⁵⁷³ «Schiacciante era stata la maggioranza di coloro che hanno aderito con entusiasmo all'iniziativa». Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ Armando Saitta's Report concerning the congress: Europe:origins, formation, and reality, and about a possible association of the European Community's historians, 5 June 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress.

⁵⁷⁵ «Per l'impossibilità di disporre di un adeguato indirizzario per l'insegnamento secondario». Ibid, 2.

⁵⁷⁶ «In gran parte perchè desidererebbero un'associazione degli insegnanti di storia di tutta l'Europa e non solo dell'Europa comunitaria». Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid, 3.

misgivings about the feasibility and timing of the project, 59 out of 76 participants were in favour of starting the association, including 24 particularly enthusiastic Italian secondary school teachers. The “cooler” attitudes revealed the political context of the period: British and French historians expressed substantial detachment; simultaneously, participants from West Germany and Italy strongly supported the initiative. An ambivalent and expectant attitude emerged from the positions of Danish, Dutch, and Belgian historians. In the background, the Spanish and Portuguese scholars enthusiastically welcomed the proposal according to their imminent entry into the EC.

As a result, the meeting participants stated that the time was ripe to create the association. They drew up a timetable before the official establishment.⁵⁷⁸ Firstly, they agreed to deposit a symbolic fee of 1,000 Italian lire to afford the initial expenses; secondly, they instructed Saitta to create a promoting committee and contact the various existing associations of historians at national and European levels; finally, Saitta was also charged to draft the statute. Three themes emerge from the final decisions of the meeting. Firstly, members’ contributions revealed a lack of institutional funding. At the beginning of the 1983 congress’ organisation, EUCO official Von Donat warned: «if this project wishes to continue, I would suggest that you contact the various foundations close to the European political parties for possible funding».⁵⁷⁹ Indeed, except for the one-time funding on the occasion of the 1983 conference, the EC did not guarantee to the rising AEH any regular financial support. The founders of the new association immediately demonstrated an in-depth awareness of the hurdles in raising EC grants; consequently, they mobilised to provide other financial resources.

Secondly, the adherents of the new association endeavoured to avoid “treading on somebody’s toes”. They acknowledged that «the definition of the relationship with the pre-existing associations at the national radius and the AEDE [...] should be preliminary to any practical organisation».⁵⁸⁰ The main concern was avoiding duplication or jealousy with regard to other similar bodies, as happened with some LCEH members a few months earlier.⁵⁸¹ Indeed, mainly referring to the “Association Européenne Des Enseignants” (AEDE), creating a duplicate was more than an over-represented risk. The AEDE was founded in 1956 by French, Belgian, German, and Italian teachers who were members of the

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 13–14

⁵⁷⁹ Letter of Marcel Von Donat to Armando Saitta, 4 Nov. 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress.

⁵⁸⁰ «La definizione del rapporto con le associazioni preesistenti a raggio nazionale e l’AEDE [...] dovrebbe essere preliminare ad ogni organizzazione pratica». Armando Saitta’s Report concerning the congress: Europe: origins, formation, and reality, and about a possible association of the European Community’s historians, 5 June 1981, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress, 6.

⁵⁸¹ Cf. notes 493–496.

European Federalist Movement.⁵⁸² This politically independent professional association sought to bring together teachers of all levels to “Europeanise” education and, consequently, the European feeling of youths. In 1981, the AEDE congress, entitled “School without Frontiers”, focused on the analysis of existing, possible, and desirable correlations between different European school systems.⁵⁸³ In 1985, a new congress laid the ground for a European teachers' action towards an update of the “European Teaching Charter” approved in 1968.⁵⁸⁴ However, apart from a general commitment to avoid duplication, the sources consulted for this study do not reveal any official contact between the AEDE and the nascent AEH project. Thirdly, the association appeared hegemonised by Italian members. Since the idea and origins of the project came from an Italian politician, Mario Pedini, and a group of Italian historians headed by Saitta, an Italian majority in the first phase seems understandable. However, one of the 1983 congress' main goals was overcoming the national borders. Thus, it is surprising that after the conference, the association proposal was primarily hinged on Italy, particularly Saitta's leadership. After guiding the congress' organising committee and securing the EC one-time funds in collaboration with Pedini, Saitta sought to make the IHIMCA a leading hub of historical research in Europe through the new association.⁵⁸⁵ Accordingly, Saitta drafted an operational programme for the association's establishment. After pointing out that «during my trips to Spain, France, and Germany, the proposal has received from barely polite disinterest to the most vivid and warm interest»,⁵⁸⁶ Saitta urged to scale back expectations and proceed gradually. Specifically, he described the association's main goals, including overcoming «historiographical nationalism»⁵⁸⁷ through a meeting and information point and a platform «to preserve the voice of European historiography, which has been too much sacrificed in various international fora to the emerging countries' historiographies».⁵⁸⁸ Furthermore, Saitta proposed a surprising opinion concerning the involvement of secondary school teachers. He described the issue as «thorny and insoluble in

⁵⁸² Raphaëlle Ruppen Coutaz, ‘The European Association of Teachers (AEDE), UNESCO, and the pedagogy of international understanding in pro-European educational networks (1950s and 1960s)’, *Relations internationales* 183, no. 3 (27 October 2020): 137–52.

⁵⁸³ Congrès (Bad Tatzmannsdorf [Autriche], 13-16/04): ‘Pour une école sans frontières’, 13–16 Apr. 1981, HAEU, AEDE-156.

⁵⁸⁴ Congrès (Montecatini, 01-04/04), 1–4 Apr. 1985, HAEU, AEDE-182.

⁵⁸⁵ Guerra, ‘Fra via Caetani e l’Europa’, 106.

⁵⁸⁶ «Nei viaggi in Spagna, Francia, e Germania l’accoglienza che le mie proposte hanno ricevuto va dal disinteresse appena cortese all’interessamento più vivo e caldo». Armando Saitta's circular of 16 December 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress, 1.

⁵⁸⁷ «Nazionalismo storigrafico». Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ «Per conservare la voce della storiografia europea troppo sacrificata in varie assisi internazionali a quella delle storigrafia dei paesi emergenti». Ibid.

the abstract»;⁵⁸⁹ consequently, he declared their participation impossible and proposed that the association should only comprise «history scholars linked to the teaching of a university discipline or theoretical scientific research».⁵⁹⁰ For the first time since the beginning of the project, Saitta was firmly against the participation of secondary school teachers.

Saitta inferred the proposal from at least two elements. First, contacting secondary school teachers on a large scale was arduous. In sending the questionnaires, as explained above, the organising committee of the 1983 conference illustrated significant obstacles, especially concerning teachers outside Italy.⁵⁹¹ Saitta's trips outlined the exact dimension of the problem, which could not be effectively solved without adequate support. As the objective was a European-sized association, the sole involvement of Italian school teachers might have seemed biased.

Second, the 1983 congress and the following assembly revealed a clash between Italian university and secondary school teachers. Pedini described the disputes as «corporate jealousies between secondary school and university teachers».⁵⁹² He referred to the Italian political scenario in the period. Indeed, between 1978 and 1979, Pedini proposed two decrees to reform the legal status of university teaching and non-teaching staff during his office as Minister of Education. The first decree aimed to solve the issue of university staff's legal and economic status and the stabilisation of precarious contracts. Pedini argued that «the decree was intended to free the university from paralysing issues and personnel problems so that the government and parliament could address the broader issue of “university reform”».⁵⁹³ However, Pedini suffered firm opposition from academics and trade unions, who claimed that the measure created new inequalities instead of coping with the pre-existing situation.⁵⁹⁴ This aversion produced severe parliamentary obstructionism by the opposition and some DC parliamentarians; as a result, the decree was not approved due to the end of the third Andreotti government in March 1979. In the background was the open crisis concerning the vote on the European Monetary System some days before the discussion on the so-called

⁵⁸⁹ «Spinoso, e insolubile se posto in astratto». Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ «Studiosi di storia legati all'insegnamento di una disciplina universitaria o alla effettiva ricerca scientifica». Ibid.

⁵⁹¹ Cf. note 567.

⁵⁹² «Gelosie corporative tra insegnanti di scuola secondaria e universitari». Pedini, *5 anni*, 400.

⁵⁹³ «Il decreto intendeva liberare la questione universitaria dalle ipoteche paralizzanti e dai problemi personali così che il Governo e il Parlamento potessero affrontare il più ampio problema della “riforma universitaria». Publication by Mario Pedini “L'università: una riforma senza nomi?”, 4 Dec. 1980, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXVII, dossier Mario Pedini 1976-1988.

⁵⁹⁴ Paolo Sylos Labini, ‘Quella Vergogna Chiamata Decreto Pedini’, *La Repubblica*, 17 November 1978; Walter Vitali, ‘Dove e Chi Sono i Nemici Della Riforma’, *L'Unità*, 1 December 1978.

“Pedini 1 decree”.⁵⁹⁵ The second decree merely extended contracts, grants and scholarships pending reform. Pedini, evidently displeased, accused the «preconceived hostilities of certain circles, [...] the "wild" syndicalism and the "convenient" particularism of those who wanted to overload the decrees with all sorts of vindication and guarantees». ⁵⁹⁶

Aside from Pedini’s personal views, a general dissatisfaction of teachers due to the failure of the university and high school reform projects in the late 1970s and early 1980s emerged.⁵⁹⁷ Progressive-oriented school reformism that had characterised the Italian 1960s was ending. The so-called "mini-reformation" of universities contained in the Valitutti-Sarti decree, approved in July 1980, and the reform of high schools launched in July 1982, concluded an intense period of attempts, largely unsuccessful, to reform Italian education globally.⁵⁹⁸ With the start of the ninth legislature, the Christian Democrat minister Franca Falcucci abandoned the idea of parliamentary reform, preferring the administrative path.⁵⁹⁹ She opened the issue of the public-private school relationship with the proposal for an integrated school system. Falcucci outlined the "change without reform" paradigm that would have characterised education in Italy during the 1980s.⁶⁰⁰

This transition coincided with a crucial shift in the leading western industrialised countries concerning school policies and cooperation. The crisis of the welfare systems and the

⁵⁹⁵ On twentieth and thirteenth October 1978, a debate was held in the Italian Chamber of Deputies concerning Italy's adhesion to the European Monetary System (EMS). In the week before the discussion, the Italian government seemed to be leaning towards a postponement of joining the EMS with the support of Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, a large part of the DC, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and the Italian Socialist Party. Notwithstanding, DC politician Ugo La Malfa’s strong determination, together with the Republican Party and a non-majority strand of the DC headed by Gerardo Bianco, struggled for immediate acceptance. As a result, the Italian Chamber of Deputies approved Italy's membership of the EMS with 270 votes in favour, 228 against and 53 abstentions. The vote depicted the definitive crisis of the “historic compromise” between the DC and the PCI, that, in early 1978, allowed the formation of a DC-led Andreotti government with the favourable vote of most parties, including the PCI, to challenge the economic crisis and terrorism. The death of Aldo Moro, creator of the compromise, at the hands of the Red Brigades induced the PCI to abandon the link with the DC and the design of its secretary Enrico Berlinguer. See: Jeffry A. Frieden, ‘Making Commitments: France and Italy in the European Monetary System, 1979-1985’, in *The Political Economy of European Monetary Unification*, Barry Eichengreen, Jeffry A. Frieden eds. (London: Routledge, 2001), 23–48: 26.

⁵⁹⁶ «Le ostilità preconcette di taluni ambienti, [...] il sindacalismo “selvaggio” e il particolarismo “di comodo” di chi voleva caricare sui decreti ogni sorta di rivendicazione e di garantismo». Publication by Mario Pedini “L’università: una riforma senza nomi?”, 4 Dec. 1980, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXVII, dossier Mario Pedini 1976-1988.

⁵⁹⁷ Giuseppe Ricuperati, *Storia Della Scuola in Italia Dall’Unità a Oggi*, (Brescia: La Scuola, 2015); Daria Gabusi, ‘A Proposito Di Scuola e Politiche Scolastiche Negli Anni Ottanta’, *Storiografia* XXIV, no. 1 (2020): 231–43.

⁵⁹⁸ The new Italian Minister of Education, Salvatore Valitutti, defined the educational policies as the “impossible reform”. See: Salvatore Valitutti, ‘Una riforma impossibile’, *L’Opinione*, January 1983; Monica Galfré, *Tutti a Scuola* (Roma: Carocci Editore, 2017), 283.

⁵⁹⁹ Gabusi, ‘A Proposito Di Scuola’, 238.

⁶⁰⁰ Marcello Dei, ‘Cambiamento Senza Riforma: La Scuola Secondaria Superiore Negli Ultimi Trent’anni’, in *Fare Gli Italiani: Scuola e Cultura Nell’Italia Contemporanea*, Simonetta Soldani, Gabriele Turi, eds. (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993), 87–128:126.

increasing international competitiveness forced the Western governments to reform school systems based on equal opportunities and citizen education. Instead, they began to focus on more excellent selectivity in the access to secondary education, the distinction of schooling, and the achieving of high-quality standards.⁶⁰¹ As a result, from 1982 onwards, crucial decisions within the EC boosted Communities' education policies.⁶⁰² The international new competition and technological requirements transformed Member States' educational priorities. To this extent, they were rethought in light of a balance shift between social and political forces. In turn, the Single Market's goal uplifted the priority level of knowledge policies. Finally, the action of the European Court of Justice forced national resistance by equating university education with vocational training, as ruled by the EC Treaty. Although not formally recognised, education became a key field for the EC action.⁶⁰³

In this respect, Gaston Thorn's leadership of the EUCO marked a turning point in the field of education, sparking a small revolution. While some writers have defined Thorn's tenure as a transitional phase between Roy Jenkins and Jacques Delors,⁶⁰⁴ in 1983 and 1984, his Commission prioritised the shift from "social education" to "economic education," with a focus on modernising the economy through new technologies.⁶⁰⁵ This paradigm change could be attributed to several factors, including the need to close the development and growth gap that separated the EC from the United States and Japan since the 1970s,⁶⁰⁶ and the view that education policies could foster the technological transformation of the European economy.⁶⁰⁷ Additionally, the Single Market's aim of promoting economic integration provided a strong rationale for reviving educational cooperation within the Community.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰¹ Daniel J. Brown, *Decentralization and School-Based Management* (London: Psychology Press, 1990); Terry Haydn, 'The Strange Death of the Comprehensive School in England and Wales, 1965–2002', *Research Papers in Education* 19, no. 4 (2004): 415–32; Susanne Wiborg, *Education and Social Integration: Comprehensive Schooling in Europe* (New York: Springer, 2009).

⁶⁰² Guy Neave, 'On Shifting Sands: Changing Priorities and Perspectives in European Higher Education from 1984 to 1986', *European Journal of Education* 21, no. 1 (1986): 7–24.

⁶⁰³ Laruffa, 'Historians' Affiliation', 282.

⁶⁰⁴ Desmond Dinan, 'Famous Non-Performers: Franco Malfatti, Gaston Thorn, and Jacques Santer', in *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*, ed. Erik Jones, Anand Menon, and Stephen Weatherill (Oxford University Press, 2012), 233–48: 238.

⁶⁰⁵ Education et formation professionnelle dans la Communauté européenne: activités de la Commission des Communautés européennes en 1983 et 1984. Une contribution à la Conférence permanente des ministres européens de l'Éducation qui aura lieu à Bruxelles du 6-10 mai 1985, 20 mars 1985, HAEU, CEUE_SEGE-COM(1985)0134.

⁶⁰⁶ Paoli, *Il sogno di Erasmo*, 186.

⁶⁰⁷ Luc Soete, 'The Challenges and the Potential of Knowledge-Based Economy in a Globalised World', in *The New Knowledge Economy in Europe. A Strategy for International Competitiveness and Social Cohesion*, ed. Maria João Rodrigues (Cheltenham-Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2002), 28–53.

⁶⁰⁸ Carl Mijoux, 'Europe '92. Le Gran Marché', *Moniteur Du Commerce International* 882, no. 3 (1989): 12–23.

As a result, the EC education and training policies were increasingly employed to foster the technological transformation of the European economy.⁶⁰⁹ According to a widespread conviction within the EC institutions, a complete technological revolution of products and production processes was compulsory; in turn, to achieve this goal, the EC aimed at creating a favourable mentality and adequate knowledge in the European workforce. Surprisingly, this debate started in the European Parliament, despite it historically advocating for a social dimension of education. The British Conservative MEP Derek Prag argued that «if we are not able to give our young people the flexibility, the ways of thinking and acting to adapt to the rapidly-changing labour market needs in the age of microelectronics, Europe will remain on a dead end and will not be able to compete internationally [...] Never before a coherent and positive training policy has been so essential».⁶¹⁰

The debate swiftly reached the EUCO offices. In May 1982, on a proposal by Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, and Education Derry Richard, the EUCO adopted a crucial Communication to the European Council concerning the initiatives in the field of new technologies, including a special significance for the workers' training.⁶¹¹ In a subsequent report about the technological evolution and its social impact, Commissioner Richard emphasised the EUCO's commitment to the technological reconversion of the production apparatus and the centrality of education and vocational training policies.⁶¹² He argued that the prospects of the European economy depended on the EEC's training to motivate and specialise the workforce. To this extent, «the Commission envisages new measures to create and financially support joint programmes of industry, higher education, training, and research institutions; these programmes are intended [...] to extend high-level training and adapt to any new needs of industry».⁶¹³ Accordingly, the Council of Ministers of Social Affairs discussed and approved a Resolution on vocational training policy in the 1980s.⁶¹⁴ Twenty years after the Decision concerning the general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy, it was widely perceived the urgency to update its theoretical framework and

⁶⁰⁹ Bengt-Åke Lundvall, *The New Knowledge Economy in Europe: A Strategy for International Competitiveness and Social Cohesion* (Cheltenham-Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2002), 28–53.

⁶¹⁰ Formation en alternance des jeunes dans la Communauté, Session du 9 au 13 mars 1981, HAEU, PE1-18262.

⁶¹¹ COM(1982)296 - LES NOUVELLES TECHNOLOGIES DE L'INFORMATION ET LA FORMATION PROFESSIONNELLE : NOUVELLES INITIATIVES COMMUNAUTAIRES POUR LA PERIODE 1983-1987 (Communication de la Commission au Conseil), 19 May 1982, HAEU, CEUE_SEGE-COM(1982)0296.

⁶¹² COM(1984)6 - CHANGEMENT TECHNOLOGIQUE ET MUTATIONS SOCIALES (Communication de la Commission au Conseil), 5 Jan. 1984, HAEU, CEUE_SEGE-COM(1984)0006.

⁶¹³ Ibid, 23.

⁶¹⁴ Projet de résolution du Conseil concernant les politiques de formation professionnelle dans les Communautés Européennes pour les années 1980. COM(82) 637 Final, 20 July 1983, HAEU, CES.VOL24-20.017.

instruments.⁶¹⁵ Chiefly, a more incisive common vocational training policy emerged; overall, the Council hoped for an exact process of modernisation and technological innovation of the European economy in constant dialogue with education.

As a result, both the 1983 Solemn Declaration on the European Union and the 1984 Draft Treaty on the European Union placed the issue of education as a milestone of political, cultural, and economic integration. The former conveyed a renewed commitment to political and cultural cooperation and a solid responsibility to complete the internal market. The heads of state and government agreed that a more structured, effective, and up-to-date common educational policy was essential to reach the goals.⁶¹⁶ The latter included the so-called “politics of society”, notably the sum of policies concerning human development and the qualitative aspects of economic growth; together with social, health, regional, and environmental policies, this section encompassed the policies of culture, research, information, education, and training.⁶¹⁷ Comparably, the European Council held in 1984 under the Mitterand presidency declared essential an update of the educational policies to achieve an appropriate economic union, as well as the emphatic intention to strengthen and promote European identity among its citizens and in the world.

Within this new framework, it is unsurprising that Saitta and other historians had difficulties embracing EC’s shift in educational policies. They considered the cultural dimension prevailing over economic priorities.⁶¹⁸ Consequently, Saitta emphasised that «recent events in the European Community make me very wary of institutionalising in any form a possible link between our association, which is a purely cultural fact, and international institutions of political nature».⁶¹⁹ Further, Saitta discussed the consequent geographical activity area. He stated that the association should not be limited to the EEC area as desired at an early stage, «especially since the number of countries in the EEC does not coincide with the much larger number in the Council of Europe».⁶²⁰

⁶¹⁵ Paoli, *Il sogno di Erasmo*, 189.

⁶¹⁶ Dennis Swann, *The Economics of Europe: From Common Market to European Union* (Penguin, 2000).

⁶¹⁷ Francesco Capotorti et al., *Le Traité Instituant l’Union Européenne: Un Projet, Une Méthode, Un Agenda* (Bruxelles: Éditions de l’Université Libre de Bruxelles, 2014), 211–30.

⁶¹⁸ Saitta, ‘Inaugural speech’, in Italian Historical Institute, *L’Europa*, XIV-XV.

⁶¹⁹ «Le recenti vicende della Comunità Europea mi rendono assai guardingo nell’istituzionalizzare sotto qualsiasi forma un eventuale legame tra la nostra associazione, che è un fatto puramente culturale, e istituzioni internazionali di natura politica». Armando Saitta’s circular of 16 December 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress, 2.

⁶²⁰ «Tanto più che il numero dei paesi della CEE non coincide con quelli, ben più numerosi, del Consiglio d’Europa». Ibid.

The possible cut-off of the EC is a crucial point of the AEH's establishment path. The existing literature has considered the 1983 conference as the association's initial activity.⁶²¹ However, a closer look at the context suggests caution in accepting this certainty. Despite the conference being planned and realised jointly by the historians and the EC “entrepreneurs”, the first stages concerning the association seemed to mark a detachment between the parties. Primarily, the historians' links with Pedini progressively weakened. Since late 1983, Pedini focused his interest on foreign affairs, particularly the relations between Europe, Africa, and Latin America.⁶²² In 1984, he ended his MEP mandate. His retirement severed the primary communication channel between the historians led by Saitta and the EC. Incidentally, Pedini was a staunch advocate of the EC's new economic perspectives in education and culture. He claimed that European educational and cultural policies should have heightened free labour movement in the common market and addressed the industrial innovation of the new economic order.⁶²³ Thus, Pedini's beliefs weakened his ties with the association's founders even before the end of his MEP mandate.⁶²⁴

However, an immediate detachment from the EC produced some concern. West German historian Volker Sellin objected that «the discourse on the possibility of a connection of the planned association to the European Community [...] still needs to be carefully analysed».⁶²⁵ Sellin was mostly upset about the «problem of financing the initiative»;⁶²⁶ therefore, he asked Saitta whether he had «by any chance investigated the possibility of receiving financial means from the EEC?».⁶²⁷ The West-German historian invited Saitta to reconsider the exclusion of these institutions and cited some German institutes, such as the Max-Planck Institute, the Institute for European History in Mainz, and the German historical institutes in Rome, Paris, and London, as virtuous examples of public fundraising.

Saitta answered by quoting another West German scholar, Werner Conze, involved in the AEH project. He argued that an exclusive tie with the EEC would mean excessive

⁶²¹ Jean-René Suratteau, ‘Armando Saitta (1919-1991)’, *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* no. 286 (1991), 567–8; Alessandro Guerra, ‘Fra via Caetani e l'Europa’, 105; Alessandro Guerra, *Armando Saitta. Due storie d'Europa* (Rome: Sapienza University Press, 2018), 202–3; Francesca Russo, ‘Armando Saitta e i Progetti Di Pacificazione Europea’, in *Studi Di Teoria Politica*, ed. Giuseppe Barbaccia (Palermo: Carlo Saladino, 2012), 41–58:44.

⁶²² Pedini, *Cinque anni*, 262–4.

⁶²³ Mario Pedini, ‘Esperienze alla Commissione Cultura del Parlamento Europeo’, *Città e Regione* no. 1(1982), 36.

⁶²⁴ Laruffa, ‘Historians' Affiliation’, 283.

⁶²⁵ «Il discorso sulla possibilità di un collegamento della prevista associazione alla Comunità europea [...] deve essere ancora analizzato con attenzione». Letter of Volker Sellin to Armando Saitta, 5 Apr. 1984, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee.

⁶²⁶ «Il problema del finanziamento dell'iniziativa». Ibid.

⁶²⁷ «Ha per caso indagato sulla possibilità di ricevere mezzi finanziari dalla CEE?». Ibid.

politicisation, whereas «Europe is a cultural and spiritual concept».⁶²⁸ Similarly, Saitta considered hazardous a temporary affiliation with the EEC, which would have branded the association as closely linked to the political institution from the outset. According to his interpretation, the difficulties would have far outweighed the benefits of any financial support. Consequently, although «it is always useful to provoke the arrival of contributions and financial means [...] it is very perilous to condition our programme on calculations of possible contributions».⁶²⁹

This feature suggests a striking difference compared to the LCEH. The historians of the Liaison Committee secured a place in the Commission's networks by underlining their usefulness for the construction of Europe. In the LCEH's early stages, they put forward a history of integration from the decision-makers point of view. Introducing the first volume of the LCEH's collection, Poidevin rhetorically asked: «Can the history of Europe's beginnings provide some lessons for today's decision-makers? It is worth remembering that many of the difficulties facing Europe today were also present in 1948-1950 [...]. Analysing all the difficulties [of the early days of European construction], and trying to clarify how the “steps forward” could have been taken, does the historian not offer today's leaders some themes for meditation?».⁶³⁰ The Commission supported this paradigm both from a financial and political perspective. The LCEH was officially established “at” the Commission and regularly funded for its activities also connected to the Historical Archives.

In contrast, the association project born at the 1983 congress in Rome did not have such an aspiration. Saitta emphasised how historians had considerably broader ambitions compared to politicians. In particular, he argued that «it was a matter of overcoming the inertia of the bureaucratic bodies, not be trapping by the Community horizon, coping with mistrust and national egos [...] to work towards the whole Europe, even with the awareness that the time is not ripe».⁶³¹ He described the first steps of the European Communities as a failure due to the prevailing economic dimension. Thus, the historians were tasked with outlining a cultural path for a united Europe. An agreement between historiographies that, without prejudice to

⁶²⁸ Letter of Armando Saitta to Volker Sellin, 5 Apr. 1984, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee.

⁶²⁹ «È sempre utile provocare l'arrivo di contributi e mezzi finanziari [...] è molto pericoloso condizionare il nostro programma a calcoli su eventuali contributi». Ibid.

⁶³⁰ Raymond Poidevin, *Histoire des débuts de la construction européenne (mars 1948 - mai 1950), Origins of the European integration (March 1948-May 1950)* (Bruxelles: Bruylant, 1986), 6–7.

⁶³¹ «Tocò superare l'inerzia degli organi burocratici, non lasciarsi irretire dall'orizzonte comunitario, superare diffidenze e orgogli nazionali, puntare, pur nella consapevolezza che i tempi non sono maturi, in direzione dell'Europa tutta». Armando Saitta, 'L'Associazione degli Storici Europei', *Critica Storica* XXII, no. 2–3 (1985), 318–9.

the defence of different regional sensitivities, would at least find a shared feature in working together to acquire a European language.⁶³²

Admittedly, the 1983 congress seemed to be a turning point in establishing the association rather than its beginning. Consistent with this hypothesis, a lively debate emerged concerning the geographical boundaries of the imminent association. While the congress was firmly centred on the EEC member states, the subsequent stages showed the confrontation of different perspectives. The first strand of historians, including Saitta, Conze, and Sakalleriou, argued that an all-embracing approach to European history required the participation of scholars even from extra-EEC countries.⁶³³ The second strand of historians, mainly supported by Volker Sellin and the Spanish Jesuit Quintín Aldea Vaquero, argued that an AEH expansion beyond the EC was premature and short-sighted due to the political issues of the period.⁶³⁴ They particularly stressed the importance of «obtaining the active cooperation of the historians of the four most important countries of the European Community».⁶³⁵

The mediation was agreed upon by postponing the final decision afterwards. Formally, the geographical scope of membership was the whole European continent without EEC limits; indeed, Saitta wondered, «could we really think of a historiography that expresses the spiritual reality of Europe without including Switzerland or Austria, which are not EEC countries?».⁶³⁶ Nonetheless, he stressed that «a healthy gradualism dictates that at least for a few years almost all organisational efforts should be directed in the direction of colleagues from Central and Western Europe».⁶³⁷ Accordingly, Sartori encouraged «a certain prudence [...] especially since in non-central-western Europe the difficulty of a historiography free of ideological interpretations is anything but an abstract danger».⁶³⁸

The historians' primary concern was the involvement of scholars from the Soviet bloc, which would become a dominant theme in the following association stages. Touched by harsh

⁶³² Saitta, 'Inaugural speech', in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, XV.

⁶³³ Letter of Werner Conze to Armando Saitta, 9 Jan. 1984, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

⁶³⁴ Letter of Volker Sellin to Armando Saitta, 9 Mar. 1984, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

⁶³⁵ «Ottenere la collaborazione attiva degli storici dei quattro paesi più importanti della Comunità europea». Ibid.

⁶³⁶ «Possiamo davvero pensare a una storiografia che esprima la realtà spirituale dell'Europa senza includere la Svizzera o l'Austria, che non sono paesi della CEE?». Letter of Armando Saitta to Volker Sellin, 26 Mar. 1984, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee.

⁶³⁷ «Un sano gradualismo impone che, almeno per qualche anno, quasi tutti gli sforzi organizzativi siano indirizzati verso i colleghi dell'Europa centrale e occidentale». Armando Saitta's circular of 16 December 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress, 2.

⁶³⁸ «Una certa prudenza non guasta, tanto più che nell'Europa non centro-occidentale la difficoltà di una storiografia scevra di interpretazioni ideologiche è tutt'altro che un pericolo astratto». Letter of Franco Sartori to Armando Saitta, Dec. 1983, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXXI, dossier Franco Sartori 1958–1990.

criticism, Saitta hastened to declare that «I did not at all write that work with the eastern countries should be started immediately [...] I did not intend an unnatural mixture».⁶³⁹ Simultaneously, he proposed contacting «a Polish scholar, famously not a member of the Polish Communist Party».⁶⁴⁰ Therefore, it was «a symbolic act, postponing to a truly remote future, and perhaps never verifiable, openness towards all countries with a Soviet regime».⁶⁴¹ Saitta referred to the Polish historian Monika Senkowska-Gluck. They were both members of the “Commission Internationale d'Histoire de la Révolution Française”.⁶⁴² Furthermore, she had been leading Saitta's links with Polish historiography since the 1970s. In 1976, Saitta participated in a conference on social elites in the Napoleonic era organised in Warsaw by the Committee of Historical Sciences at the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Polish Historical Society, in which Senkowska-Gluck held the position of general secretary.⁶⁴³ Subsequently, the Polish scholar became ambassador of the Polish Academy of Sciences within a scientific agreement signed with the IHIMCA; the collaboration started with the edition of the letters between Filippo Mazzei and King Stanislaus Augustus of Poland.⁶⁴⁴ In 1979, Saitta concluded a cultural agreement with the Polish Historical Society, which included the organisation of biennial seminars on Polish history and a two-month internship at the IHIMCA for Polish scholars: the first intern was Senkowska-Gluck.⁶⁴⁵

While Poland was laying the ground for its exit from the Soviet bloc, Saitta weaved contacts with specific scholars unrelated to the central power.⁶⁴⁶ For this reason, he considered

⁶³⁹ «Non ho scritto affatto che bisognava iniziare da subito il lavoro con i paesi dell'Est [...] non intendevo procedere a una commistione innaturale». Letter of Armando Saitta to Volker Sellin, 26 Mar. 1984, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee, 4.

⁶⁴⁰ «Una studiosa polacca, notoriamente non iscritta al partito comunista polacco». Ibid.

⁶⁴¹ «Un atto simbolico, rimandando a un futuro veramente remoto, e forse mai verificabile, l'apertura verso tutti i paesi a regime sovietico». Ibid.

⁶⁴² The creation of an International Commission for the History of the French Revolution (ICHFR) was proposed at the ICHS Congress in Stockholm in 1960 at the initiative of Ernest Labrousse, Jacques Godechot, Walter Markov, and Albert Soboul. It was officially established in 1980 as an internal Commission of the ICHS. Saitta was introduced in the project by his friend and colleague Soboul; Monika Senkowska-Gluck was involved as a representative of the Soviet bloc historiography on the French Revolution. See: Michel Vovelle, ‘Rapport d'activité. Commission internationale d'Histoire de la Révolution française’, *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 310, no. 1 (1997): 651–54; Alessandro Guerra, ‘La Rivoluzione fra le lettere. Il carteggio fra Albert Soboul e Armando Saitta’, *Nuova rivista storica* 101, no. 1 (2017): 103–36; 124.

⁶⁴³ Saitta and Senkowska-Gluck discussed about the conference in several letters between April and October 1976. ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXXII, dossier Senkowska-Gluck 1976–1990.

⁶⁴⁴ Armando Saitta, *Lettres de Philippe Mazzei et du roi Stanislas-Auguste de Pologne* (Rome: Italian Institut for Modern and Contemporary Ages, 1982).

⁶⁴⁵ Letter of Armando Saitta to the Polish Historical Society, 15 Feb. 1979, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXXII, dossier Senkowska-Gluck 1976–1990.

⁶⁴⁶ The Polish crisis of 1980–1981 was associated with the emergence of the Solidarity movement in the Polish People's Republic, which challenged the rule of the Polish United Workers' Party and Poland's alignment with the Soviet Union. For the first time, the Kremlin abstained from military intervention, unlike previous occasions such as the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and the Prague Spring of 1968. The USSR's central power left the Polish leadership under General Wojciech Jaruzelski to impose martial law and deal with the opposition on its

Senkowska-Gluck a suitable scholar for the symbolic involvement of historians beyond the Iron Curtain.

3.2 The AEH's progressive detachment from the EC.

Specifically, Saitta tried to involve Senkowska-Gluck in the association's promoting committee.⁶⁴⁷ It was composed of seven scholars representing the participating countries. Following a widespread demand expressed during the assembly in May 1983, the historians involved in the association's project commissioned a small number of scholars to carry out the necessary paperwork to establish the association. Each participant in the meeting could list by mail three names for the committee; according to the number of preferences, scholars would be appointed up to the seventh position. The reins of the process remained in Saitta's hands, and the IHIMCA became the venue for the promoting committee meetings as well as the logistical hub for the scholars' letters containing preferences.⁶⁴⁸

The promoting committee was charged with several fundamental functions. Firstly, it prepared the materials for the association's founding assembly. The scholars unanimously agreed that this starting general meeting should coincide with the 1985 International Conference of Historical Sciences in Stuttgart. This choice ensured multiple benefits. Most historians involved in the association project would have participated in the Stuttgart congress, and logistics would have been more accessible than a specific meeting.⁶⁴⁹ The venue would have been Marbach, and in particular the Schillermuseum, «because it is a fitting symbol of the scientific aims of our association, a place steeped in cultural history and home to such a rich archive for the history of the nineteenth century».⁶⁵⁰ Furthermore, the parallel ICHS conference was considered an excellent opportunity to publicise the association and the possibility of affiliation.

own. See: Andrzej Paczkowski and Malcolm Byrne, *From Solidarity to Martial Law: The Polish Crisis of 1980–1981* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007).

⁶⁴⁷ Letter of Armando Saitta to Monika Senkowska-Gluck, 4 Mar. 1984, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXXII, dossier Senkowska-Gluck 1976-1990.

⁶⁴⁸ Armando Saitta's circular of 16 December 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress, 3.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid, 4.

⁶⁵⁰ «Perchè penso sia un giusto simbolo degli intenti scientifici della nostra associazione, un luogo carico di storia culturale e sede di un archivio così ricco per la storia del secolo XIX». Letter of Armando Saitta to Volker Sellin, 27 Feb. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee.

The second task of the promotion committee could be directly inferred from the advertising requirement. It was instructed to «carry out advertisement and persuasion so that as many colleagues as possible would join the association».⁶⁵¹ This dissemination work became a constant in the association project, and several scholars actively worked to involve their colleagues. For instance, Sartori listed 83 Italian scholars that he thought might be interested.⁶⁵² Similarly, Eloy Benito Ruano, Spanish medievalist and member of the “Asociacion española de ciencias históricas”, emphasised his contribution «to disseminate the proposal for an international society of history teachers to all our partner organisations».⁶⁵³ Finally, Sellin informed Saitta that a German translation of the circulars on the association project, which were only available in English and Italian, would have been helpful to involve a broader range of West-German scholars.⁶⁵⁴

This is a distinguishing feature of the association compared to the LCEH. The latter used an élite-driven method of co-optation: they added members at the discretion of the group.⁶⁵⁵ It sought an EEC balance in terms of composition; thus, it included historians from Germany, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy, Ireland, and Britain. However, the criteria for selecting new members was arbitrary and based on the potential candidate’s scientific value at the discretion of the existing members. As a rule, members remained in office until the end of their careers or even death. In contrast, historians planning the association after the Rome conference in 1983 aimed at broader participation. The intense publicising and dissemination of the project witnessed a substantial desire to involve as many scholars as possible. It is worth noting that, especially in this first phase, the association’s founding members also used a kind of co-optation. Indeed, the involvement was broad but referred to a few specific clusters, namely the fields and countries of the founding members. However, the association showed a marked attitude towards a broader membership than a narrow élite like the LCEH.

Furthermore, the association aimed to implement a democratic decision-making procedure. Indeed, the promotion committee’s third and most crucial task was to draft a statute for the

⁶⁵¹ «Fare opera di propaganda e persuasione affinché il maggior numero di colleghi aderisca all’Associazione». Armando Saitta’s circular of 16 December 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 6, dossier Europe-Strasbourg Congress, 4.

⁶⁵² Letter of Franco Sartori to Armando Saitta, 14 Sept. 1984, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXXI, dossier Franco Sartori 1958–1990.

⁶⁵³ «Difundir la propuesta de una sociedad internacional de profesores de historia a todas nuestras organizaciones asociadas». Letter of Eloy Benito Ruano to Armando Saitta, 9 Mar. 1984, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder IV, dossier Eloy Benito Ruano 1980–1992.

⁶⁵⁴ Letter of Volker Sellin to Armando Saitta, 27 Feb. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee.

⁶⁵⁵ Varsori, *From normative impetus*, 14.

association to be democratically voted by members at the first general assembly. During the meeting in May 1983, two opposing theses were confronted. On the one hand, Vierhaus argued for postponing the association's kick-off until the founding assembly in Stuttgart.⁶⁵⁶ On the other hand, Saitta urged the earliest possible beginning of preliminary activities, including the statute drafting. The latter proposal found favour among the participants, considering that «to a large extent, the association has to be defined: the task of the promotion committee is to prepare [...] a draft statute, the founding assembly will decide its final validity. Otherwise, we would create an undemocratic association».⁶⁵⁷

Nevertheless, Saitta seemed to force this democratic process as early as the appointment of the promoting committee. Indeed, following the committee elections by mail, he recognised «the exclusion of some names, which were indicated in the letters I received but did not appear in the list of those chosen to establish the committee».⁶⁵⁸ According to Saitta, the choices were obliged by the unwillingness of the person concerned or by his or her non-involvement in the preparatory phase of the association, which would have lengthened the timetable to start the activities. In addition, he asked the voters to add some committee members “out of the vote” «to introduce a medievalist (a completely uncovered sector), at least one representative from non-EU Europe but the West (such as a Swiss or an Austrian), and, as a demonstration, a representative from Eastern Europe (I would propose Poland in this case, and specifically my colleague Monika Senkowska-Gluck)».⁶⁵⁹ Finally, he scheduled the first two meetings of the promoting committee between 1984 and 1985 at the IHIMCA, to discuss operational issues before the constitutive assembly in Stuttgart.

This forcing suggests that Saitta increasingly hegemonised the association project. The fear of failure, especially following the breakaway from the EC, forced him to speed up the path even by sacrificing some “democratic” steps. He had no intention of waiting for collective awareness to establish balance in the provenance of scholars; similarly, he was not willing to leave a fundamental field of study as medieval history uncovered. The pressure to realise the

⁶⁵⁶ Letter of Armando Saitta to Volker Sellin, 26 Mar. 1984, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee.

⁶⁵⁷ «Si trattava di un'Associazione in buona parte ancora da definire: il compito del comitato promotore è quello di preparare [...] una bozza di statuto la cui validità definitiva è da demandare all'assemblea fondativa. In caso contrario, daremmo vita ad un'Associazione non democratica». Ibid.

⁶⁵⁸ «L'esclusione di alcuni nomi, che sono stati indicati nelle lettere da me ricevute, ma che non compaiono nella lista dei prescelti a comporre il comitato». Letter of Armando Saitta to the colleagues interested in the Association, 13 Feb. 1984, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee, 2.

⁶⁵⁹ «Introdurre un medievista (settore del tutto scoperto), almeno un rappresentante dell'Europa non comunitaria ma di appartenenza occidentale (come uno svizzero o un austriaco), e, a titolo dimostrativo, un rappresentante dei paesi dell'Est (proporrei in questo caso la Polonia e precisamente la collega Monika Senkowska-Gluck)». Ibid.

project as quickly as possible produced a significant centralisation of the tasks on Saitta and the IHIMCA, a constant feature of the rising association.

The composition of the promoting committee reflected Saitta's striking influence. He involved two medievalists, namely the Spanish Eloy Benito Ruano and the Italian Pietro De Leo. In general, however, the committee had a marked connotation of modernist and contemporary historians. The only representative of ancient history was Sartori, Saitta's close collaborator. Similarly, Saitta had strict relations with other scholars of the committee, namely Sellin, Suratteau, and Schieder. Oddly, the committee did not include any English historians. Following the disagreement after the congress,⁶⁶⁰ Saitta resolutely explained that «the great problem of England remains, but I confess that I have voluntarily ignored it for the time being because the feedback that the congress had provided me for this country was not the most suitable for the future development of the initiative».⁶⁶¹ Nevertheless, he promised «to make new reports and to be personally in England to solve the problem in the coming months».⁶⁶²

However, Saitta failed to realise all his expectations. Although three Spanish historians were appointed, including Quintin Aldea and Manuel Espadas Burgos, in addition to the aforementioned Ruano, neither Swiss nor Austrian scholars were among the committee members. In particular, as already stated during the organisation of the 1983 conference, Saitta considered Austria a crucial country in European history, and he "violated" the EC geographical boundaries to involve the Austrian scholar Lutz.⁶⁶³ Comparably, Senkowska-Gluck was not on the list of committee members. As Saitta explained to the West-German historian Friedrich Neubauer, «despite one of the association's aims is the overcoming of "small-European" borders [...] the Polish colleagues are in a tough situation».⁶⁶⁴ Arguably, this reason was combined with the different views concerning the immediate involvement of historians from the Soviet bloc.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶⁰ Cf. note 564.

⁶⁶¹ «Resta il grosso problema dell'Inghilterra, ma confesso di averlo per il momento volontariamente ignorato poichè i riscontri che per questa nazione m'aveva fornito il congresso non era la più adatta ai futuri sviluppi dell'iniziativa». Letter of Armando Saitta to the colleagues interested in the Association, 13 Feb. 1984, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee, 1.

⁶⁶² «Nei prossimi mesi di realizzare nuovi rapporti e di essere personalmente in Inghilterra per risolvere il problema». Ibid.

⁶⁶³ Cf. note 427.

⁶⁶⁴ «Nonostante uno degli scopi dell'associazione sia il superamento dei confini "piccolo-europei" [...] i colleghi polacchi si trovano in una situazione particolarmente difficile». Letter of Armando Saitta to Friedrich Neubauer, 3 Nov. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee, 2.

⁶⁶⁵ Cf. notes 629–631.

On this basis, the promoting committee met for the first time on 4 May 1984 at the IHIMCA. «The current identity crisis that Europe is going through and its negative repercussions on historical research» imposed an accelerated process for the association's establishment.⁶⁶⁶ Consequently, while waiting for the notarial deed, the “de facto” promoting committee founded the Association of European Historians (AEH) at the IHIMCA. A few provisional rules were drawn up to “ferry” the AEH until the founding assembly and the statute approval in August 1985. The participants emphasised the temporary nature of these rules and invited interested colleagues «that want to be part of it since the early stage: this is a newly established body, where everything is to be decided and to be done, and where each of us can play a fundamental role».⁶⁶⁷ Through the broadest possible participation, the promoting committee's hope was «to present in Stuttgart a vital organism [...] and not a corpse to be buried».⁶⁶⁸

Nonetheless, the transitional rules already gave the Association a clear imprint. They stipulated that the statute's approval would only become official after the Stuttgart assembly. But before the vote, the association's headquarters were established in Rome at the IHIMCA; the promoter committee was instructed to legally register the AEH in Italy; although the statute was also drafted in English, French and German, the juridical valid version was the Italian one; finally, the annual membership fee was set at 20,000 Italian liras.⁶⁶⁹ Furthermore, although the Association would address the entire continent, they stressed the difficulties of integrating the historiographies of the two political blocs in that period; therefore, for the first eight years of the Association, a four-year plan concerning the geographical and cultural scope of activities was delegated to the future Executive Board.

Subsequently, during the second meeting of the promoting committee on 10th April 1985 in Rome, the statute was approved for submission to the general assembly. From the beginning, the committee outlined the AEH's main objectives:

⁶⁶⁶ «La crisi d'identità che l'Europa attraversa e i riflessi negativi che ciò produce nel piano della ricerca storica». Report of the first promoting committee meeting, 4 May 1984, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee, 1.

⁶⁶⁷ «A voler far parte di essa sin da questa fase iniziale: si tratta di un organismo appena nato, ove tutto è da stabilire e da fare, ove ciascuno di noi può svolgere una parte fondamentale». Ibid.

⁶⁶⁸ «Presentare a Stoccarda un organismo vitale [...] e non un cadavere da seppellire». Ibid.

⁶⁶⁹ 20.000 Italian liras correspond to roughly 10 euros.

«The aims of the Association are:

- a) to provide the European historians with a focus for meeting and information exchange;
- b) to encourage the elimination of the remaining national prejudices, which in the different national historiographies are an obstacle to a proper understanding of both the European past and the European present;
- c) to undertake definite initiatives which will lead not only to a better mutual knowledge of the methodological needs and problems of Europe's historiographies and to a constant comparison between them, but also to a reconciling aspiration to unity, which has always been at the root of European civilisation, with the particular characteristics of the various cultural and national traditions;
- d) to create organised cultural structures dedicated to carrying out wide-ranging supra-national historical research, which will not reduce the unitary history of Europe to a simple sum of individual national histories.

[...] The Association is neither concerned with the careers of history scholars, professors or researchers at their respective institutions, nor with pedagogical-didactic efforts to modify or harmonise history teaching programmes in schools».⁶⁷⁰

Two major themes emerge from this article. Firstly, the intention to intervene in harmonising school curricula officially disappears. This is a prominent shift considering that, in Pedini and Saitta's intentions, the 1983 congress was conceived precisely to improve educational cooperation in history teaching.⁶⁷¹ In addition to the logistical obstacles for a large-scale involvement of secondary school teachers, the peculiarities and jealousies of each category, and the AEH's limited financial resources, Saitta pointed out that EC educational cooperation policies at that point were aimed at a prevailing economic goal.⁶⁷²

Indeed, the distances between the EC educational policies and the AEH paradigm became unbridgeable. The common market required citizens to believe in the European integration process and a highly qualified workforce prepared to move within the Community. To achieve these goals, the EEC needed an effective education policy to overcome the old socialist and trade union conceptions of the predominantly social role in education and the traditional national reserves of sovereignty.⁶⁷³ The new European Commission, which took office on 6th January 1985 under the influential presidency of the former French MEP

⁶⁷⁰ Statute of the Association of European Historians - English version, art.2, 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 3, dossier Statute.

⁶⁷¹ Cf. note 397.

⁶⁷² Letter of Armando Saitta to Franco Sartori, 12 Dec. 1984, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 4, dossier Association of European Historians - Letters of members.

⁶⁷³ Guy Neave, 'Education and Social Policy: Demise of an Ethic or Change of Values?', *Oxford Review of Education* 14, no. 3 (1988): 273–83.

Jacques Delors, emphasised this new paradigm.⁶⁷⁴ Delors firmly believed in the economic value of education and training policies. Specifically, he argued that a dynamic and cohesive single market entirely relied on a common and high-performance education and training policy.⁶⁷⁵ Delors focused on developing a more robust institutional base for educational cooperation within the Community. He urged to include education as a policy area within the Commission: it had been housed under the Directorate for Science and Research, but in 1978 it was transferred to social affairs and linked with training.⁶⁷⁶ Simultaneously, Delors was committed to employing the European Social Fund more creatively and encouraging greater cooperation in educational issues.

However, the institutionalisation of education was only part of his plan. The publications issued by the Commission and its sponsored programmes suggested a normative agenda driving this new schedule for education and its role in the EC.⁶⁷⁷ The EUCO argued that education was crucial both to the Single Market and, in the form of transnational cooperation, as a force to go beyond the Treaty of Rome and encourage a positive integration towards a European federalist order. Peter Sutherland, European Commissioner for Competition, Social Affairs and Education, in a speech at the EP Committee on Youth, Culture, Information and Sport on 25th April 1985, stated that:

«over the past recent years, education and training policy have been regarded too often simply as a means of preventing unemployment for young people [...]. Recently, we have begun to place the debate on education and training systems in the Community within the global context, [...] The objective is to address the serious shortage of skilled human resources that European industry needs to improve its technological base and strengthen cooperation within the Community».⁶⁷⁸

The “economisation” of education represented a sharp break with the past, and the designs promoted by Delors and his colleagues in the pre-Maastricht period challenged the policies of the 1970s, when education was discussed as a right, with little application. They depicted

⁶⁷⁴ Brad K. Blitz, ‘From Monnet to Delors: Educational Co-Operation in the European Union’, *Contemporary European History* 12, no. 2 (May 2003): 197–212, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777303001140>.

⁶⁷⁵ Interview with Jones, Hywel Ceri, 6 May 2016, HAEU, INT1050, 9–10.

⁶⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶⁷⁷ Blitz, ‘From Monnet’, 207.

⁶⁷⁸ Extraits d’un discours sur la politique d’éducation dans la Communauté, lors d’une réunion de la Commission de la jeunesse, de la culture, de l’éducation, de l’information et des sports du Parlement européen, Bruxelles, 25/4/1985, HAEU, CPPE-1623.

transnational cooperation in education as essential to produce a competitive workforce and a socio-psychological community.⁶⁷⁹

Despite the distance between the AEH and the EC on education, they had a similar conception concerning the “unity in diversity” idea. The second theme that emerged from Article 2 of the AEH’s Statute is the ancestral aspiration for the unity of the European continent. This issue recalls some identity politics of the EC in the period. On April 1986, during the so-called relaunching of European integration through the Single Market program, the European Parliament adopted the European flag and took «formal note of current practice concerning the European anthem».⁶⁸⁰ Accordingly, the EP expressed the hope that «the flag, together with the European passport and the European anthem, will help strengthen the image of Europe and instil in European citizens the feeling of belonging to the Communities [...] helping to strengthen the concept of European identity».⁶⁸¹ Finally, on 29th May 1986, the newly adopted flag of the EC, representing all its institutions and 322 million European citizens, was hoisted with great solemnity in the forecourt of Berlaymont, home of the European Commission in Brussels, over the strains of "The European Anthem" sung by a massed choir singing Schiller’s still unofficial text on Beethoven’s melody.⁶⁸²

As Cris Shore has argued, the cultural dimension of the European integration process has been repeatedly stressed from the late 1970s onwards.⁶⁸³ Officials and politicians operating on a European scale strove to construct a European identity. According to Shore, their concern was driven by political imperatives, particularly the need to legitimise the EC’s institutions and emerging systems of transnational governance. This stress on cultural identity thus served as a way of legitimising the European integration process. Due to political attention, social sciences and humanities scholars increasingly focused on European identity. Pieter Huistra et al. have emphasised the crucial role of history in European identities since it could give a sense of belonging and answer questions of group identity, such as “who are we, where do we come from?”.⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁷⁹ Raymond Ryba, ‘Toward a European Dimension in Education: Intention and Reality in European Community Policy and Practice’, *Comparative Education Review* 36, no. 1 (1992): 10–24.

⁶⁸⁰ Rapport établi au nom de la commission des questions politiques sur le drapeau européen, par M. J. Gama, 1986, HAEU, PE2-6450, 7.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid, 9.

⁶⁸² Caryl Clark, ‘Forging Identity: Beethoven’s “Ode” as European Anthem’, *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 4 (1997): 789–807:800.

⁶⁸³ Cris Shore, ‘Inventing the “People’s Europe”: Critical Approaches to European Community “Cultural Policy”’, *Man* 28, no. 4 (1993): 779–800; Cris Shore, *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration* (Routledge, 2000).

⁶⁸⁴ Pieter Huistra, Marijn Molema, and Daniel Wirt, ‘Political Values in a European Museum’, *Journal of Contemporary European Research* 10, no. 1 (2014), 124–36:125.

The AEH historians tried to play a role in constructing the “unity in diversity” master narrative. Their contribution aimed at giving a unified European dimension to the individual national historiographies of the continent while respecting each peculiarity. In other words, they challenged on a historiographical level the nationalism revival in the period.⁶⁸⁵ As Stefan Berger has extensively discussed, by the late 1970s and early 1980s, national narratives had been challenged, and the link between history writing and national identity creation had been questioned, especially in Germany, Great Britain, France, and Italy. Nevertheless, these four historiographies witnessed attempts to strengthen that link and renationalise history writing. Such attempts were primarily linked to political changes in Germany and Britain, where centre-right governments, respectively, after 1982 and 1979, set out to use history to support their political agendas.⁶⁸⁶

In 1982, the new centre-right chancellor of West Germany, Helmut Kohl, started his mandate advocating patriotism with a call for a “spiritual and moral renewal” of the country. Some Conservative liberal historians, such as Michael Stürmer, committed to stress the more worthwhile elements of German national history before 1933; others, like the revisionist Ernst Nolte, tried to relativise the weight of Nazism in German history. Left-liberal historians firmly reacted to this challenge, and between 1985 and 1987, a debate that became known as the “Historikerstreit” raised. On the one hand, left-liberal historians supported constitutional patriotism and post-nationalism ideas; on the other hand, conservative liberal historians emphasised the need for a positive national identity grounded in historical master narratives. Nonetheless, West German attempts to renationalise the past showed that the history of nazism still hampered any return to positive national narratives.⁶⁸⁷

East Germany was part of the game. During the 1980s, we can observe a limited and party-driven discourse on German national history in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The notion of inheritance emerged as a supplement to the idea of tradition, which had previously divided German history into positive and negative developments. GDR historians increasingly declared their willingness to research the positive lines of tradition and the whole inheritance of German history. The myths surrounding GDR “heroes”, such as Thomas Müntzer, were downsized and partially unravelled; in contrast, former “villains” like Martin Luther, Frederick II, and Bismarck were reinterpreted in more positive meanings.⁶⁸⁸ While

⁶⁸⁵ Cf. note 85.

⁶⁸⁶ Berger, ‘A Return’, 629–78.

⁶⁸⁷ Berger, ‘A Return’, 650. On the “historikerstreit” see also: Richard J. Evans, *The New Nationalism and the Old History: Perspectives on the West German Historikerstreit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

⁶⁸⁸ Berger, ‘A Return’, 637. On the topic, see also: Helmut Meier and Walter Schmidt, *Erbe und Tradition in der DDR: die Diskussion der Historiker* (Berlin: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1989); Jan Herman Brinks, *Die DDR -*

some historians in West Germany attempted to renationalise West German identity, some of their colleagues in the East tried to deliver a historical justification for the Communist party's claim of a "socialist nation". Thus, a national history revival surfaced on both sides of divided Germany.

Comparably, the Thatcherism after 1979 produced distinct historical overtones in Great Britain. National self-respect alluded to allegedly perennial values of the Victorian age and the age of the Empire. Geoffrey Elton, Regius Professor of History at Cambridge University at the time, denounced unpatriotic historians and urged for a renewed commitment to teaching the glories of English political history.⁶⁸⁹ Historians like James Clark, Norman Stone, and Maurice Cowling imprinted the historical profession during the 1980s with a distinct conservative inflexion. Even some fervent liberals such as David Cannadine depicted historians as «guardians of the national past, as the keepers of our country's corporate memories».⁶⁹⁰ Notwithstanding, as in Germany, most liberals and left-wing historians opposed their conservative counterparts on a variety of issues. Although they had been taken aback by the apparent ease of nationalist mobilisation in the 1982 war with Argentina over the Malvinas, left historians harshly disputed the Thatcherite appeal to old-fashioned nationalist history. They described Britain as a multinational state and promoted an open, multiethnic, and tolerant idea of British society. Introducing his volumes against xenophobia, nationalism, and Englishness of Thatcherite historians, Raphael Samuel stressed that «this volume is intended to encourage a more molecular view of the nation, and a more pluralist politics, one which starts from a recognition of diversity».⁶⁹¹

Differently, in Italy and France, the attempt to a positively accentuated national historical consciousness happened under socialist political tutelage. The Italian governments headed by the leader of Italy's socialist party (PSI), Bettino Craxi, strongly encouraged the revival of positive national discourses.⁶⁹² Craxi emphasised the need for a stronger sense of patriotism among Italians, which he associated with the pride in the economic accomplishments of his governments. Under this political cover, the Italian reinterpretation of national histories was

Geschichtswissenschaft auf dem Weg zur deutschen Einheit. Luther, Friedrich II. und Bismarck als Paradigmen politischen Wandels, (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1992).

⁶⁸⁹ Geoffrey Elton, 'Presidential Address: The Historian's Social Function', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 27 (1977): 197–211.

⁶⁹⁰ David Cannadine, 'British History: Past, Present -- And Future?', *Past & Present*, no. 116 (1987), 169–91: 90.

⁶⁹¹ Raphael Samuel, *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, 1st edition (London: Routledge, 1989), vol.1, XXXIV.

⁶⁹² Mastrolia Nunziante, *Il socialismo liberale di Bettino Craxi*, II edizione. (Ogliastro Cilento: Licosia edizioni, 2015), 77.

mainly attributable to Renzo De Felice. Rewriting the history of Fascism, he argued that Mussolini was able to build on a far-reaching consensus in Italian society, and only a minority of Italians actively resisted fascism.⁶⁹³ According to De Felice, the Resistance between 1943 and 1945 was a civil war that resulted in a profound crisis of national identity rather than a heroic battle of the overwhelming majority of Italians against the German occupation and their Italian fascist supporters. Several Italian historians defended the history of the Resistance against attempts to diminish its significance, but during the 1980s, Italian historiography was shifting from the old solid antifascist paradigms towards a hazy uncertainty regarding the situation in Italy between 1943 and 1945.⁶⁹⁴

Similarly, the renationalisation of French historical discourses was already ongoing. The two famous volumes of Fernand Braudel on French identity were the most striking example.⁶⁹⁵ He claimed for the assimilation of immigrants, the naturalisation of the external borders of France erected in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and referred to the ethnic French nation's origins.⁶⁹⁶ Concerning Vichy, he recalled the Gaullist narratives of the 1950s, arguing that Gaullist France was already in the ascendant when Petainist Vichy France was in inexorable decline. Braudel's volumes were included in a general context of national history writing turn. In this period, the historians replaced the "intellectuels engagé" in the French intellectual world.⁶⁹⁷ Even when some historians, such as Pierre Nora, attempted to deconstruct French national identities, the outcome was doubtful. Nora's seven-volume "Les Lieux de memoire", published between 1984 and 1993, aimed to demystify national sites of memory and forms of public commemoration, as well as to debunk some crucial symbols of French national history.⁶⁹⁸ Yet, several contributions in those volumes seemed to support rather than curtail such mystifications.

Besides the resurgence of nationalism in historiography, the AEH's eurocentric paradigm also challenged the global perspective. Poststructuralism debunked myths of homogeneous and uniform national identities by focusing on constructing these identities. This approach considerably strengthened the constructionist methodologies to national identity and

⁶⁹³ Eugenio Di Rienzo, *Un Dopoguerra Storiografico, 1943-60* (Roma: Le Lettere, 2002), 369–70.

⁶⁹⁴ Niccolò Zapponi, 'Fascism in Italian Historiography, 1986-93: A Fading National Identity', *Journal of Contemporary History* 29, no. 4 (1 October 1994): 547–68.

⁶⁹⁵ Fernand Braudel, *L'identité de La France*, 2 vol. (Paris: Arthaud-Flammarion, 1986).

⁶⁹⁶ Julian Jackson, 'Historians and the Nation in Contem- Porary France', in *Writing National Histories: Western Europe Since 1800*, Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan, and Kevin Passmore eds. (London: Psychology Press, 1999), 230–59:241.

⁶⁹⁷ Olivier Mongin, *Face au scepticisme: Les mutations du paysage intellectuel ou l'invention de l'intellectuel démocratique* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1994).

⁶⁹⁸ Pierre Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1984–1994).

criticised essentialist notions of national cores.⁶⁹⁹ In the cases where historians have analysed the transnational entanglements of national memory cultures, they significantly endorsed a paradigm shift beyond national discourses in historiography. During the 1970s, comparative and transnational approaches to history have been appealing, especially for a young generation of historians committed to overcoming the national limitations of older scholarship.⁷⁰⁰ Outside of Europe, global history historians such as William McNeill and the adherents of Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems analysis tried to move history away from its nation-centeredness.⁷⁰¹ The history of global networks, relations, and dependencies increasingly moved to the foreground. In 1982, a new body of bold transnational historians focusing on extra-European history and international relations founded the World History Association.⁷⁰²

Against this background, the AEH aimed to «overcome and eliminate residual nationalistic prejudices [...] and restore a common European consciousness to our concrete historiographical work».⁷⁰³ Simultaneously, a new possible collaboration with the EC disclosed for the AEH historians. During the Italian six-month EC presidency between January and June 1985, the Italian Ministry of Cultural and Environmental Heritage Antonino Pietro Gullotti was well-disposed towards significant European cultural value projects.⁷⁰⁴ He intended to collect «the greatest historians of Europe both to promote research on European history and provide scientific support for educational books».⁷⁰⁵ The Italian government acknowledged to the AEH historians, particularly Saitta, «the keen interest in the initiative, but also its useful and concrete implementation by promoting the important conference on Europe in Rome in 1983».⁷⁰⁶ As a result, on behalf of the Minister, the Italian Office for Libraries and Cultural Institutes' Director General Francesco Sisinni asked Saitta for

⁶⁹⁹ Concerning the debates between essentialists and constructionists on national identity, see: Anthony D. Smith, *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2000).

⁷⁰⁰ Woolf, 'Europe', 327–8.

⁷⁰¹ Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974); William Hardy McNeill, *Polyethnicity and National Unity in World History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

⁷⁰² Richard Drayton and David Motadel, 'Discussion: The Futures of Global History', *Journal of Global History* 13, no. 1 (March 2018): 1–21.

⁷⁰³ «Superare ed eliminare i residui pregiudizi nazionalistici [...] e restituire una comune coscienza europea al nostro concreto lavoro storiografico». Saitta, 'L'Associazione', 322.

⁷⁰⁴ Letter of Francesco Sisinni, Italian Office for Libraries and Cultural Institutes' Director General, to the Italian Historical Institute for Modern and Contemporary Age, 31 Jan. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

⁷⁰⁵ «I più grandi storici d'Europa, sia per promuovere la ricerca sulla storia europea sia per fornire un supporto scientifico ai libri didattici». Ibid, 1.

⁷⁰⁶ «Il vivo interesse per l'iniziativa, ma anche utilmente e concretamente l'attuazione della stessa, promuovendo l'importante convegno sull'Europa a Roma nel 1983». Ibid, 2.

«valuable cooperation in the scientific and practical definition of a European historical institute».⁷⁰⁷

3.3 The attempt of a European historical institute.

The AEH promoting committee enthusiastically accepted.⁷⁰⁸ Its members designed a federating body that «should not compete or interfere with the work of the individual national historical institutes, but rather represent a general point of reference and link, placing the results of its work at the service of these institutes».⁷⁰⁹ The main functions of the Institute, which would focus on the entire history of European civilisation, included the periodic draft of a general historical bibliography and the conducting of wide-ranging international research. The AEH historians even argued that the Institute «could represent the historiography of the European Communities».⁷¹⁰

At first glance, it would seem that the AEH historians were retracing their steps from a clear break with the EC. Indeed, following a considerable distance from the EC institutions, the AEH seemed to move decisively towards an autonomous dimension. In the draft statute of the association, drawn up in the same days as the idea of the European Historical Institute was taking shape, there was no reference to the EC, their funding, or any collaboration. Contact with Pedini had ceased, and the eventual politicisation of historical research apparently removed any possibility of compromise between the AEH historians and the EC. Finally, the project also included a commitment to harmonising school textbooks, an issue that was expressly denied in the AEH's activities.

However, a more accurate look at the European Historical Institute project suggests a diverse scenario. The AEH promoting committee saw in the Italian government's proposal the possibility of binding the association to the EC without submitting to its political “yoke”. Although funded by the EEC, the new institute would hinge on the individual national historical institutes, as they would have elected the decision-making bodies and would have been the protagonists of its work.⁷¹¹ The Institute would have representation in the individual

⁷⁰⁷ «Una preziosa collaborazione per la definizione scientifica e pratica di un Istituto Storico Europeo». Ibid.

⁷⁰⁸ Report of the AEH promoting committee meeting, 14 Apr. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

⁷⁰⁹ «Non deve entrare in concorrenza o interferire con l'attività dei singoli istituti storici nazionali, ma piuttosto fungere come punto di riferimento e collegamento generale, mettendo al servizio di questi istituti i risultati della propria attività». Ibid.

⁷¹⁰ «Assumere la rappresentanza della storiografia delle Comunità Europee». Ibid.

⁷¹¹ European Historical Institute project, 7 May 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

states and the Community bodies; in contrast, the Institute's organisation chart did not include any political representative. It was therefore configured as an exclusively cultural initiative, without political interference, as the AEH historians hoped for from the early stages of the project.

Concerning the school textbooks, in contrast to the path that culminated at the 1983 congress, the AEH promotion committee emphasised the need «to avoid the task of harmonising the various textbooks for the teaching of history in schools in the various EEC countries».⁷¹² The AEH historians were seriously concerned about the possible opposition of the national bodies. First, West Germany already had a dedicated institute, the “Georg-Eckert-Institut für Internationale Schulbuchforschung” in Braunschweig. It carried out extensive work on textbooks with a scientific-didactic approach. Professor Ernst Hinrichs, the institute's President, was supported by national politicians, who were significantly interested in research towards quality education and removing nationalism from schooling. According to the AEH historians, it was precisely the appointment as President of Hinrichs, a prestigious full professor at Göttingen University, that witnessed the weight of this institute.⁷¹³ Moreover, the “Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte” was involved in the field. In the early 1970s, the institute strongly opposed a handbook for the EC countries' history teachers designed by Fernand Braudel with the participation of an AEH member, Rudolf Vierhaus. Hence, it was anything but impossible to imagine its hostility to the supranational management of school textbooks.

Similarly, poor enthusiasm for European “meddling” in education was foreseeable in France and the UK. In the French case, the “Association des Professeurs d'histoire et géographie”, the country's largest teachers association, although linked with the EEC's secondary education service, had never discussed history textbooks with non-French institutions.⁷¹⁴ Concerning the UK, the AEH historians believed the British scholars had little interest in harmonising school textbooks. The unsuccessful experience of the “School of European Studies” in Brighton, which specialised in didactic pedagogy, testified to the lack of British aptitude towards a “Europeanisation” of history teaching.

As a result, the historians of the AEH considered that:

⁷¹² «Evitare il compito di un'armonizzazione dei vari manuali per l'insegnamento della storia nelle scuole dei vari paesi della CEE». Notes on the European Historical Institute, 14 Apr. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians, 1.

⁷¹³ Ibid, 2.

⁷¹⁴ Notes on the European Historical Institute, 14 Apr. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians, 3.

«it is not too prudent to follow a path that places the problem of teaching and school textbooks in the foreground; instead, we could claim an active role in the publishing of historical-scientific works that form the background and/or support for history schoolbooks but are not only intended for that purpose».⁷¹⁵

However, setting the eventual European Historical Institute on a purely scientific level would have met with similar mistrust from the national historical institutes. Concerning France, the promoting committee dreaded the “École des Hautes Études” and its associated journal “Annales. Economies-Sociétés-Civilisations”.⁷¹⁶ AEH historians feared world-renowned figures such as Leroy Ladurie or scholars with significant political backing such as François Furet.⁷¹⁷ Concerning West Germany, the AEH was concerned with the aforementioned “Max-Planck-Institut”, the Institute of the “Monumenta Germaniae Historica”, and the “Institut für europäische Geschichte” in Mainz, directed by the AEH member Karl Otmar Von Aretin.⁷¹⁸ Finally, according to the AEH promoting committee, the “Association of British Historians” would express definite hostility due to the rigidity and wide circulation of its journal and critical notebooks.

Thus, the AEH historians were completely aware of the hurdles concerning a hypothetical European Historical Institute. The various national institutes and associations would have badly born an “antagonist” which would have reduced their field of action. As a result, the promoting committee planned an institute that would not repeat the characteristics of other national entities but rather a coordinating hub.⁷¹⁹ They fostered a joint structure to implement international and EEC-wide initiatives while respecting individual national autonomies. To avoid excessive specificity, the institute did not include chronological limits but a clear focus on the history of civilisation and culture with an interdisciplinary approach. The “complementary” services of the new institute for the existing structures needed to cope with national blocks and group exclusivism typical of historians.⁷²⁰ The institute planned by the AEH historians envisaged the publication of an annual historical bibliography of EEC

⁷¹⁵ «Non è troppo prudente l'avviarsi per una strada che ponga in primo piano il problema dell'insegnamento e dei manuali scolastici, e convenga invece rivendicare un ruolo attivo nella edizione di opere storico-scientifiche che costituiscano il retroterra e/o il supporto per i libri di storia ad uso scolastico ma non siano finalizzati solo a tale scopo». Ibid, 5.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid, 6.

⁷¹⁷ The AEH historians especially referred to the links between Furet and the former President of the National French Assembly Edgar Faure. See: Pierre Nora, 'François Furet dans le débat', *Le Debat* no. 96, 4(1997), 7–11.

⁷¹⁸ Notes on the European Historical Institute, 14 Apr. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians, 6.

⁷¹⁹ European Historical Institute project, 7 May 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians, 3.

⁷²⁰ Ibid, 4.

countries, a biannual journal, a series for small critical volumes, and the creation of an extensive EC history library.⁷²¹ To ensure balance and qualified representation of the EEC countries, the functioning bodies, i.e. the President, the Executive Board, the Assembly, and the Board of Auditors, should have been appointed by the member countries governments.

Despite internal and external obstacles, the AEH promoting committee argued that establishing the European Historical Institute was necessary. Among the main functions of the new structure, the committee listed «the representation of the historiography of Western Europe (in the spiritual and not only geographical sense), to correct and balance the existing relations in the International Committee of Historical Science, where African, Asian, Third World, and New Zealand historians have marginalised European historiography and are carrying out a work of grudging claims rather than thoughtful historiography».⁷²² The institute's project recalled the Eurocentrism, the “spirit of Europe” that had characterised the 1983 conference, this time declined in the concern for emerging historiographies that could “unseat the king from his throne”.

Incidentally, it is worth noting that AEH historians' perception was substantially altered. The ICHS activities still primarily involved European and North American scholarship.⁷²³ In 1985, the ICHS encompassed sixteen national committees from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Australia out of forty-seven. At the Stuttgart congress, only 26 contributions of 182 were provided by authors from outside Europe or North America. Although it was a relative improvement compared to the past, the ICHS was tightly hinged on European and North American historians.⁷²⁴ According to Karl Dietrich Erdmann, former ICHS President of the period, this feature corresponded to the fact that critical modern studies in history had their origin in Europe and then spread to other continents.⁷²⁵ Consequently, he has claimed that one must beware of employing the term “Eurocentric” since it refers to historical interests and perspectives rather than the geographical region in whose historical scholarship is rooted.

⁷²¹ Ibid, 5–6.

⁷²² «La rappresentanza della storiografia dell'Europa occidentale (nel senso spirituale e non soltanto geografico) operando così una correzione e un nuovo equilibrio dei rapporti esistenti nel Comité International des Sciences Historiques, dove gli storici africani, asiatici, del Terzo Mondo, della Nuova Zelanda hanno finito con il mettere ai margini la storiografia europea e svolgono un'opera di rancorose rivendicazioni che di meditata storiografia». Ibid, 6.

⁷²³ Karl Dietrich Erdmann, Wolfgang J. Mommsen, and Agnes Blänsdorf, *Toward a Global Community of Historians: The International Historical Congresses and the International Committee of Historical Sciences 1898-2000* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 267–8.

⁷²⁴ In 1960, during the ICHS congress in Stockholm, the contributions from outside Europe and North America were 8 out of 159, and only a few national committees came from other continents. See: Erdmann, Mommsen, Blänsdorf, *Towards*, 267.

⁷²⁵ Ibid, 268.

Erdmann has described this ICHS phase as increasingly ecumenical, with intensified inclusion of non-European cultures and scholars.

Despite Erdmann describing this context as an ongoing process rather than an arrival point, the AEH historians were intensely concerned about the marginalisation prospect of the European continent both politically and historiographically. Saitta clearly expressed that «beyond the Mediterranean, beyond the Atlantic, beyond the Urals, there are “others” who are not Europe, but there are also “others” who are themselves Europe, or rather creatures and children of Europe».⁷²⁶ Notwithstanding, Europe had been forced to the rearguard as the world's ruler in power and ideas since 1848. Europeanism had been born to “agglutinate” rather than subjugate other continents; however, it was relegated to a simple ideology of defence or resigned survival, eventually losing touch with reality. Thus, the AEH historians were primarily committed to retracing the European continent's cultural soul and positive influence on the world.⁷²⁷

The European Historical Institute perfectly fitted into this strategy. The AEH promoting committee provided the Italian government with a detailed project. Consequently, on behalf of Minister Gullotti, the Italian Office for Libraries and Cultural Institutes' Director General Francesco Sisinni proposed the establishment of a European historical institute to the EC Council of Cultural Affairs in anticipation of Italy's six-month EEC presidency from January 1985.⁷²⁸ The document presented to the Council cited the great work of the EP in emphasising the existence of European culture as a result of the individual national cultures.⁷²⁹ The plurality of cultures had developed as part of European history and civilisation evolution in each country and region of Europe. While recognising the excellent quality of research in the field of history carried out by individual national institutes, the Italian government interpreted the solemn declaration of Stuttgart in 1983 as an exhortation towards a more significant knowledge of EEC countries, and more vital information on European history to promote an utterly European consciousness. Subsequently, the Italian presidency of the European Council, «based on this solemn declaration and to enhance the

⁷²⁶ «Al di là del Mediterraneo, al di là dell'Atlantico, al di là degli Urali vi sono degli “altri” che non sono Europa, ma vivono pure degli “altri” che sono essi stessi Europa, o per meglio dire creature e figli dell'Europa». Armando Saitta, ‘Europe and the others’, in *L'Europa*, ed. Italian Historical Institute, 404–5. It is worth remembering that, a few years earlier, Saitta stated that the Italian extreme left made a rush forward, refusing an EC Europe for a wider Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals. Cf. note 564.

⁷²⁷ Notes on the European Historical Institute, 14 Apr. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians, 7.

⁷²⁸ 968ème session du Conseil (affaires culturelles), Bruxelles, 22 Nov. 1984, HAEU, CM2/1984-00070/001.

⁷²⁹ Communications de la Présidence au Conseil et aux Ministres responsables des affaires culturelles réunis au sein du Conseil - Objet: Institut européen d'histoire, 5 June 1985, HAEU, CM2/1985-00029/001, 1.

knowledge of the various facets of the civilisation components in the EEC countries, proposes the creation of a European Historical Institute».⁷³⁰

The Italian government attempted to include the Institute project in the community's information policy debate. From its origins in the 1950s, the EC forged its information policy around two objectives: firstly, to inform EC citizens of the action taken by the supranational institutions; secondly, to contribute to “making Europeans”, i.e. to foster the establishment of a shared consciousness and the sense of belonging to a common destiny.⁷³¹ The European Commission frequently supported a “European public spirit” according to the “founding fathers” rather than a simple dissemination of its day-to-day activities.⁷³² In the same vein, the European Parliament conceived information policy as an effective instrument to strengthen the integration process.⁷³³ In the mid-1980s, along with the Single European Act (SEA) debate, the EC institutions strengthened their commitment to information. Indeed, the significant role that the EEC would play as a consequence of the Single Market establishment required a greater understanding of its structure and pro-European ideals.⁷³⁴ Concerning university cooperation, this objective would lead to the Jean Monnet Action for the establishment of European Chairs in teaching.⁷³⁵ Even in this case, the most controversial points regarded the definition of the respective competence spheres between EC institutions and national governments.

Notwithstanding, the Italian government's attempt to create the European Historical Institute fell on deaf ears. The Council of Ministers of Culture sent the proposal to the “Comité des Représentants Permanents” (COREPER) for discussion.⁷³⁶ Notwithstanding, the European Historical Institute was never put on the agenda of the subsequent COREPER meetings. Oddly, there is no trace of the project either in institutional sources or private letters. Although the archival sources do not reveal official reasons for the Institute's failure, we could formulate at least three hypotheses.

⁷³⁰ «Sur la base de cette déclaration solennelle et pour faire mieux connaître les diverses facettes des composantes de civilisation des pays de la Communauté, il paraît utile de proposer la création d'un Institut européen d'histoire». Ibid, 2.

⁷³¹ Daniele Pasquinucci, 'In/formare gli Europei : le origini della politica di informazione comunitaria (1951-1972)', *Memoria e ricerca : rivista di storia contemporanea*, no. 30 (2009), 1.

⁷³² Michel Dumoulin, *The European Commission 1958-72. History and Memories of an Institution*. (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2007), 530.

⁷³³ Interview with Rabier, Jacques-René, 8 Jan. 2004, HAEU, INT716.

⁷³⁴ Hugues Dumont, 'Les compétences culturelles de la Communauté européenne. Bilan critique et perspectives', *Revue interdisciplinaire d'études juridiques* 29, no. 2 (1992): 1–47: 15.

⁷³⁵ Emanuele Torquati, 'L'azione Jean Monnet, Unicum Nelle Iniziative Della Commissione Europea per l'università.', in *Sfide Del Mercato e Identità Europea. Le Politiche Di Educazione e Formazione Professionale Nell'Europa Comunitaria.*, Antonio Varsori, eds. (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2006), 111–16.

⁷³⁶ 1008ème session du Conseil et des ministres responsables des affaires culturelles, Bruxelles, 28.05.1985, HAEU, CM2/1985-00029/001, 12.

Firstly, the proposal might have caused jealousy in other existing entities. The primary reference is the LCEH, officially established by the European Commission. The vehement reaction of some Liaison Committee members concerning the 1983 conference has been already described above.⁷³⁷ Similarly, the AEH promotion committee harshly judged the exclusive relationship that the LCEH had established with the EC. They objected to «the monopoly they seek to exercise over particular archives and institutions connected with political reality [...] through President Alan Milward and Secretary General Poidevin, it has knotted close relations with some EC commissions, preventing other scholars from accessing the archives and contesting any other initiative».⁷³⁸ Further, the LCEH was defined as «lacking in representativeness (for Italy, Prof. Enrico Serra, historical advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is a member); but thanks to the nod of the former President Thorn, it is now established and does as it pleases».⁷³⁹ Thus, it is not difficult to imagine that the European Historical Institute project, coming from a single government and elaborated by a specific network of historians, moreover without any notable political support, would have met with the hostility of the LCEH.

Secondly, the EC already had a European University Institute, which was located in Italy and strongly supported by the Italian government. The various Italian executives that succeeded in almost two decades of debate prior to the EUI establishment have decisively contributed to its structure and location. In turn, Italy confronted some countries, especially Belgium and the Netherlands, historically reluctant to centralise cultural and education policies.⁷⁴⁰ The Belgians feared the competition of the new university with the College of Bruges, which was seeking to extend its curriculum to a doctorate. The Dutch were hesitant due to the considerable expense of creating a general university for 3.000 students; further, they feared that EUI would extend the divide between the EC and the third countries. Notwithstanding, the EUI was established in Florence in 1976. The President of the Italian Republic, Giovanni Leone, emphasised the importance of the missions assigned to the new institution.⁷⁴¹ As a university Institute, it was a high-level teaching and research centre; as a European Institute,

⁷³⁷ Cf. note 496.

⁷³⁸ «Il monopolio che cercano di esercitare su archivi particolari e istituzioni connesse con la realtà politica [...] attraverso il Presidente Alan Milward e il segretario generale Poidevin, ha annodato stretti rapporti con qualche commissione della CEE, impedendo l'accesso agli archivi ad altri studiosi e contestando qualunque altra iniziativa». Notes on the European Historical Institute, 14 Apr. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians, 5.

⁷³⁹ «Privo di rappresentatività (per l'Italia ne fa parte il prof. Enrico Serra, consigliere storico del Ministero degli Esteri); ma grazie all'annuenza dell'allora Presidente Thorn si è costituito e fa ormai il bello e il cattivo tempo». Ibid.

⁷⁴⁰ Palayret, 'Des négociations', 349.

⁷⁴¹ Cf. note 223.

it should distinguish itself from national universities and contribute to the influence of Europe's cultural heritage.⁷⁴² These aims were very similar to those imagined for the European Historical Institute. Although it was not a university institute by the promoters' own admission, the risk of creating duplicates was far from remote. Especially considering that, just in 1984, the EUI opened the doors of the EC archives to the public.⁷⁴³

Incidentally, it is worth noting that the European Foundation project, under discussion in the EC at the time, also had many similar features to the eventual European Historical Institute. At the end of 1985, the Promoting Committee of the European Foundation, chaired by the French politician Jean-Daniel Jurgensen, presented its programme of operation to the Council of Ministers of Cultural Affairs. The main functions of the Foundation, which was explicitly designed to act in the cultural field, included travelling exhibitions on the origins of European civilisation, thematic courses on European cultural heritage, and teaching history from a European perspective.⁷⁴⁴

Finally, the Italian government's position in the EEC was under surveillance because of the Single European Act debate. The SEA came after the early-1980s apogee of Europessimism. Disputes over agricultural policy, the accession of Spain and Portugal, and budgetary reform festered. In this context, there was a proliferation of ideas to split the EC into subgroups such as "Europe a deux vitesses," "a two-tier Community," and "abgestufte Integration". The divergent economic policies weakened the collaborative axis between France and Germany within the EC. However, the situation changed with France's appointment to the EC presidency in January 1984 and the active involvement of Mitterrand. As a result, France and Germany supported a proposal to re-energise the EC during the Luxembourg summit in March 1985, based primarily on the Dooge Report. This initiative aimed to limit the Luxembourg compromise, expand EC competence in foreign affairs, and finalise the internal market.⁷⁴⁵

⁷⁴² Inauguration of the European University Institute held on 15 of November 1976 in Florence, Sept. 1976 to december 1976, HAEU, EUI-1.

⁷⁴³ The official establishment of the archives dates back to 1983, with the enactment of the Regulation on public access to the archives of the EEC and EURATOM. On 17 December 1984, the EC and the EUI concluded an agreement for the centralisation of the archives in Florence. As of January 1986, the archives opened their doors to scholars. On this topic see: Christopher Audland, 'The Historical Archives of the European Union: Their Opening to the Public, Management and Accessibility', *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 28, no. 2 (1 October 2007): 177–92.

⁷⁴⁴ 1057ème session du Conseil (affaires culturelles) des ministres responsables des affaires culturelles et des représentants des gouvernements des États membres de la CECA, réunis au sein du Conseil, Bruxelles, 20.12.1985, HAEU, CM2/1985-00078/001, Annexe 1.

⁷⁴⁵ Andrew Moravcsik, 'Negotiating the Single European Act: National Interests and Conventional Statecraft in the European Community', *International Organization* 45, no. 1 (ed 1991): 19–56: 33.

As the Milan summit drew near in late June 1985, numerous proposals were put forward. In addition to the Dooge Report, which aimed to strengthen the European Community (EC), Jacques Delors proposed extending the EC's responsibilities, doubling funding for research and development, and reforming the monetary system. Meanwhile, the British government, feeling excluded and seeking to divert attention from the treaty amendments, launched a counteroffensive to reaffirm the Luxembourg compromise and a separate treaty that codified principles of informal political cooperation. Italian Foreign Minister Andreotti was concerned that declarations of intention would not be enough to prevent failure during Italy's EC presidency, so he called for a majority vote on convening an intergovernmental conference under Article 236 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Communities. Germany and the Benelux countries strongly supported the initiative and were hesitantly joined by France and Ireland, while Britain, Denmark, and Greece opposed it. The UK raised procedural objections to the majority vote, but these complaints were ultimately dismissed, and the conference was scheduled to take place.⁷⁴⁶ On this basis, the Italian government arguably had a low margin of manoeuvre for a possible forcing on another issue.

The European Historical Institute project was the last convergence attempt between the EC and the AEH promoting committee, albeit with the mediation of the Italian government. After its failure, the committee devoted exclusively to preparing the AEH's first general assembly in August 1985 in Stuttgart on the occasion of the fifteenth International Congress of Historical Sciences.

3.4 The AEH's official establishment and the “East enlargement”

The general and founding assembly of the Association of European Historians took place on 28 August 1985. It was attended by 419 scholars, who also became the first members, geographically distributed as follows:

⁷⁴⁶ Moravcsik, ‘Negotiating’, 40.

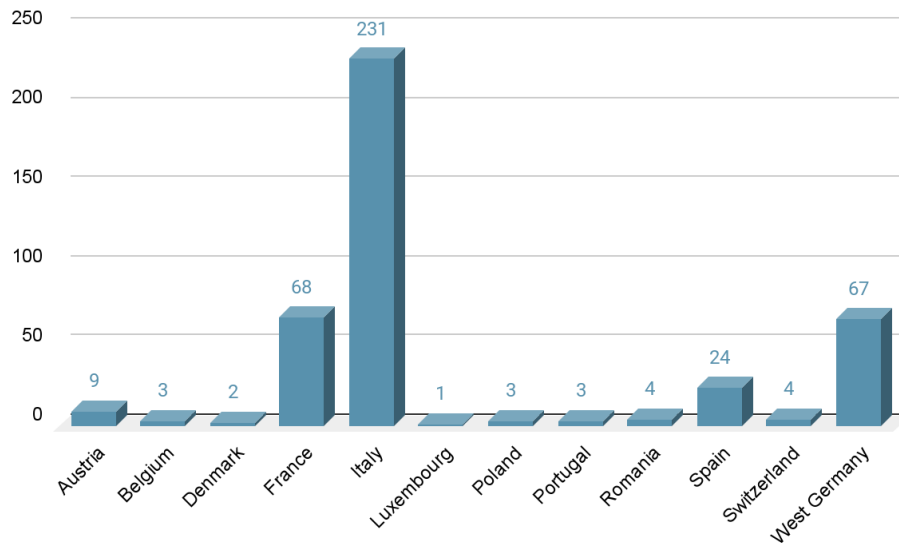


Fig. 1 - Number of AEH members per country in August 1985.

Source: AEH member lists, Aug. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

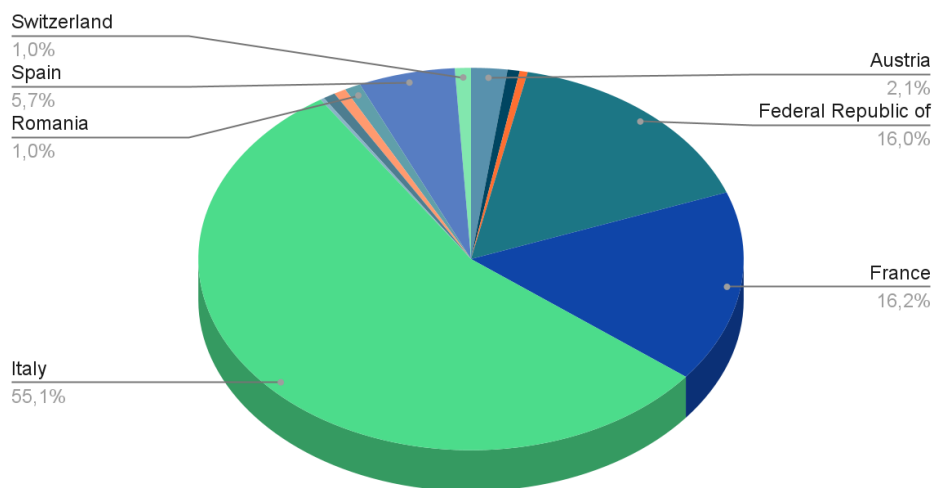


Fig. 2 - Percentage of AEH members per country in 1985.

Source: AEH member lists, Aug. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

A quantitative analysis of the AEH members' geographical origin reveals a prominent majority of Italian and, to a minor extent, French and West German scholars. In a letter to Sellin, Saitta claimed that for those countries, «the work was facilitated by the presence of

specific directories containing all the names of history school teachers».⁷⁴⁷ Arguably, we can presume that the Italian origins of the project and the scientific associations of the Italian members influenced the initial structure. Comparably, a respectable number of members from Spain and Portugal, on the verge of joining the EC, participated due to previous contacts with the promoting committee.

Nevertheless, a striking difference between the AEH and the LCEH emerges:

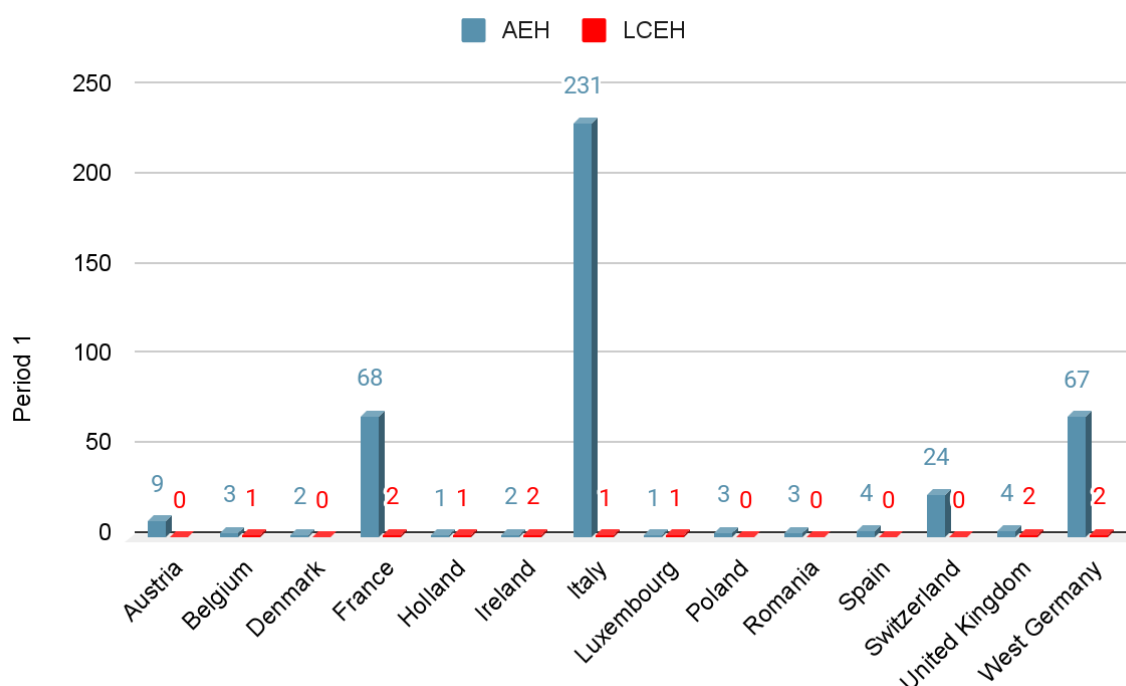


Fig. 3 - Comparison between AEH and LCEH members per country in 1985.

Sources: AEH member lists, Aug. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians; Le Boulay, 'Investir', 110–1.

The number of participants was substantially different. The AEH welcomed «all European scholars of history who teach in universities or private university institutes».⁷⁴⁸ The AEH provided an application to the Executive Board for membership. Furthermore, in the event of rejection, the applicant could appeal to the General Assembly. Thus, the AEH was open to a large number of scholars and even made public appeals to involve new members. In contrast, the LCEH was a narrow body. In 1982, during the conference in Luxembourg conventionally

⁷⁴⁷ «Il lavoro è stato facilitato dalla presenza di repertori specifici contenenti tutti i nomi dei docenti di storia in quei tre paesi». Letter of Armando Saitta to Volker Sellin, 27 Feb. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee.

⁷⁴⁸ Statute of the Association of European Historians, art.3, 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 3, dossier Statute.

depicted as the starting point of the Liaison Committee, it was agreed that only two scholars per EC member or applicant country could attend.⁷⁴⁹ Cooperation with the EC was closely linked to the initiators of the initiative, who reserved the right to co-opt any new members.

A similar noticeable difference between the two historians' networks emerges from analysing the research fields:

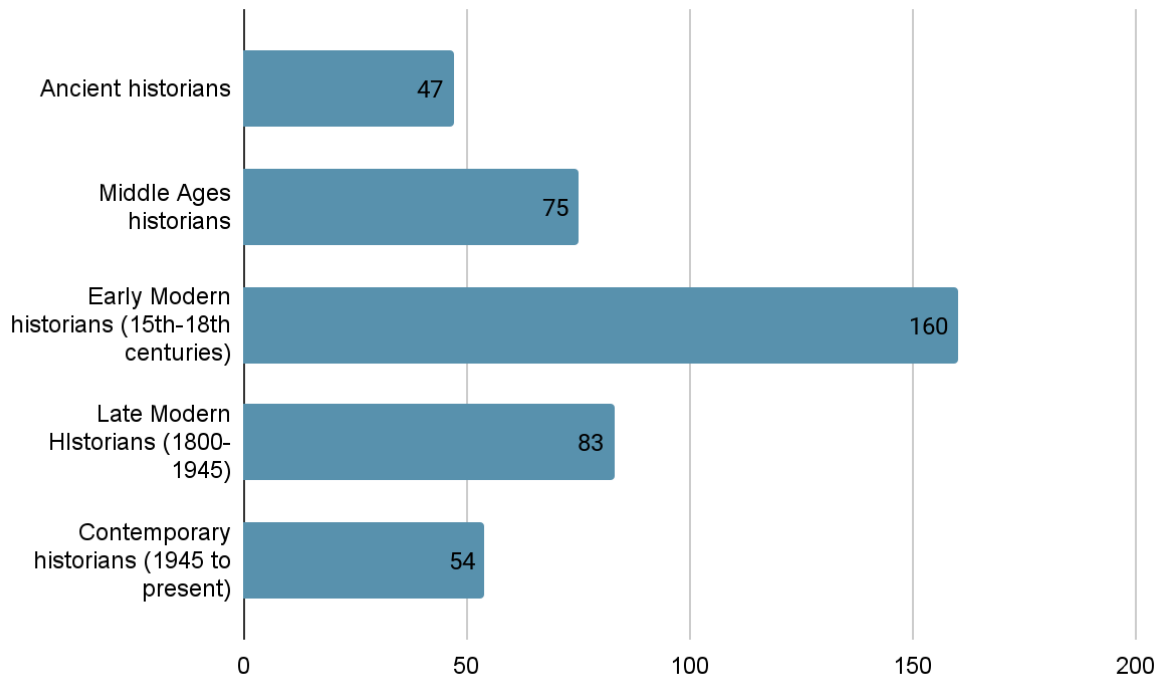


Fig. 4 - Number of AEH members per field of study in 1985.⁷⁵⁰

Source: AEH member lists, Aug. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

Indeed, the AEH included members from all chronological areas of historical research. A significant majority were scholars of early modern history. The promoting committee did not deliberately focus on this field of study. Notwithstanding, we can presume that the significant number of early modern historians among the AEH founders and Saitta's research interests affected the Association's membership. In contrast, the LCEH members were all post-II World War historians. Consistent with this composition was the historical focus of the Delors' Commission. Since the mid-1980s, the EC institutions' main interest has been to strengthen historical studies on European integration, as evidenced by the opening of their archives in 1983. Accordingly, Jacques Delors' EUCO actively supported the LCEH through

⁷⁴⁹ Cf. note 366.

⁷⁵⁰ In line with the structure of this dissertation, the graph follows the periodisation in English-language historiography. Instead, in the sources, the periodisation follows the approach of Italian historiography: ancient history; medieval history; modern history; contemporary history.

the direct involvement of Lastenouse, the Commission's foremost advocate for European integration history studies. The Commission Directorate for University Information established a "historians' corner" in its bulletin and financed the Liaison Committee's meetings, conferences, and publications costs. The LCEH network, mainly consisting of international relations historians, took advantage of its similarity with the EUCO's vision of European integration. As a result, the LCEH obtained privileged access to the EC archives, financial resources, and symbolic credit, while the AEH remained out of the great game.⁷⁵¹ Finally, among the significant differences with the LCEH, the crucial element that emerges from analysing the AEH composition is the presence of members from countries outside the EC. The Association included members from Switzerland and especially from beyond the Iron Curtain, namely Poland and Romania. Although small in numbers, the few participants from these countries denote a radical paradigm shift from the past. This small "revolution" was clearly stated in black and white in the first articles of the AEH statute:

«The Association of European Historians is a cultural, apolitical, and non-profit organisation. It has the whole of Europe as its sphere of action, intending to mirror the spiritual, ideal and cultural heritage that constitutes the identity of the European continent compared to the other continents [...] Possession of citizenship of a European country is a prerequisite for membership of the Association».⁷⁵²

Thus, the field of activity moved from the EC, as in the 1983 congress and the European Historical Institute project, to the whole of Europe. Comprehensibly, the geographical shift represented a turning point: the AEH officially detached from the EC. Four years after the first meeting between Saitta and Pedini, in which they outlined the guidelines for a congress and a group of historians as part of the EP and, more generally, the EC,⁷⁵³ the founding assembly utterly expressed a will of independence from any political body. In the background was the lack of direct contact with the EC and the disappointment caused by the failure of the European Historical Institute. As a result, they attempted to emancipate from negotiation with the EC "entrepreneurs" definitively and to distance cultural and scientific activity from the

⁷⁵¹ Laruffa, 'Historians' Affiliation', 284.

⁷⁵² «L'Associazione degli Storici Europei è un'organizzazione culturale, apolitica, e senza scopo di lucro. Essa ha per proprio raggio d'azione tutta l'Europa, intendendo che sia rispecchiato al suo interno quel patrimonio spirituale, ideale, e culturale che costituisce l'identità del continente europeo nei confronti degli altri continenti [...] Il possesso della cittadinanza di uno dei paesi dell'Europa costituisce un requisito pregiudiziale per l'iscrizione all'Associazione». Statute of the Association of European Historians, art.2, 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 3, dossier Statute.

⁷⁵³ Cf. note 387.

turbulence of politics. To this extent, a substantial difference comes out with the LCEH, which was hinged upon the European Commission from the beginning.

Incidentally, the AEH paradigm seemed more similar to another historians' attempt in the period. In 1985, the Italian Maria Antonietta Macciocchi, former MEP of the Italian Communist Party from 1979 to 1984, organised a meeting titled “the European cultural space” in Madrid. A group of historians from several European countries came together to organise the writing of the history of the whole of Europe. Among the French historians involved, the names of three exponents of the “Annales” school stood out: Fernand Braudel, administrator of the project; Jean-François Revel, a specialist in cultural and religious history in the modern age; and Jacques Le Goff, a scholar of the intellectual and economic history of the Middle Ages. For West Germany, the meeting was attended by Rudolf Von Thadden, professor of medieval and early modern history at the University of Göttingen, and Wolfgang Mommsen, director of the German Historical Institute in London. For Spain, the medievalist historian Miguel Ortola was involved, and for Portugal, the medievalist José Mattoso. Medievalist Girolamo Arnaldi and late modern historian Valerio Castronovo represented Italy. Although not present at the first meeting, the group also planned to include English, Dutch and Belgian historians. Macciocchi was charged with the coordination of the project.⁷⁵⁴

Similar to the AEH, the aim of this group of historians was the transnational writing of a history of Europe that transcended the borders of the EC. However, Le Goff, who took over the leadership of the project after Braudel's death in November 1985, immediately complained about significant funding problems. Despite several attempts to request a meeting with the European Commission, the French historian never received a response. Le Goff found out the reason for the silence from Macciocchi, who revealed to him the Commission's intention to finance another work on European history by the French historian Jean-Baptiste Duroselle and Frédéric Delouche, which would later lead to the publication of the volume “L'Europe. Histoire de ses peuples”.⁷⁵⁵ Following the lack of funding, Le Goff decided to abandon the project.⁷⁵⁶

The failure of the “European” ambitions of this group of scholars specialised in socio-cultural history, mostly medievalists and early modern historians, confirms the Commission's intentions at the time. The EUCO preferred to support the writing of a political and

⁷⁵⁴ Maria-Antonietta Macciocchi, *La Femme à la valise: Voyage intellectuel d'une femme en Europe* (Paris: Grasset, 1988), 31–32.

⁷⁵⁵ Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, *L'Europe : Histoire de ses peuples* (Paris: Hachette Littérature, 1998).

⁷⁵⁶ Le Boulay, *La Fabrique*, 86–92.

“événementielle” history focused on promoting the integration process after the Second World War. The work of Duroselle and Delouche, although tracing the history of Europe through the centuries, favoured political history intending to record all past unification of the continent. In this sense, the European integration process represented the culmination of a long-term process. The project, directed first by Braudel and then by Le Goff, on the other hand, proposed a socio-cultural history of European civilisation that was not limited to the EC countries and prioritised social, cultural, and mental aspects. In other words, they aspired to construct a Europe of peoples and cultures rather than a political entity. The vision of Braudel and Le Goff's group was thus not only a historical perspective but also a vision of Europe and research into it. Like the AEH, such a vision did not match the EUCO's requirements.

Nevertheless, the AEH historians did not abandon the idea of contributing to Europeanness, quite the opposite. They explicitly recalled the “spirit of Europe” as part of the entire continents beyond the EC borders.⁷⁵⁷ The AEH historians argued that Europeans, not only the EC countries' peoples, challenged identity consciousness with harsh difficulties.⁷⁵⁸ The sense of boundary to exclude the “Other” could only establish such consciousness; however, the AEH conceived these borders larger than the EC. It is worth noting that they did not specify the geographical limits of their idea of Europe; they defined the “European continent” generically but never overlapped Europe with the EC. Instead, the AEH members conceived diversity-in-unity as depicting the relations of diverse peoples who are united by a considerable degree of common history and culture.⁷⁵⁹

Ostensibly, the AEH's historiographical paradigm corresponded to Saitta's “new” expectations. After detaching from the EC, he argued that the first thirty years of the integration process had been disappointing because it «failed to evolve from the economic dimension alone».⁷⁶⁰ Saitta was concerned with understanding the present and analysing possible developments in the EC's future rather than merely analysing the past. Therefore, he imagined a viable unitary perspective starting from the assumption of a Europe bounded from the Atlantic to the Urals. To this extent, the task of historians was «to reconstruct with full scientific dignity and a new methodological slant the slow and laborious process of the formation of European civilisation, a process characterised in its development not only by

⁷⁵⁷ Perkins, *Christendom and European Identity*, 187–8. Also cf. note 540.

⁷⁵⁸ Report of the AEH general assembly in Stuttgart, 27 Aug. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier General Assembly - Stuttgart 1985.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁰ «L'integrazione non era riuscita a evolvere dalla sola dimensione economica». Saitta, ‘Inaugural speech’, XV.

numerous convergences but also by differentiations and conflicts».⁷⁶¹ Accordingly, the AEH «does not limit its action to the countries of the European Community alone, as the congress of May 1983 did».⁷⁶²

The AEH was openly opposed to frameworks like the ICHS. Indeed, the reports on the ICHS Congresses of the period highlighted a straightforward negotiating climate. In the opening speech at the Bucharest congress in 1980, the Romanian President Nicolae Ceaușescu asked the historians to place their work in the service of peace.⁷⁶³ The newly elected Polish ICHS President Aleksander Gieysztor appreciated Ceaușescu's appeal and highlighted the political meaning of his words in that historical period.⁷⁶⁴ However, despite the issue of peace being one of the prominent themes of the Congress, the attempt to include this general idea in concrete historical forms produced antagonistic positions, especially concerning imperialism and disarmament.⁷⁶⁵ Consequently, analysing the congress, the East German journal "Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft" reported that «the debates between Marxist and bourgeois historians were generally to the point, the exchange of opinions fruitful [...] but there can be no ideological coexistence».⁷⁶⁶ Similarly, some Soviet journals, such as "Voprosy Istorii" and "Novaja i Novejšaja Istorija", criticised the perspective of a historiographical union.⁷⁶⁷ According to their interpretation, Ceaușescu's speech warned against counter-productive ideological positions. Nevertheless, it did not mean a complete refusal of any link between historical research and politics; somewhat, objectivity and partisanship need not contradict one another.⁷⁶⁸

In this context, it is significant to cite the end-mandate speech of the outgoing ICHS President Erdmann in 1980. He emphasised the necessity of academic cooperation between Western and Soviet historians and listed some requirements for fertile links among the international

⁷⁶¹ «Ricostruire con piena dignità scientifica e con un taglio metodologico nuovo il lento e faticoso processo di formazione della civiltà europea, un processo caratterizzato nel suo svolgimento non solo dalle numerose convergenze ma anche dalle differenziazioni e dai conflitti». Saitta, 'The Association', 322.

⁷⁶² «Essa non limita la propria azione ai paesi soltanto dell'Europa comunitaria, come fece il congresso del maggio 1983». Letter of the promoting committee to the scholars interested, June 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee.

⁷⁶³ Report of the XV International Congress of Historical Sciences in Bucharest from 10 Aug. 1980 to 17 Aug. 1980, Italian Central Committee for Historical Studies (ICCHS), Institutional fund, Section VI International Committee of Historical Sciences, series 1 International Congresses, dossier Bucharest congress 1980.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid. On the Polish Crisis cf. note 636.

⁷⁶⁵ Erdmann, *Towards*, 260.

⁷⁶⁶ «Die Debatten zwischen marxistischen und bürgerlichen Historikern waren im Allgemeinen sachlich, der Meinungsaustausch fruchtbar [...], aber es kann keine ideologische Koexistenz geben». Georg Becker, 'Der XV Internationale Historikerkongreß in Bukarest', *Zeitschrift Für Geschichtswissenschaft*, no. 29 (1981): 507–37.

⁷⁶⁷ Lucas Tikhvinsky and Anatoly Tishkov, 'XV Mezhdunarodnyi Kongress Istoričeskich Nauk', *Voprosy Istorii* 55, no. 12 (1980): 15–32; Igor Grigulevich, Anatoly Chubaryan, and Zelina Udalcova, 'Igor Grigulevich, Zelina Udalcova, Anatoly Chubaryan', *Novaja i Novejšaja Istorija* 25, no. 4 (1981): 3–23.

⁷⁶⁸ Tikhvinsky, Tishkov, 'XV Mezhdunarodnyi Kongress', 25.

community of historians. He argued that teleological discussions concerning the sense of history and the controversial views on the laws that rule the historical process were pointless. Instead, he proposed accepting the regulative idea of objectivity and the essential multicausality of historical processes. This postulate was valid even without any agreement concerning the fundamental values of historians. Invoking Max Weber's methodological principles, Erdmann stressed the possibility of rational discussions of empirical facts and different historical interpretations.⁷⁶⁹ In agreement, some scholars have pointed out how, although with different points of view, within the ICHS the governing bodies frequently promoted activities that enabled bridges to be maintained between scholars of the two blocs.⁷⁷⁰

Incidentally, it is worth noting that some cooperation projects between the historians of the two blocs were already ongoing in previous decades. For example, since the end of the Second World War, Geneva has been the centre of multiple initiatives to overcome the political and ideological closures emerging on the continent. These initiatives took both more informal contours and more institutional characteristics. Claus Hassig has extensively analysed two of these institutions that, in the immediate post-World War II period, tried to maintain a united European horizon: the “Rencontres international de Genève”, founded in the summer of 1945, and the “Centre européen de la culture”, established between May 1948 and October 1950. The two organisations worked to safeguard contacts between intellectuals and scholars between the two blocs and to save the “European spirit”.⁷⁷¹

During one of the above-mentioned “Rencontres”, in September 1946, the Italian federalist Umberto Campagnolo proposed European solidarity between intellectuals based on the unity of culture.⁷⁷² The idea stemmed from his experience as an exile in Switzerland during the fascist regime in Italy. Like Saitta, Campagnolo had lived through the horrors of war and considered the European perspective as the only possible path to peace between peoples. On this basis, he founded the “Société européenne de culture” in Venice in 1950. During the 1950s, this organisation contributed to the dialogue between communist intellectuals of the

⁷⁶⁹ Report of the XV International Congress of Historical Sciences in Bucharest from 10 Aug. 1980 to 17 Aug. 1980, Italian Central Committee for Historical Studies (ICCHS), Institutional fund, Section VI International Committee of Historical Sciences, series 1 International Congresses, dossier Bucharest congress 1980.

⁷⁷⁰ Agnes Blänsdorf, ‘Zusammenarbeit Zwischen Historikern Im Geteilten Europa: Das Comité International Des Sciences Historiques Und Die Internationalen Historikerkongresse, 1945-1990’, in *Une Europe Malgré Tout, 1945-1990*, ed. Antoine Fleury and Lubor Jílek (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2009), 183–204.

⁷⁷¹ Claus Hassig, ‘Deux Protagonistes Genevois Face à l’Éclatement de l’Europe: Les Rencontres Internationales de Genève et Le Centre Européen de La Culture’, in *Une Europe Malgré Tout, 1945-1990*, ed. Antoine Fleury and Lubor Jílek (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2009), 105–24.

⁷⁷² On the figure of Umberto Campagnolo, see: Lorella Cedroni and Pietro Polito, eds., *Saggi su Umberto Campagnolo* (Rome: Aracne Editore, 2006).

two blocs through an appeal for unity to intellectuals in 1951 and an East-West dialogue meeting held in Venice in 1956. While the Hungarian crisis increasingly distanced the Western Communist parties from the USSR, the “Société” attempted a structured dialogue between the two blocs.⁷⁷³

After the Second World War, however, one could even observe organisations that promoted “confrontation” rather than dialogue between the two factions. Incidentally, the SEC strongly criticised another group of the period that supported dialogue between anti-communist intellectuals, the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF). In June 1950, while the Korean War was being fought, the US committed to establishing this body, which was also highly symbolic because of its location in Berlin. The CCF had a clear anti-Soviet and anti-Communist intent to defend a united Europe. Only from the 1960s onwards the “Congress” began to strive for negotiations with the Soviet bloc and a more open relationship with communist intellectuals.⁷⁷⁴

A similar methodology, but with a different purpose, was used by the “Foundation for European intellectual self-help”. The foundation, established in 1966 in Geneva and dissolved in 1991 in Krakow, offered support to dissident intellectuals mainly from Poland, Hungary and Romania. It offered political and scientific support, sent books and journals, and above all, provided more than two thousand scholarships for study trips to Western Europe. The main objective of the Foundation, in the name of common European culture, was to provide support to scholars who wished to develop independent scientific research. In fact, therefore, dialogue only took place between a certain type of intellectuals: as a result, the Foundation and the recipients of its aid became an informal network of opposition to the Soviet Union.⁷⁷⁵

The contacts and ideological tension between blocs also influenced already existing organisations. This was the case with PEN International, a worldwide writers' association based in London. Founded in 1922 by English writers Catharine A. Dawson Scott and John

⁷⁷³ Sylvie Guinnard, ‘La Société Européenne de Culture et Le Dialogue Est-Ouest Jusq’en 1956’, in *Une Europe Malgré Tout, 1945-1990*, ed. Antoine Fleury and Lubor Jílek (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2009), 125–38. In November 2021, the Historical Archives of the European Union at the EUI in Florence presented a new SEC fund. As of February 2023, however, the entire fund is still classified and not available for consultation. See: SEC, 1950–, HAEU.

⁷⁷⁴ Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Political Economy of American Hegemony 1945-1955* (London: Routledge, 2003). On the links between the CCF and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), see: Sarah Miller Harris, *The CIA and the Congress for Cultural Freedom in the Early Cold War: The Limits of Making Common Cause* (London: Routledge, 2016).

⁷⁷⁵ Lubor Jílek, ‘La Fondation Pour Une Entraide Intellectuelle Européenne et Le Soutien Aux Antécédents de Solidarité’, in *Une Europe Malgré Tout, 1945-1990*, ed. Antoine Fleury and Lubor Jílek (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2009), 167–82.

Galsworthy, PEN aimed to develop collaboration between writers from different countries. During the Cold War, this traditionally apolitical association came under international tension. Among many examples, we can mention the exclusion of East German delegates from the Executive Committee meeting in London in 1963. NATO had in fact decided to deny visas to these members in retaliation for the Berlin crisis of 1961. Again, the USSR, having no PEN seat of its own, lobbied after the fall of Stalin, unsuccessfully, to join the Association via Hungary, Bulgaria and East Germany. Again, the ideological battle did not spare international congresses, places par excellence for debate between intellectuals of different backgrounds.⁷⁷⁶

In contrast, Maxine Berg has outlined an association that successfully coped with the Cold War tensions. During the late 1950s, the International Economic History Association was created with the intention of connecting economic historians from both Western and Eastern Europe. This association hosted a series of congresses from 1960 onward, which brought together scholars from Europe, the Soviet Union, North America, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and "Third World" countries. Founders Fernand Braudel and Michael M. Postan committed to promoting collaboration among economic historians from both sides of the blocs while economic history was gaining prominence in historical studies. Despite several diplomatic crises, the association successfully maintained academic exchanges across the Iron Curtain. According to Berg, the International Economic History Association's story is not merely another tale of Cold War literary and cultural organizations, but rather a history of academic culture during the later period of détente.⁷⁷⁷

In a smaller scale, proposals for practical co-operation came from West Germany. In 1972, after several intellectual exchanges since 1938, a joint German-Polish Textbook Commission was established.⁷⁷⁸ Its task was to critically discuss the presentation of German-Polish topics in the textbooks of Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany and to formulate joint recommendations on the schoolbooks of history and geography. This collaboration was included in a phase of "détente" between the two states closely linked to the so-called "Ostpolitik" (Eastern Policy) promoted by the Social Democratic Party (SPD) since the end

⁷⁷⁶ Sven Hanuschek, *Geschichte des bundesdeutschen PEN-Zentrums von 1951 bis 1990* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013).

⁷⁷⁷ Berg, 'East-West Dialogues', 37. See also: Jessica Gienow-Hecht, 'Culture and the Cold War in Europe', in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War: Volume 1: Origins*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 398–419, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521837194.020>.

⁷⁷⁸ Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, 'Der Entstehungsprozess Der Gemeinsamen Deutsch-Polnischen Schulbuchkommission 1937/38 - 1972', *Archiv Für Sozialgeschichte* 45, no. 1 (2005): 237–52.

of the 1960s. Chancellor Willy Brandt's genuflection in front of the Warsaw Ghetto in December 1970 symbolised this relation shift.⁷⁷⁹

Moreover, Saitta himself took part in contacts between Italian and Soviet historians long before the 1980s. In November 1955, as director of the Italian Marxist journal *Movimento Operaio*, he attended the conference of the Italian Association for Cultural Relations with the Soviet Union.⁷⁸⁰ A few months earlier, several Soviet historians participated in the tenth ICHS congress in Rome following a long absence. The conference was attended by a qualified and active delegation, as witnessed by the resonance of the keynote lecture by Arkadij L. Sidorov, director of the Historical Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences.⁷⁸¹ In Rome, a new phase of cultural cooperation and scientific coexistence emerged. In his inaugural speech, the ICHS President Robert Fawtier urged for a forthcoming "peaceful" use of history.⁷⁸² One of the "architects" of the eastward opening was the Italian historian Federico Chabod, elected President of the ICHS at the congress in Rome. However, after the Hungarian crisis in 1956, he was forced to reconsider scientific collaboration with the Soviets and contested the decision to convene the International Bureau in Moscow at the official invitation of the Communist authorities.⁷⁸³

In the context of problematic relations between Italian and Soviet historians after 1956 due to political circumstances, the lively debates between Franco Venturi and Nikolaj M. Družinin within the journals "Rivista Storica Italiana" and "Istorija SSSR" deserve mention. The main discussions between the two scholars concerned the links between the struggle for political freedom and the struggle for economic welfare in Russian history.⁷⁸⁴ This debate implied several other issues: the priority of facts or theories, worldview, and methodologies; the psychology of Russian revolutionaries; the specificity of absolutism and Russian statehood. Incidentally, very few Italian scholars were sensitive to the hardships that post-Stalinist

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid, 2.

⁷⁸⁰ Letter of Antonio Banfi to Armando Saitta, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XVII, dossier Italia-URSS. Associazione Italiana per i rapporti culturali con L'Unione Sovietica.

⁷⁸¹ Salvatore Francesco Romano, 'Storiografia Sovietica', *Il Contemporaneo* II, no. 35 (1955): 4–20.

⁷⁸² Opening speech by ICHS President Robert Fawtier, ICCHS, Institutional fund, Section VI International Committee of Historical Sciences, series 1 International Congresses, dossier Rome congress 1955.

⁷⁸³ Brunello Vigezzi, *Federico Chabod e la 'nuova storiografia' italiana dal primo al Secondo Dopoguerra, 1919-1950* (Milan: Jaca Book, 1984), 547–50. It was the dawn of several debates concerning the role of history and politics that frequently involved the USSR. In those years, the most reknown Italian historian with critical approach to the rough identification between scientific activity and cognitive activity combined with politics was probably Delio Cantimori. Incidentally, Cantimori published a famous letter addressed to Saitta on *Movimento Operaio* in 1956 on the topic. See: Gastone Manacorda, 'Lo storico e la politica. Delio Cantimori e il partito comunista', in *Storia e storiografia, studi su Delio Cantimori*, ed. Bruno Bandini (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1979); Delio Cantimori, 'Lettera al Direttore Armando Saitta', *Movimento Operaio* VII, no. 1–3 (1956): 320–35.

⁷⁸⁴ Viktor Pugacëv, 'La Polemica Di Franco Venturi Con Nikolaj Michajlovič Družinin (1962-64) e La Storiografia Sovietica', *Rivista Storica Italiana* CVIII, no. 2–3 (1996): 771–88.

Soviet historiography was experiencing. Only Vittorio Strada, in some essays in the early 1960s, analysed the tendencies and limits of the “new course” undertaken by Russian researchers and highlighted the dramas of Soviet revisionism and its neo-Stalinist fallout.⁷⁸⁵

In the 1980s, the political context was slightly different. The AEH members challenged the «ecumenical community of historians» evoked by the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Richard Van Weizsäcker, in the opening speech at the ICHS congress in Stuttgart in 1985.⁷⁸⁶ Indeed, the desire to overcome the political blocks clashed with real difficulties. In a letter sent to scholars interested in the AEH project ahead of the General Assembly in Stuttgart, the promoting committee stressed «the difference in possibilities between the various countries that are still part of the one Europe».⁷⁸⁷ Consequently, in the first phase, they urged «to voluntarily limit the action to that part of our continent in which the establishment of a historians’ association is a matter of pure and simple scientific organisation, without any need for specific and particular governmental authorisation».⁷⁸⁸

The promoting committee's statement referred to challenging obstacles. The first concerned the political control of historians. In an article published on the Italian journal “Studi Storici”, the Czechoslovak historian Miloš Hájek described his country's historiography as divided into three areas: «next to the official historiography we have another unofficial one and a third “of emigrants”».⁷⁸⁹ Hájek emphasised that the existence of a three-sided division witnessed to the significant “normalisation” of historical research in his country. As a result, after 1969, more than 300 Czechoslovak historians, including Hájek, mostly communists expelled from the party, were excluded from research or teaching activities. Since the AEH attempted to involve scholars outside the communist orbit,⁷⁹⁰ we can assume that it would be nothing but simple overcoming the scientific barriers imposed by the Soviet bloc governments.

⁷⁸⁵ Vittorio Strada, ‘Tendenze e Limiti Della Storiografia Sovietica Nel Momento Attuale’, *Rivista Storica Del Socialismo*, VI, no. 18 (1963): 209–14. On the topic see also: Roger D. Markwick, *Rewriting History in Soviet Russia: The Politics of Revisionist Historiography, 1956-1974* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

⁷⁸⁶ Report of the XV International Congress of Historical Sciences in Stuttgart from 25 Aug. 1985 to 1 Sept. 1985, ICCHS, Institutional fund, Section VI International Committee of Historical Sciences, series 1 International Congresses, dossier Stuttgart congress 1985.

⁷⁸⁷ «Il dislivello di possibilità esistenti tra i vari paesi che son pur sempre parti dell'unica Europa». Letter of the promoting committee to the scholars interested, June 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee.

⁷⁸⁸ «Limitare volontariamente l'azione da svolgere a quella parte del nostro continente, nella quale la costituzione di una associazione di storici è un fatto di pura e semplice organizzazione scientifica, senza alcun bisogno di specifiche e particolari autorizzazioni governative». Ibid.

⁷⁸⁹ «Accanto alla storiografia ufficiale ne abbiamo un'altra non ufficiale e una terza “di emigrati”». Miloš Hájek, ‘Gli Studi Storici in Cecoslovacchia Oggi’, *Studi Storici* 22, no. 3 (1981): 507–14: 508.

⁷⁹⁰ Cf. notes 630–631.

The second hurdle concerned the payment of the fee required for AEH membership. Senkowska-Gluck presented the issue in a letter to the promoting committee in 1985.⁷⁹¹ For her own country, the Polish historian illustrated a scenario similar to Hájek's description. She stated: «I don't see any chance of recruiting many of the members of the Association you have found among Polish historians [...] The general feeling is despondency and discouragement because the Minister of Higher Education has recently dismissed several professors and researchers».⁷⁹² Despite she was «fully aware of the advantages of the participation of Polish historians in the Association, the decision on this matter depends on the Secretariat of the Section of Humanities of the Polish Academy. And there, unfortunately, there is no one to whom we could talk and find understanding».⁷⁹³ Finally, Senkowska-Gluck highlighted that, according to this assumption, «banking institutions refuse payments outside the Soviet bloc and make even formal registration impossible».⁷⁹⁴

These difficulties were added to a more general mistrust of AEH historians for scholars beyond the Iron Curtain. Before the general assembly in Stuttgart, a sharp debate emerged on the “East enlargement”. On the one hand, Conze and Sakallierou stated that an all-embracing approach to European history required the participation of Eastern Europe scholars. On the other hand, Sellin argued that an AEH expansion beyond the Soviet bloc was premature and short-sighted due to the political issues of the period. After a lively debate, the General Assembly unanimously approved the proposal of enlarging the AEH in Eastern Europe but seeking memberships uniquely from individual scholars. Seemingly, the proposal surfaced as a mediation among the different stances by avoiding the involvement of official institutions and communist scholars.⁷⁹⁵

AEH's goals were bolstered by transformations in Soviet leadership. In the early 1980s, the Soviet Union mismanaged perceptions in Western Europe regarding the Soviet threat posed by the deployment of new American and Soviet missiles.⁷⁹⁶ However, when Mikhail

⁷⁹¹ Letter of Monika Senkowska-Gluck to Armando Saitta, 17 Mar. 1985, ASNS, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXXIII, dossier Senkowska-Gluck 1976-1990.

⁷⁹² «Je ne vois pas des chances de recruter beaucoup des adhérents à l'Associations que vous avez fondée parmi les historiens polonais [...] Le sentiment général est celui d'abattement et de découragement parce que le ministre de l'enseignement supérieur a récemment destitué plusieurs professeurs et chercheurs». Ibid.

⁷⁹³ «Je me rends parfaitement compte des avantages qu'aurait la participation des historiens polonais à l'Association, la décision en cette matière dépend du Secrétariat de la Section des Sciences Humaines de l'Académie Polonaise. Et là, malheureusement, il n'y a personne à qui on pourrait parler et trouver de compréhension». Ibid.

⁷⁹⁴ «Les institutions bancaires refusent les paiements en dehors du bloc soviétique et rendent impossible tout enregistrement officiel». Ibid.

⁷⁹⁵ Laruffa, 'Historians' Affiliation', 284–5.

⁷⁹⁶ Jonathan Haslam, 'Soviets Take Fresh Look at Western Europe', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 44, no. 4 (1 May 1988): 38–42.

Gorbachev became the General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1985, a new approach emerged. He argued that Europe was crucial to the Soviet Union.⁷⁹⁷ The literature has discussed Gorbachev's strategy, concluding that, in the early stages, he planned to moderate the superpowers' relationship through the European transatlantic channel.⁷⁹⁸ His vision was based on the "Common European Home" concept, which aimed to establish an unambiguous unity between different social systems and opposing military and political blocs.⁷⁹⁹ This concept aligned with the 1975 Helsinki Final Act's principles and included objectives such as disarmament, peaceful conflict resolution, pan-European economic cooperation, and creating a "community of destiny" among European states.⁸⁰⁰ In light of these developments, negotiations between the European Community (EC) and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) began. On 25 June 1988, the EC and CMEA signed a joint declaration to establish official relations,⁸⁰¹ leading to the negotiation and conclusion of cooperation agreements between the Communities and several Eastern European countries by 1990.⁸⁰²

Within this re-Europeanisation, socialist internationalism reverted to the geographies of the nineteenth century. The socialist world around 1980 encompassed roughly one-third of the world's population across four continents, and the socialist states played active roles in the global conflicts and developments of the twentieth century.⁸⁰³ However, in many countries of Eastern Europe, the global geography of socialist cultures in the 1950s and 1960s began to shrivel in the context of the Helsinki Process, and the reorientation toward Europe and the West became slowly institutionalised.⁸⁰⁴ Some scholars have depicted this process as a

⁷⁹⁷ Neil Malcolm, 'The "Common European Home" and Soviet European Policy', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 65, no. 4 (1989): 659–76: 663.

⁷⁹⁸ Karen Dawisha, *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev, and Reform: The Great Challenge* (CUP Archive, 1990); Pierre Hassner, 'Gorbachev and the West', in *Contemporary Issues In Soviet Foreign Policy*, ed. Frederic Fleron, Erik Hoffmann, and Robbin Laird (London: Routledge, 1991). Some studies further conceived that Soviet Europeanism as anti-Americanism: Anatoly Vtorov and Yuri Karelov, 'The Dynamic European Policy of the USSR', *International Affairs* 62, no. 6 (1986): 101–18: 105.

⁷⁹⁹ Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika: New Thinking for Our Country and the World* (London: Collins, 1987), 208–9.

⁸⁰⁰ Marie-Pierre Rey, 'L'URSS et l'Europe Communautaire: Les Enjeux Identitaires, 1957-1991', *Transitions* XLVI, no. 2 (2006): 135–52. On the Helsinki Final Act and the EC-Eastern Europe relations see also: Angela Romano, *From Détente in Europe to European Détente: How the West Shaped the Helsinki CSCE* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009); Angela Romano, *The European Community and Eastern Europe in the Long 1970s: Challenging the Cold War Order in Europe* (London: Routledge, 2022).

⁸⁰¹ Cooperation with Soviet Union, 13 June 1988, HAEU, ESA-12792.

⁸⁰² Karen E. Smith, *The Making of EU Foreign Policy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 54–5. By 1990, the Communities negotiated and concluded cooperation agreements with Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic, and Romania.

⁸⁰³ Raymond L. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1985), 33–4.

⁸⁰⁴ James Mark, Artemy M. Kalinovsky, and Steffi Marung, eds., *Alternative Globalizations: Eastern Europe and the Postcolonial World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020), 20.

prelude to the peripheralisation of the region in the context of European Union enlargement.⁸⁰⁵ In the early 1980s, the Soviet philosopher Yuriy Novopashin, countering the orthodox view, argued that contradictions in the socialist camp could become antagonistic.⁸⁰⁶ Despite the shift in the Soviet Union coming later, Gorbachev translated this reflection into his political doctrine. The new Communist Party of the Soviet Union program discussed during the Twenty-Seventh Party Congress in 1985 coldly spoke of “sympathies” for the aspirations of postcolonial countries and called for socialist-oriented states to develop their economies through their own efforts.⁸⁰⁷ As a result, one could observe a progressive decline in USSR’s development aid for the Global South countries, particularly Africa. Gorbachev’s foreign policy urged to reconsider military support and asserted the need to reduce “ideological fervour” in relations with Asia and Africa. His new thinking derived from a broader disillusionment in the Soviet partnership with the Global South and the challenges posed by the internal crisis.⁸⁰⁸ Plainly, this shift towards the “Common European Home” decidedly fitted the AEH perspective.

However, noticeable resistance towards Eastern Europe still affected AEH’s framework. The mediation for individual scholars’ adhesion did not appease the dissenters, who complained of a premature blend with Soviet historiography.⁸⁰⁹ The AEH promoting committee proposed Senkowska-Gluck as a provisional board member to defuse the tension. However, the Polish scholar was excluded from the Executive Board in the elections at the Stuttgart assembly. The new Executive Board only consisted of men belonging to the «small European boundaries».⁸¹⁰ Additionally, the formal participation of Soviet bloc historians in the AEH’s activities became hardly feasible because of foreseeable banking hurdles.⁸¹¹ To facilitate their involvement, the Executive Board accepted inscriptions without fee in case of inability:⁸¹² the

⁸⁰⁵ József Böröcz and Melinda Kovács, *Empire’s New Clothes: Unveiling EU Enlargement* (Telford: Central European Review, 2001).

⁸⁰⁶ Iuriy Novopashin, ‘Vozdeistvie Real’nogo Sotsializma Na Mirovoi Revoliutsionnyi Protesess: Metodologicheskie Aspekty’, *Voprosy Filosofii* 36, no. 8 (1982): 3–16.

⁸⁰⁷ Francis Fukuyama, ‘Gorbachev and the Third World’, *Foreign Affairs* 64, no. 4 (1986): 715–31; 716.

⁸⁰⁸ Melvin Allan Goodman, *Gorbachev’s Retreat: The Third World* (Westport: Praeger, 1991), 158–9.

⁸⁰⁹ Letter of Volker Sellin to Armando Saitta, 26 Mar. 1984, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

⁸¹⁰ «Confini piccolo-europei». Report of the AEH general assembly in Stuttgart, 27 Aug. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier General Assembly - Stuttgart 1985. The elected members of the Executive Board were: Helmut Koenigsberger (West Germany), Heinrich Lutz (Austria), Jacques Godechot (France), Hartmut Galsterer (West Germany), Bruno Paradisi (Italy), Cinzio Violante (Italy), Alessandro Galante Garrone (Italy), Pierre Villard (France), Franco Sartori (Italy), Francesco Barone (Italy).

⁸¹¹ Letter of Monika Senkowska-Gluck to Armando Saitta, 17 Jan. 1986, ASNS, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXXIII, dossier Senkowska-Gluck 1976-1990.

⁸¹² AEH’s Executive Board meeting report, 10 Oct. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

sole criterion was “European citizenship”, which automatically excluded scholars from other continents, confirming the eurocentric stand of the Association.⁸¹³

Nonetheless, the Stuttgart assembly started a growing openness towards the Soviet bloc. The newly elected AEH President Saitta and the Executive Board agreed on the «involvement of scholars from the various Eastern European countries and recommend the members of the Association engage every possible contact to smooth out any political distrust»,⁸¹⁴ always bearing in mind that «the Association does not seek institutional agreements subject to political control but rather memberships of individual scholars».⁸¹⁵ In Stuttgart, Saitta met several delegations of Polish historians and the vice-President of the National Commission of Soviet Historians, Alexander O. Chubarian. Simultaneously, Lutz and Sartori involved some Hungarian historians who, in their opinion, experienced fair research freedom. In the same vein, Koenigsberger suggested deepening ties with Soviet historians that would facilitate the involvement of Czechoslovak or East German scholars. Finally, Violante and Barone urged deepening ties with Romanian historians already registered with the association to broaden the membership.

The new AEH governing bodies expressed their priorities, at least on paper. Following the first assembly, the approval of the statute, and the elections, the Association could officially start its activities.

Conclusions

Starting in the early 1980s, the European Commission and the member states began to pay growing attention to education. In their intentions, educational cooperation was supposed to positively influence the professional training and skills of the EC workforce. International competition and the constantly changing global geopolitical scenario pushed member states to increase the productivity of the economy and labour force. In this context, education assumed a crucial role in creating highly specialised workers with a solid European feeling,

⁸¹³ Statute of the Association of European Historians, 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, art.3.

⁸¹⁴ «Il coinvolgimento di studiosi dei vari Paesi dell'Europa orientale e raccomanda i membri dell'Associazione di curare ogni possibile contatto per smussare eventuali diffidenza politiche». AEH's Executive Board meeting report, 10 Oct. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians, 4.

⁸¹⁵ «L'Associazione non cerca accordi istituzionali soggetti a controlli politici bensì adesioni di singoli studiosi». Ibid, 5.

which could counter the two big blocs of the US and the USSR. Consequently, education was increasingly linked to an economic rather than a socio-cultural function.

In this context, following the 1983 congress, deep disagreements arose between the historians led by Armando Saitta and their main EC interlocutor, Mario Pedini. The lack of political interest in the initiative and little media attention discouraged Pedini from pursuing the initiative to create a European association of historians. On the other hand, the group of historians led by Saitta regarded the 1983 conference as a milestone in elaborating a “new” history of Europe. Stressing the depth of the scholars involved and the quality of the lectures, the organising committee expressed substantial satisfaction with the outcome of the meeting. Despite the initial collaboration with the EC, the historians gathered in Rome disagreed with the new “economic” approach to education in the EC.

After the collaboration with Pedini, whose term as MEP ended in 1984, Saitta and his colleagues made no effort to find new collaborations with the EC. In this sense, the section challenges the existing literature on the subject, which points to 1983 as the starting point of the Association. This study shows that the congress on Europe was rather a turning point, where both sides, the EC and Saitta’s group, realised the impossibility of lasting collaboration. From that moment on, the project of an association of European historians took on different traits, going beyond the boundaries of the EC.

Nevertheless, the group of historians attempted one last contact with the EC through the Italian government, namely the European Historical Institute. Taking advantage of the Italian presidency of the European Council, the Rome government led by the socialist Bettino Craxi sought to produce a significant initiative towards creating a common European sentiment. Explicitly abandoning the educational dimension, the historians led by Saitta were trying to focus on a cultural organisation among the different member states of the EC. During this attempt, they did not compromise their opposition to the “politicisation” of historical research. Indeed, the Institute was conceived as autonomous from any political control. The end of the Italian presidency, the presence of another similar institute in Florence, the concern of other member states such as Belgium and the Netherlands, and the tension between the governments of the member states in the mid-1980s led to the failure of the project.

Braudel’s and Le Goff’s attempt in Madrid, as well as the AEH, took place at a time when EC action in the cultural sphere became a topical political issue. Both groups of historians attempted to build a cultural vision of Europe. Both the AEH documents and the manifesto produced after the Madrid meeting reflected substantial discontent with European cultural policies. Above all, the two groups of historians demanded to maintain their intellectual

autonomy from politics. According to Macciocchi, organiser of the Madrid meeting, relations between the historians and the EC Commissioner for Culture, the Italian Carlo Ripa Di Meana, rapidly soured after the statements of the Madrid group. As a result, the Commission stopped funding Braudel's and Le Goff's initiatives, and the project was abandoned.⁸¹⁶ We can deduce that, during the 1980s, some groups of historians who attempted to develop transnational projects to study the history of European civilisation shared dissatisfaction with the political world, particularly the EC institutions.

Nevertheless, in 1985, the AEH was officially established by a group of 419 scholars with no connection to the EC. The main objective of the Association was cooperation between historians from European countries, and not only from the EC, in order to bring Europe back to the centre of historiographical debate and combat the nationalism that still characterised large sections of historical research. The high number of members and the “open” structure of the Association, always open to welcoming new scholars, differentiated it distinctly from other networks of the period, especially the LCEH. The AEH aimed to enlarge its membership as much as possible, whereas the LCEH was a select committee with only two representatives from each EC member state.

The differences between the two networks were even more evident in the composition. The AEH immediately discussed the possibility of involving historians from the Soviet bloc within the Association. Unlike the LCEH, the focus of the AEH was the whole of Europe, both as a membership and as an object of historical analysis. Consequently, its members wondered about the most appropriate methodology to encourage the participation of Eastern European historians. Despite heated debates and conflicting positions, as early as the first general assembly in 1985, 3 Polish and 4 Romanian scholars joined the AEH. In the intentions of AEH President Saitta and the Executive Board, this was only the beginning of a broad eastward enlargement, reserved, however, only for historians unconnected to political power.

⁸¹⁶ Macciocchi, *La Femme*, 34–5.

4. To the peak: the first official congress of the AEH (1986-1989).

This chapter challenges the large part of the existing literature describing European identity building as a mainly top-down process. Is it possible to promote Europeanness outside the EC institutions with a bottom-up approach? The first paragraph examines the theoretical objective of the AEH, the public dissemination aim through an editorial product, and the contradictions of promoting Europeanness with a largely Italian-centered structure. This Europeanness building is further scrutinised in the second part, where the analysis focuses on organising the first AEH official congress to confront national paradigms in European historiography, starting from the French Revolution. By discussing the composition of the conference's participants and the outputs of the lectures, the third paragraph assesses whether the AEH tried to foster Europeanness without direct inference with the EC institutions and policies but provided "from below" a unified-Europe perspective in an explicit Eurocentric strand.

4.1 Journal or bulletin?

Since the beginning, the AEH was committed to «claim the Europeans' methods of "make history" and, simultaneously, reaffirm the autonomy of historical research».⁸¹⁷ To achieve the goal, President Armando Saitta proposed the publication of an official AEH journal:

«To avoid the risk of losing the challenge with other historiographies and remaining without an institutional tool of connection, I propose a journal that, on the one hand, could provide objective information of a public nature [...] and allow members to give notice of their work; and on the other hand, to a greater extent, it undertakes to inform, thereby responding to an urgent need, on the state of open questions in European historiography».⁸¹⁸

⁸¹⁷ «Una rivendicazione del modo di fare storia proprio degli europei e al tempo stesso una riaffermazione dell'autonomia della ricerca storica». AEH's Executive Board meeting report, 10 Oct. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians, 14.

⁸¹⁸ «Per evitare il rischio di perdere la sfida ingaggiata con le altre storiografie e restare privi di un istituzionale mezzo di collegamento, propongo una rivista che, da un lato, si preoccupi di fornire informazioni oggettive di carattere pubblico [...] e di dare ai soci la possibilità di dar notizia dei loro lavori, e dall'altro lato, in maggior misura, si impegni ad informare, con ciò dando risposta ad un'esigenza imperiosa, sullo stato delle questioni aperte nella storiografia europea». Ibid, 15.

Speaking at the AEH Executive Board meeting on 11 October 1986, Saitta even stated that «the future of our Association is closely linked to the creation of a journal from January 1987 that maintains continuous contact between the centre and the periphery».⁸¹⁹ Privately, the President of the AEH confided to some members that he had already begun negotiations with a publisher and could count on «substantial Italian funds».⁸²⁰ The essays, Saitta specified, should have «not only a European slant but to inform on current historiographical trends and open issues».⁸²¹ In other words, he urged analysing the different interpretations of European historiography concerning a particular debate as broadly as possible.

Saitta's determination to establish a new journal recalls his commitment to "Critica Storica". The journal's first issue was conceived and edited by Saitta in 1962. He had been teaching modern history at the University of Pisa for almost ten years. After the direction of the Marxist "Movimento Operaio" and the aforesaid bitter clash with the Catholic "La Civiltà Cattolica",⁸²² Saitta urged to create a new journal. In the first issue of "Critica Storica", he outlined the requirements «to identify the crucial points of humanity's journey, namely to reconstruct reality in its entirety, as the co-presence of multiple nexuses now converging now opposing».⁸²³ Consequently, he urged «challenging the abuse of specialisation, the creator of so many non-communicating sectors, to grasp the point of confluence between "particular histories" and general historiography».⁸²⁴ Accordingly, *Critica Storica* included literary, philosophical, sociological, and political essays without any strict chronological limit.

Following this framework, Saitta moved to the objectives. "Critica Storica" could bridge the gap between professional historians and the broader non-specialist actors. Through the employment of a comprehensible language, it had a dissemination role to spread the historical research as a shared heritage: «We cannot but remember that Omodeo, De Ruggiero, Russo

⁸¹⁹ «L'avvenire della nostra Associazione è strettamente legato alla possibilità o meno di creare a partire dal gennaio 1987 una rivista che serva a mantenere continui contatti tra il centro e la periferia». AEH's Executive Board meeting report, 11 Oct. 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

⁸²⁰ «Cospicui mezzi finanziari italiani». Letter of Armando Saitta to Pierre Villard, 21 Dec. 1985, AEH's Executive Board meeting report, 11 Oct. 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians. Saitta made a similar statement in a letter to Manuel Bustos Rodriguez, 8 Nov. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

⁸²¹ «Un taglio non solo europeo, ma di informazione sulle attuali tendenze storiografiche e sulle problematiche ancora aperte». Letter of Armando Saitta to Bruno Di Porto, 21 Dec. 1985, AEH's Executive Board meeting report, 20 Oct. 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4; letter of Armando Saitta to Lietta De Salvo, 12 July 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4.

⁸²² Cf. note 275.

⁸²³ «Identificare i punti nodali del cammino dell'umanità, ovvero ricostruire la realtà nella sua globalità, come compresenza di molteplici nessi ora convergenti ora opposti». Armando Saitta, 'Introduzione', *Critica Storica* I, no. 1 (1962), 1–9: 2.

⁸²⁴ «Combattere l'avvenuto abuso della specializzazione, creatrice di tanti settori non comunicanti, per cogliere il punto di confluenza tra le "storie particolari" e la storiografia in generale». Ibid, 3.

knew how to speak to everyone, and this was no small merit».⁸²⁵ Saitta conceived the journal as a link between high culture, scientific culture, and secondary schools, i.e. to constitute «an initial meeting point for men with significantly different cultural experiences».⁸²⁶ In a nutshell, "Critica Storica" could bridge culture and organisation by connecting historiographical, abstract work to the current society. Saitta was aware that «this feature perhaps will make "Critica Storica" an unacademic journal, but it does not aspire to such honours. Its ideal is another, in the words of Carlo Cattaneo: "The study of history, namely of the past, is the study of those dispositions and preparations, on which the future must lay the groundwork"».⁸²⁷

This attention to the broadest possible circulation of historical culture was linked to Saitta's scientific formation. As Vittorio Criscuolo has emphasised, Saitta intimately followed the path of his masters Carlo Morandi and Guido Calogero. Criscuolo highlighted Saitta's focus concerning the link between historical research and politics. According to Saitta, historians should not associate all ideological and political suggestions with historical research. Instead, he preferred to implement further activities outside the narrow scope of scientific research. This issue became acute in 1955-1956 when the crisis in Hungary created real turmoil in Saitta's mind. Parallel to the historical events that upset the world balance, Saitta concluded his attempt to bring liberal and Marxist cultures into dialogue. However, differently from many of his Italian colleagues, Saitta refused to embrace a liberal democratic position wholly.⁸²⁸ Even during the genesis of the AEH, he did not conceal fundamentally radical positions which characterised the intellectual and civil renewal after the Second World War.

To some extent, Saitta was close to a "nineteenth-century" conception of the man of culture, intended primarily as the moral and intellectual guide. As a result, historians were inevitably protagonists in politics since they were committed to guiding the development of civil consciousness through their work. Saitta firmly affirmed the political value of historical research aside from its strictness and autonomy. Consequently, he claimed the independence of intellectuals from any political organisation.

Saitta's transition from "political militancy" to "historiographical militancy", as effectively discussed by Criscuolo,⁸²⁹ was also reflected in the AEH. After the initial attempt to conduct

⁸²⁵ «Non possiamo non ricordare che gli Omodeo, i De Ruggiero, i Russo seppero parlare a tutti e questo non fu piccolo merito». Ibid.

⁸²⁶ «Un primo punto di incontro per uomini dalle esperienze culturali sensibilmente diverse». Ibid, 4.

⁸²⁷ «Forse ciò farà di "Critica Storica" una rivista poco accademica, ma essa non aspira a onori del genere: il suo ideale è un altro, quello che è possibile indicare con le parole di Carlo Cattaneo: "Lo studio della storia, ossia del passato, è lo studio di quelle disposizioni e preparazioni, sulle quali deve innestarsi il futuro"». Ibid, 2.

⁸²⁸ Criscuolo, *La genesi*, 648–9.

⁸²⁹ Ibid, 650.

independent historical research within the EC, the Association's founding members detached from the political bodies. However, they did not abandon the public dimension, quite the opposite. They committed to exercising their public role outside political institutions by employing history as an interpretative framework for the present and the future. The journal of the AEH, in its President's intentions, was the peak of this process: a body linking the various strands of European historiography which performed a critical "pedagogical" function towards civil society through their debates.

However, several AEH members were hesitant about the journal. Before the Executive Board meeting in October 1986, Silvana Seidel Menchi privately expressed her misgivings. She had «strong doubts about the usefulness of the journal, in a scientific world already crowded with journals, which could prove detrimental to the Association».⁸³⁰ Furthermore, Seidel Menchi argued that the AEH members did not need the journal; instead, she hoped for deeper involvement of the members in ordinary activities. Comparably, Alessandro Galante Garrone warned Saitta against repeating the failed experiment of Nello Rosselli's "Rivista di Storia Europea" (Journal of European History).⁸³¹

Garrone referred to the journal project of the Italian anti-fascist intellectual Rosselli from 1932 to 1934, when he was a student at the IHIMCA school. In Rosselli's intentions, the journal should have an anti-fascist impact on historical research, creating an alternative for the anti-fascist intellectuals.⁸³² With the consolidation of Fascism in Italy, scholars outside the regime or those who refused to indulge in irrational and sterile complaints about the alleged "disease" of European civilisation faced the issue of reviewing the content and political use of their activity.⁸³³ As Domenico Zucaro has argued, Rosselli's programme significantly impacted the anti-fascist culture.⁸³⁴ Rosselli was influenced by Benedetto Croce's "great conspiracy of culture" and Gaetano Salvemini's political-cultural approach.⁸³⁵ Through the project of a European journal, Rosselli urged condemning historians who tolerated the dictatorship by taking refuge in their profession.

⁸³⁰ «Forti dubbi sull'utilità della rivista, in un mondo scientifico già affollato di riviste, che potrebbe rivelarsi nociva per l'Associazione». Letter of Silvana Seidel Menchi to Armando Saitta, 27 June 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4.

⁸³¹ Letter of Alessandro Galante Garrone to Armando Saitta, 12 July 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4.

⁸³² Nello Rosselli's project for a new European journal, 3 Oct. 1933, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4.

⁸³³ On the topic see: Monica Fioravanzo, 'Mussolini, Il Fascismo e l'idea Dell'Europa: Alle Origini Di Un Dibattito', *Italia Contemporanea* 1, no. 1 (2011): 7–27. It is worth remembering that Saitta had a controversial position concerning the relationship between the Fascist regime and the historians. Cf. notes 317–318.

⁸³⁴ Domenico Zucaro, 'In Un «carteggio» Inedito Di Nello Rosselli Il Progetto Di Una Rivista Di Storia Europea', *Il Ponte* XXVIII, no. 6 (1972): 764–94.

⁸³⁵ Carlo Morandi, 'Nello Rosselli Storico', *Il Ponte* III, no. 6 (1947): 510–22.

Incidentally, the similarities between Rosselli's and Saitta's attempts are worth noting. As Piero Calamandrei has outlined, Rosselli interpreted fascism as the symptom of a broader European social crisis. He proposed to challenge the crisis through the rise of a new liberal and socialist Europe.⁸³⁶ Similarly, Saitta emphasised the opportunities provided by the European identity crisis of the 1980s for a strong revival of Europeanism in historical research, culture, and politics. In the same vein, the two intellectuals had similar perspectives concerning valorising the historian's craft. They considered crucial the role of historians in the interpretation of Europe as a spiritual rather than a geographical-political entity. To achieve this awareness, both Saitta and Rosselli urged to unfold an accurate methodology highlighting the rationality of the historical process by connecting the past and present. In Rosselli's words, «it is a matter of overcoming national watertight compartments and reviewing our immediate antecedents from the point of view of European solidarity».⁸³⁷ As a result, first Rosselli and then Saitta committed to challenging national specialisation towards a supranational synthesis that would produce a collective history of Europe. The journals envisioned by the two scholars coordinated and linked scholars in the European continent.

However, Rosselli's journal never saw the light. He relied on the support of his colleagues from the IHIMCA School, including Federico Chabod, Ernesto Sestan, Carlo Morandi, and Alberto Maria Ghisalberti. However, Rosselli lacked their solidarity due to the absence of political "cover". Rosselli initially tried to conceal the journal project from the highest members of the regime, including the director of the IHIMCA School, Gioacchino Volpe. Under pressure, Rosselli wrote to Volpe to obtain formal authorisation for his project. Following a deceptive approval, the anti-fascist scholar refused to rely on Volpe's alleged "liberality" and abandoned publishing the journal.⁸³⁸

The primary concern of several AEH members was that their journal could experience a similar failure. Firstly, funding was far from straightforward due to the lack of political partnerships. The detachment from the EC did not guarantee a fixed income, except for the fees paid by members. Thus, the structure of a journal with broad ambitions risked failure due to the lack of funding. Moreover, Francesco Barone warned the AEH President that even

⁸³⁶ Piero Calamandrei, 'Ricordo Di Nello', *Il Ponte* I, no. 1 (1945): 52–61.

⁸³⁷ «Si tratta di superare i compartimenti stagni nazionali e di rivedere i nostri antecedenti immediati dal punto di vista della solidarietà europea». Nello Rosselli's project for a new European journal, 3 Oct. 1933, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4.

⁸³⁸ Zucaro, 'In Un «carteggio» Inedito', 791.

using Italian IHIMCA funds for the journal would be problematic due to bureaucratic reasons.⁸³⁹

Secondly, some AEH members were concerned about adding a new journal, especially the Italian scholars. Silvana Seidel Menchi and Franco Sartori expressed perplexity due to the considerable number of journals circulating in Europe at the time.⁸⁴⁰ Yet, the situation did not seem encouraging, especially concerning the spread of Italian journals in Europe. In the early 1980s, the Italian journal “*Quaderni Storici*” outlined a substantially pessimistic scenario. The circulation of the Italian journals, measured by the number of subscriptions, was occasional, scarcely systematic, and mainly focused on a few Central and Western European countries, as well as the United States, with significant variations depending on the theme of the journal. “*Quaderni Storici*” emphasised a substantial lack of circulation of Italian journals in entire geographical areas, such as the Asian continent, the southern Mediterranean, and Central and South America. Concerning Eastern Europe, overall, the circulation of Italian magazines was weak and poorly diversified.⁸⁴¹

It is worth noting that at the beginning of the 1980s, some significant transformations in academic publishing began in two pivotal countries of the Western world: the United States and Great Britain. Jonathan Morris, analysing the market for academic publications in these two countries between 1980 and 2000, pointed out the significant reductions in public funding for higher educational institutions, which led to the disappearance of a secure market for academic monographs in university libraries. Although university publishing houses operated as non-profit organisations in the Anglo-Saxon world, academic publishing had always been managed as a private and independent business. Consequently, it reacted by narrowing the range of books produced and concentrating on those with a broad “market”. Journals also suffered from cutbacks due to the discontinuation of many subscriptions.⁸⁴²

Nevertheless, an increasing number of journals circulated in the 1980s. For instance, a prominent and particularly rich-in-review journal such as the “*American Historical Review*” performed a valuable service to the scholarly community through extensive reviews of individual volumes. However, the wide range of published articles suggested an audience

⁸³⁹ Letter of Francesco Barone to Armando Saitta, 8 Mar. 1986, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series III, folder 116, dossier Barone, Francesco 1960-1986.

⁸⁴⁰ Letter of Silvana Seidel Menchi to Armando Saitta, 27 June 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4; Letter of Franco Sartori to Armando Saitta, 2 Jan. 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4.

⁸⁴¹ R. R., ‘La Diffusione Estera Di Alcune Riviste Storiche Italiane: Alcuni Dati’, *Quaderni Storici* 16, no. 48 (3) (1981): 1091–97.

⁸⁴² Jonathan Morris, ‘«Contemporary European History» Nel Nuovo Mercato Della Riviste Storiche’, *Contemporanea* 7, no. 4 (2004): 643–49.

equally interested in all genres and periods of history, a reasonably rare factor in historical research. The same could be noted for journals such as “Historical Journal” and “Past and Present”, whose broad openness to high-quality studies resulted in inevitably fragmented content depending on the period and the geographical context covered. Comparably, the “Journal of Modern History”, the most important journal for scholars of modern Europe, embraced a period from the Renaissance to the present. Consequently, in the 1970s, a proliferation of journals dedicated to sector or area studies emerged. Limiting the geographical area produced appealing journal articles for specific readers. Journals linked to Associations of scholars, such as “German History” and “Modern Italy”, respectively connected to the German Historical Society and the Association for the Study of Modern Italy, were particularly attractive to publishers. They ensured a relatively stable subscriber base consisting of the Association's members.⁸⁴³

At first glance, the last case seems applicable to the possible journal of the AEH. Saitta had already contacted several publishers before the Executive Board meeting, and they agreed to publish the journal. The AEH President privately scheduled the publication of the first issue in January 1987.⁸⁴⁴ Before formalising the request to the publishing houses, in addition to the Executive Board's approval, Saitta emphasised the need to prepare at least three issues. He hoped «that all members of the Association, and in particular the Executive Board members, would dedicate 1986 to drafting articles and contributions for the future journal».⁸⁴⁵ Saitta considered essential this preliminary phase since «an international journal should have articles with a particular slant [...] which is not easily understandable for all contributors».⁸⁴⁶ Even so, some members did not value Saitta's initiative. Silvana Seidel Menchi, in a new letter to the AEH President, albeit with significant scepticism, proposed two alternatives.⁸⁴⁷ The first was to trace the model of the West-German journal “Gesellschaft und Geschichte”. It was a journal for the whole field of historical research and the social sciences. As the curators argued, the aim was to combine historical-hermeneutic and social-scientific-analytical procedures, embracing suggestions from the other human sciences

⁸⁴³ Morris, ‘«Contemporary»’, 644–5.

⁸⁴⁴ Letter of Armando Saitta to Fulvio Babudieri, 12 June 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4; Letter of Armando Saitta to Guido Mansuelli, 7 July 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4.

⁸⁴⁵ «Che tutti i membri dell'Associazione, e in particolare i membri del Consiglio Direttivo, dedichino il 1986 alla stesura di articoli e contributi per la futura rivista». Ibid.

⁸⁴⁶ «Una rivista internazionale dovrebbe avere articoli con un taglio particolare [...] che non è facilmente comprensibile per tutti i collaboratori». Ibid.

⁸⁴⁷ Letter of Silvana Seidel Menchi to Armando Saitta, 7 July 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4.

and, as far as possible, the natural sciences. Its target included university lecturers, students, historians, sociologists, political scientists, and cultural workers interested in the problems and results of historical research in the field. The journal's subject was social history, intended as the history of social, political, economic and cultural phenomena linked to specific social formations. With an approach similar to the “*Annales*”, the focus was on analysing social change. Structurally, the journal had an essay section, a discussion forum, a volume review section, and a column dedicated to cultural-historical institutions.⁸⁴⁸ While stressing the hurdles of a similar structure on a European scale, Menchi emphasised the usefulness of an all-encompassing journal at the European level.

Menchi's second proposal was the publication of a bulletin instead of a journal. She thought the bulletin could provide regular information on European historical research initiatives. Modelled on the “Historians of Early Modern Europe” bulletin, distributed free of charge by the Northeast Missouri State University, Menchi proposed a retracted format to inform about essays, conferences, and research groups concerning the European countries from an international perspective.⁸⁴⁹ Franco Sartori also agreed with the bulletin proposal, stating that historians appreciated short critical-bibliographical reviews. On behalf of ancient historians, he emphasised the complexity of a journal covering an extended period. Even considering the onerous financial issue, Sartori argued that a bulletin might be suitable for “coordinating the centre and the periphery”. Instead, Sartori was concerned about the willingness of young scholars to publish in this format because it produced little value in public exams.⁸⁵⁰ Finally, Cinzio Violante warned about the excessive grandiosity of the scientific project.⁸⁵¹

The discussion moved to the AEH Executive Board. During the meeting of 11 October 1986, Pierre Villard argued that «a journal would constitute the most permanent element of the Association [...] But there are several problems to be solved [...] in France, for example, I notice that the editors fundamentally lack courage and ideas».⁸⁵² He argued that, given the international ambition of the journal, it was undesirable to rely solely on the contributions of members. Thus, «caution should be exercised before embarking on the enterprise [...] Care

⁸⁴⁸ ‘Vorwort Der Herausgeber’, *Geschichte Und Gesellschaft* 1, no. 1 (1975): 5–7.

⁸⁴⁹ Letter of Silvana Seidel Menchi to Armando Saitta, 7 July 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4.

⁸⁵⁰ Letter of Franco Sartori to Armando Saitta, 10 Aug. 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4.

⁸⁵¹ Letter of Cinzio Violante to Armando Saitta, 2 Aug. 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4.

⁸⁵² «Une revue formerait l'élément le plus permanent de l'Association [...] Mais les problèmes à résoudre sont multiples [...] en France, par exemple, je constate que les éditeurs manquent fondamentalement de courage et d'idées». AEH's Executive Board meeting report, 11 Oct. 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

should be taken to ensure that this publication is original: a journal of a historical nature should not be added to many other publications of this kind».⁸⁵³ In his view, the periodic realisation of issues might be burdensome for the Association. Instead, Villard proposed to begin with a smaller publication, perhaps within an existing journal, to “test” the steadiness of the contributions, and then realise a whole journal in a second phase.

The Executive Board unanimously accepted Villard's proposal. Saitta, although annoyed, accepted the mediation suggested by the French historian. Aware of the new context, he proposed publishing the bulletin in his journal “*Critica Storica*”.⁸⁵⁴ A few months after the official establishment of the Association with an Italian notary,⁸⁵⁵ the first bulletin of the Association of European Historians was published in March 1987 in the journal founded and edited by Armando Saitta.

4.2 Approaching the first AEH's official congress.

In the first bulletin, the AEH President described the Association's path until the establishment of «an effective communication tool, which does not diminish the importance that the "letter" has had in the European republic of historians».⁸⁵⁶ Saitta emphasised that «the bulletin is not a mere “*boîte aux lettres*” but an instrument to spread ideas and provide valuable comparisons of methodologies, different cultural traditions, and concrete historiographical experiences».⁸⁵⁷ Therefore, the publication in “*Critica Storica*” would contain news, reports, and scientific essays with a particular European outlook. Despite the large number of texts already received by the Presidency, Saitta acknowledged the caution expressed by the Executive Board considering the «swarming of journals with an inflationary tendency».⁸⁵⁸ Consequently, he stated that the bulletin might never turn into a journal.

Simultaneously, Saitta reported another critical decision of the Executive Board meeting held on 11 October 1986:

⁸⁵³ «La prudence s'impose avant de se lancer dans l'entreprise [...] Il faudra veiller à donner à cette publication afin qu'elle soit originale: il ne faut pas ajouter une revue à caractère historique à de nombreuses autres publications de cette nature». Ibid.

⁸⁵⁴ Cf. notes 822–826.

⁸⁵⁵ Memorandum of the Association of European Historians, 7 May 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

⁸⁵⁶ «Uno strumento comunicativo efficace, pur non sminuendo l'importanza che la “lettera” ha avuto nella repubblica europea degli storici». Armando Saitta, ‘*Bollettino A.S.E.*’, *Critica Storica* XXIV, no. 1 (1987): 113.

⁸⁵⁷ «Il bollettino non è una semplice *boîte aux lettres*, ma uno strumento per far circolare idee e procurare preziosi confronti di metodologie, di tradizioni culturali diverse, di esperienze storiografiche concrete». Ibid.

⁸⁵⁸ «Pullulare di riviste con tendenza inflazionistica». Ibid, 114.

«Among the decisions taken by the Executive Board of the Association of European Historians during its last collegial meeting, [...] it seems appropriate to mention in a separate letter the decision to organise and hold in 1989, on the occasion of the Bicentenary of the French Revolution, with the cooperation of the Italian Historical Institute for Modern and Contemporary Age, a major congress concerning the historiography of the various European countries on the French Revolution».⁸⁵⁹

It is worth noting that Saitta's idea of a major conference in Italy on the occasion of the Bicentenary had roots that predated the AEH.⁸⁶⁰ In September 1983, he informed the Italian historian Furio Diaz about his intention to draft «a programme of scientific work and publications both of sources and critical studies concerning the French Revolution».⁸⁶¹ As a result, on 20 October 1983, Saitta called an informal meeting at the IHIMCA «to assess the possibility of joining the initiatives underway in France to celebrate the Bicentenary of the French Revolution» according to the programme that the French historian Michel Vovelle was preparing on behalf of the French government's Ministry of Scientific Research.⁸⁶² Saitta urged establishing an Italian committee based at the IHIMCA to dialogue with its international homologue and coordinate the Bicentenary initiatives, starting with the edition of Filippo Buonarroti's texts and the unfinished work of Albert Soboul on François-Noël Babeuf.⁸⁶³ Following the meeting, Saitta sent Vovelle a detailed draft of the schedule

⁸⁵⁹ «Parmi les différentes décisions qui ont été prises par le Conseil Directeur de l'Association des Historiens Européens dans sa dernière réunion collégiale, [...] il me semble à propos de signaler par une lettre à part la décision d'organiser et de tenir en 1989, à l'occasion du Bicentenaire de la Révolution française, avec la coopération de l'Istituto Storico Italiano per l'Età Moderna e Contemporanea, un grand congrès avant pour thème l'historiographie des différents pays de l'Europe sur la Révolution Française». Ibid, 115.

⁸⁶⁰ Saitta's entire scientific production hinged on his interpretation of the French Revolution as a distinctly European phenomenon. Cf. notes 304–305.

⁸⁶¹ «Un programma di lavoro scientifico e di pubblicazioni di fonti e di studi critici sulla Rivoluzione francese». Letter of Armando Saitta to Furio Diaz, 5 Sept. 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 9, dossier Bicentenary of the French Revolution.

⁸⁶² «Per valutare la possibilità di aderire alle iniziative in corso in Francia per celebrare il bicentenario della Rivoluzione francese». Report of the meeting held on 20 October 1983, 12 Oct. 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 9, dossier Bicentenary of the French Revolution. Saitta referred to the work initiated by Vovelle as President of the International Commission for the Bicentenary of the French Revolution within the «Centre national de la recherche scientifique».

⁸⁶³ In a letter to the French historian Jacques Godechot on 3 December 1983, Saitta stated that the financial and technical resources of the IHIMCA could be used to solve some of the issues related to Soboul's death, such as the continuation of Babeuf's works edition. Letter of Armando Saitta to Jacques Godechot, 3 Dec. 1983, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 9, dossier Bicentenary of the French Revolution.

initiatives until 1989.⁸⁶⁴ The programme primarily focused on the relationship between the Revolution, Italy, and Europe.⁸⁶⁵

Against this background, the AEH Executive Board argued that the Revolution «was not an event limited to one or a few European countries but affected the entire European continent».⁸⁶⁶ Consequently, the Bicentenary was a perfect occasion to implement «a country-by-country analysis of what each national historiography has produced on the French Revolution».⁸⁶⁷ The conference's main goal was implementing a joint work plan for all AEH members. In the eyes of the President and the Executive Board, the Association remained fragmented and not very interactive in scientific interests and historiographical work.

Three central themes emerge from these statements. First, we can note the persistent hegemony of Saitta and the Italian members within the Association. Although “defeated” in the debate concerning the journal, criticised by several Italian scholars, the publication of the bulletin in his journal “Critica Storica” was Saitta’s proposal. Contributions were published in four languages, Italian, French, English and German, but official communications were written in Italian from the first issue. Moreover, the decision to invest in the Bicentenary was not accidental. As already mentioned, the French Revolution was Saitta's favourite field of study. Organising a congress on the topic gave him deep knowledge and contacts. In other words, for Saitta, a congress for the Bicentenary constituted the link between his entire scientific career and the new Association he presided over.

However, the second issue that emerges is the dissatisfaction of the Association's heads, especially the President, with the level of interaction between the members, particularly with the Soviet bloc scholars. Although very young, the AEH already had several hundred members. The formal detachment from politics created several disagreements, as did the journal debate. In addition, bureaucratic and political difficulties prevented the active participation of the few Eastern European members. Through the great event of the Bicentenary, the Association's leadership aimed to strengthen the bonds between the members and definitively bypass the division into blocs. Proudly, since early 1987, Saitta emphasised

⁸⁶⁴ The IHIMCA commission was composed of the Italian scholars Alberto Caracciolo, Paolo Alatri, Gabriele De Rosa, Armando Saitta, Pasquale Villani, Gerardo Marotta, Regina Pozzi, Mario Leonardi, Anna Maria Rao, and the French historian Gérard Delille.

⁸⁶⁵ Armando Saitta, ‘Programme de l’Istituto Storico Italiano per l’Età Moderna e Contemporanea à l’occasion du Bicentenaire de la Revolution française’, *Bulletin de la Commission Nationale de Recherche Historique pour le Bicentenaire de la Revolution française* II, no. 1 (1985), 174–5.

⁸⁶⁶ «Non si trattava un avvenimento che rimase limitato a uno solo o a pochi paesi dell’Europa bensì toccò l’intero continente europeo». Letter of President Armando Saitta to the AEH members, 9 Dec. 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 9, dossier Bicentenary of the French Revolution.

⁸⁶⁷ «Un’analisi, paese per paese dell’Europa, di ciò che ogni storiografia nazionale ha prodotto sulla Rivoluzione francese». Ibid.

that «historians from almost all the countries of Europe, regardless of any distinction of ideological or political blocs, have already responded positively».⁸⁶⁸

Incidentally, the third theme that stands out is the lack of global perspective. According to Georg W. F. Hegel, a German philosopher of the early nineteenth century, the French Revolution profoundly impacted world history. It sparked intense reactions and divisions among populations in Europe and the Americas, led to the creation of "sister republics" that changed the map of Europe, and played a role in both the Haitian slave Revolution and the first abolition of slavery in 1793-4. Its ongoing wars also had repercussions in places as far-flung as Egypt, other parts of Africa, India, and Java. Despite its global impact, however, the French Revolution has frequently been analysed in national terms, with French and European factors considered as the primary causes and processes behind it. Consequently, some scholars have noted a paradox: while participants, observers, and scholars recognised the Revolution's global significance, they seldom looked for global causes. Nevertheless, figures such as Edmund Burke, Karl Marx, and Alexis de Tocqueville stressed the Revolution's global importance; yet, they sought the causes in developments only within France.⁸⁶⁹

Many scholars have recently challenged the French Revolution as a European-centered process and analysed how peoples in the Caribbean, the Americas, and Africa interacted with events in late-eighteenth-century France to forge their Revolutionary traditions.⁸⁷⁰ It is interesting to note that some of these scholars were inspired by the "Atlantic Revolutions" theory, which was first developed in the 1950s by Robert Roswell Palmer and one of the AEH Executive Board members, Jacques Godechot. Palmer and Godechot argued that the French Revolution was part of a broader Atlantic movement that included the American Revolution, British radicalism, and the Dutch, Belgian, Swiss, and Polish revolts.⁸⁷¹ Nonetheless, the "Atlantic thesis" was not widely accepted by historians in France. Some scholars accused it of being a manipulative interpretation of history that aimed to endorse the

⁸⁶⁸ «Storici da quasi tutti i Paesi d'Europa, a prescindere da qualsiasi distinzione di blocchi ideologici o politici, hanno già risposto positivamente». Saitta, 'Bollettino', 116.

⁸⁶⁹ Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max Nelson, *The French Revolution in Global Perspective* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2013), 1.

⁸⁷⁰ Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Pierre Serna, *Républiques sœurs: Le Directoire et la Révolution atlantique* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009); Matthias Middell and Megan Maruschke, eds., *The French Revolution as a Moment of Respatialization* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019).

⁸⁷¹ Desan, Hunt, Nelson, *The French Revolution*, 3. See also: Jacques Godechot, *La Grande Nation: L'expansion Révolutionnaire de la France dans le monde de 1789 à 1799* (Paris: Aubier, 1956); Robert Roswell Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959).

Cold War's Atlantic Alliance. However, Palmer and Godechot strongly refuted such claims. Meanwhile, some historians opposed comparing the "lesser" revolts to the French Revolution, finding it unappealing.⁸⁷²

Contemporary scholars of the Atlantic world highlight a distinct inadequacy in Palmer and Godechot's Atlantic framework, which is its omission of any reference to slavery or the colonies in the Caribbean. Comparably, the methodological framework of the first official AEH congress was precisely the inclusion of the French Revolution within an essentially European process. The congress undoubtedly had the merit of transcending national, especially French, borders in its analysis of the Revolutionary period. But it lacked a broader vision that included a perspective beyond continental borders. This is not surprising, considering the AEH's endemic aversion to emerging historiographies from other continents and a global history approach in general.⁸⁷³ According to the AEH Executive Board, the congress was valuable «in the completeness of the overview, in the realisation of an overall picture that does not exclude any nation of Europe».⁸⁷⁴

Despite the lack of a global perspective, the initiative nevertheless required a significant effort. Volker Sellin emphasised that «the idea of analysing the historiographical reflection of the Revolution in European countries from its beginnings to the present is impressive [...] On the other hand, it seems a vast subject for a single congress».⁸⁷⁵ Similarly, Eloy Benito Ruano stressed «the grandeur of the congress planned for 1989; given the necessary organisational commitment, I am available to take charge of coordinating the Spanish scholars».⁸⁷⁶

Even with some misgivings, the AEH Executive Board started to engage in the Bicentenary. The contribution took the shape of extensive work on the history of historiography: an in-depth analysis of the scholarly production, or eventual “silences”, of each European country concerning the French Revolution, from the participants' earliest writings to the 1980s. Despite the awareness of «a topic that is perhaps outdated in the current issue of the

⁸⁷² Philip Daileader and Philip Whalen, *French Historians 1900-2000: New Historical Writing in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 309–12. This discussion can be found also in Desan, Hunt, Nelson, *The French Revolution*, 3.

⁸⁷³ Cf. note 713.

⁸⁷⁴ «Nella completezza dello sguardo d'insieme, nella realizzazione di un quadro generale che non escluda alcuna nazione dell'Europa». Letter of President Armando Saitta to the AEH members, 9 Dec. 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 9, dossier Bicentenary of the French Revolution.

⁸⁷⁵ Letter of Volker Sellin to Armando Saitta, 19 Mar. 1987, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXXII, dossier Volker Sellin.

⁸⁷⁶ «La grandeza del congreso previsto para 1989; dado el necesario compromiso organizativo, estoy disponible para ocuparme de la coordinación de los becarios españoles». Letter of Eloy Benito Ruano to Armando Saitta, 4 June 1987, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder IV, dossier Benito Ruano, Eloy.

French Revolution»,⁸⁷⁷ the AEH Executive Board emphasised «the valuable overview rather than the individual lectures, a richness that other Bicentenary initiatives lack».⁸⁷⁸

For a comprehensive understanding of the AEH Executive Board's intentions, it is worth including the conference in the broader context of the Bicentenary. From 1986, French political institutions established a powerful organisational machine in view of the bicentenary celebrations of the "Great Revolution".⁸⁷⁹ Organisational efforts involved governments of different political affiliations like the right-wing Jacques René Chirac (1986-1988), the socialist Michel Rocard (1988-1991), and especially the socialist President François Mitterrand (1981-1995). The driving force behind the celebrations was the "Mission for commemorating the French Revolution Bicentenary and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen", an inter-ministerial body established by decree of 15 September 1986. Not randomly, Michelle Vovelle was entrusted with the chairmanship of the Scientific Committee. He was chair of the History of the French Revolution at Sorbonne University. Vovelle was a Marxist historian affiliated with the "Parti communiste français" (PCF), but also interested in the history of mentalities and the "Annales" approach. The choice of Vovelle showed Mitterrand's historiographical inclinations, oriented towards the left-wing republican tradition, from the renowned "Histoire socialiste de la Revolution française (1901-1908)" by Jean Jaurès onwards.⁸⁸⁰ Vovelle and other Marxist historians like Claude Mazauric attempted a strenuous defence of the Revolution and its relevance in what has been called the "Battle of the Bicentenary".⁸⁸¹

Indeed, the political climate in the late 1980s, especially the attitude of the mass media, had a completely different orientation, hegemonised by the "grande révision" proposed by François Furet. While initially a Marxist and supporter of the Annales School, he later separated from the Annales and critically re-evaluated Marxist historians' interpretation of the French Revolution. As a result, he became the leader of the revisionist school of historians who challenged the Marxist account of the French Revolution as a form of class struggle.⁸⁸² In

⁸⁷⁷ «Un argomento forse superato, nell'attuale problematica sulla Rivoluzione francese». Letter of President Armando Saitta to the AEH members, 9 Dec. 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 9, dossier Bicentenary of the French Revolution.

⁸⁷⁸ «Lo sguardo d'insieme piuttosto che le singole relazioni, una ricchezza che altre iniziative sul Bicentenario non possono vantare». Ibid.

⁸⁷⁹ Michel Vovelle, *La bataille du Bicentenaire de la Revolution française* (Paris: La Découverte, 2017), 41–66.

⁸⁸⁰ Jean Jaurès, *Histoire socialiste de la Revolution française* (Paris: Les éditions sociales, 1908).

⁸⁸¹ Vovelle, *La bataille*; concerning the conflicts of the bicentenary and their impact on public opinion, see: Patrick Garcia, *Bicentenaire de la Revolution française : Pratiques sociales d'une commémoration, Bicentenaire de la Revolution française : Pratiques sociales d'une commémoration*, CNRS Histoire (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2000).

⁸⁸² Christophe Prochasson, *François Furet: Les chemins de la mélancolie* (Paris: Stock, 2013), 348–72.

1966, Furet's first work on the Revolution argued that its early years had a benign character. However, after 1792, the Revolution shifted into the blood lust and cruelty of the Reign of Terror. The cause of this shift was the outbreak of war in 1792, which Furet argued was intrinsic to the Revolution rather than an unrelated event, as most French historians had argued.⁸⁸³ Furthermore, he focused on Revolution's political history, downsizing its social and economic history, and attacked the "Marxist line" of Albert Soboul, which Furet defined as more Jacobin than Marxist.

Although disputed in academia, Furet's revisionism was entrenched in crucial research institutions, such as the "Institut Raymond Aron", and became the reference point of journalism concerning the Revolutionary period. In the wake of Alfred Cobban's and George Taylor's work, the revisionist offensive emerged outside the academic world in the late 1960s.⁸⁸⁴ Subsequently, revisionism continued with Furet's essay "Le catechisme Revolutionnaire" published in the "Annales", an extremely harsh attack on Marxist historiography and its "scholastic sociologism".⁸⁸⁵ Finally, the ambitious "Penser la Revolution française" declared the vital influence of 1789 over in the Third Republic and challenged the Revolution as a reference for the present.⁸⁸⁶

Furet's revisionism gained considerable favour in public opinion, mainly due to his controversial charge towards the so-called "classical" historiography rooted in the Jacobin and Marxist paradigms.⁸⁸⁷ The revisionist approach mainly attacked the two years of Robespierism and its positive interpretation. In contrast, Furet described this phase as the tragic "dérapage" from the virtuous liberal Revolution of 1789, born from the Enlightenment, the reforming alliance between the "progressives" of the three orders without class conflict, and the crisis of absolute monarchy.⁸⁸⁸ As a result, the Terror became the prefiguration of communist totalitarianism from Robespierre to Stalin. The coeval political events of the late 1980s, with the implosion of the socialist camp, accentuated the revisionist readings of the Revolution and the Bicentenary. In the 1990s, Furet, beyond his intentions but also partly due

⁸⁸³ François Furet and Denis Richet, *La révolution Française* (Paris: Fayard, 1966).

⁸⁸⁴ George V. Taylor, 'Noncapitalist Wealth and the Origins of the French Revolution', *The American Historical Review* 72, no. 2 (1967): 469–96, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1859237>; Alfred Cobban, *The Myth of the French Revolution* (Folcroft, Pennsylvania: Folcroft Library Editions, 1970).

⁸⁸⁵ François Furet, 'Le catéchisme Revolutionnaire', *Annales* 26, no. 2 (1971): 255–89.

⁸⁸⁶ François Furet, *Penser La Revolution Française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978).

⁸⁸⁷ Albert Soboul, 'L'Historiographie Classique de La Revolution Française', *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques* 1, no. 2 (1974): 141–67.

⁸⁸⁸ Julien Louvrier, 'Penser La Controverse: La Réception Du Livre de François Furet et Denis Richet, *La Revolution Française*', in *Annales Historiques de La Revolution Française* 1, no. 351 (2008): 151–76.

to his responsibility, became the picklock to legitimise a decidedly counter-Revolutionary historiography and sector of French culture.⁸⁸⁹

The crumbling of the Marxist paradigm based on the idea of the bourgeois Revolution and class struggle hampered every approach to social history. It led to the fragmentation of studies and a prevalence of traditional political history, with a strong emphasis on the accidental character of the Revolution and the predominance of ideological elements over other causes. As Francesco Benigno has argued, in this paradigm, the Revolution is reduced to a collective tragedy originated by Revolutionary ideology. He has stressed that the triumph of revisionism led to a new general paradigm that overturned both the Marxist and the liberal approaches.⁸⁹⁰ In the words of Massimo Cattaneo, the Revolution was no longer a social fact but only a political event; it was primarily linked to contingent factors rather than the consequential outcome of economic conflicts; finally, it was all but the development of social progress and democracy: indeed, it had despotic consequences which rooted the rise of totalitarianism in the twentieth century.⁸⁹¹

In contrast, Vovelle supported the “classical” paradigm in opposition to Furet's interpretation. He argued that Marxist historiography rejected all rigidity, dogmatism and scholastic diatribes. Vovelle was committed to analysing the concrete reality of structures, living conditions, and the very dynamics of the social groups. He rejected one of Furet's main criticisms about Jacobin-Marxist historiography: its possible neglect of the political dimension. Vovelle was indebted to Albert Soboul, who developed «a demonstration of all-encompassing history that includes the political, the social, living conditions, collective representations and the imaginary».⁸⁹² Accordingly, Vovelle claimed that in this paradigm, politics was not neglected but included in a broader context, as opposed to the «narrow focus that François Furet proposed from the Revolutionary discourse, privileging the word, the

⁸⁸⁹ Steven L. Kaplan, *Adieu 89* (Paris: Fayard, 1993).

⁸⁹⁰ Francesco Benigno, *Specchi della rivoluzione: conflitto e identità politica nell'Europa moderna* (Rome: Donzelli, 1999), 43.

⁸⁹¹ Cattaneo emphasises that, in recent years, thanks especially to historians close to the “Institut d'histoire de la Révolution française and the Société des études robespierristes”, a new historiography on the French Revolution has emerged. It totally rejects the assumption, derived from the revisionism of François Furet and widespread at the academic level and in the media, that the Revolution is now a “cold object” that has nothing to say to the men of the twentieth and twenty-first century. On the contrary, globalisation, with its contradictions, has rendered relevant again the term “Revolution” and the need to reflect on how the “Revolutionaries” of the late eighteenth century thought and acted. This takes place by promoting research attentive to global dynamics, and the long duration of the Revolution, and by expanding the topics analysed. Moreover, these historians are personally engaged in spreading the results of their research in schools and in society in general. See: Massimo Cattaneo, ‘Vent’anni dopo.. il Bicentenario. Gli studi sulla Rivoluzione francese nel 2009-2013’, *Passato e presente* XXXII, no. 92 (2014): 127–43.

⁸⁹² «Una dimostrazione di storia globale che comprende il politico, il sociale, le condizioni di vita, le rappresentazioni collettive e dell'immaginario». Michel Vovelle and Paolo Bianchini, ‘La Mia Strada Alla Storia’, *Studi Storici* 40, no. 3 (1999): 657–80, 675.

politics made in assemblies, the historiography of the nineteenth century».⁸⁹³ Nevertheless, Vovelle credited the revisionist interpretation with “shaking up” the comfortable security of Marxist historiography, leading to the reopening of several historical issues through discourse analysis and new methodologies.

To fight this “battle of the Bicentenary”, Vovelle gathered scholars of solid international reputation who could support the challenge. The International Committee for the History of the French Revolution included leading names in European historiography on the Revolution, such as Jacques Godechot, Ernest Labrousse, Robert Palmer, and Robert Forster. It also included scholars from Soviet bloc countries, such as Walter Markov (East Germany) and Guennadi Koutcherenko (USSR); from Eastern Asia, like Zhang Zhilian (China); and from Northern Europe, namely Kåre Tønnesson (Norway). The committee, which Vovelle described as prestigious in terms of international impact, drafted a work programme that included a round table in 1987 to organise the 1989 Bicentenary World Congress on the theme “The Image of the Revolution”.

Four AEH members were also present in the Vovelle Commission. In addition to the natural membership of Jacques Godechot, who had initially been appointed to chair the Commission, and Jean René Suratteau, a member of the “Société des Études robespierristes” and collaborator of Georges Lefebvre, Armando Saitta and Monika Senkowska-Gluck were also members. Thus, several AEH scholars prepared to play a crucial role in the Bicentenary initiatives. Accordingly, the Association’s conference on the history of European historiography concerning the Revolution aimed to «initiate a critical appraisal of two hundred years of research by historians and men of culture, as well as politicians and commentators, throughout Europe, without monopolising methods and schools».⁸⁹⁴

Aside the official declarations, the conference had very clear objectives. First, the AEH urged to provide a different perspective from what Saitta called «the celebration-show, the funeral of a ghost Revolution, the “fête Revolutionnaire”».⁸⁹⁵ He referred to the ongoing revisionist operation and Furet’s “attack” on the occasion of the Bicentenary. The historiographical strand of several AEH members, especially Saitta, was irreconcilable with «the imperialism of some institutions that would like a Bicentenary in a single direction so that no occasions

⁸⁹³ «Focalizzazione angusta che François Furet ci ha proposto a partire dal discorso rivoluzionario, privilegiando la parola, la politica fatta nelle assemblee, la storiografia del XIX secolo». Ibid.

⁸⁹⁴ «Avviare un bilancio critico di duecento anni di indagini da parte degli storici e degli uomini di cultura in generale, nonché di politici e commentatori, in tutta l’Europa, e ciò senza chiusure monopolizzanti di metodi e scuole». Armando Saitta, ‘Preface’, in Italian Historical Institute for the Modern and Contemporary Ages, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese* (Rome: Alpha Print, 1990), I vol., III.

⁸⁹⁵ «La celebrazione-spettacolo, il funerale di una Rivoluzione-fantasma, la “fête Revolutionnaire”». Ibid.

for "défaillances" would arise».⁸⁹⁶ The President of the AEH defined Furet as «a charmer who had long imposed a harsh and merciless reign on European historiography».⁸⁹⁷ In organising the conference, the AEH Executive Board evoked the debate between Soboul and Furet concerning the so-called "return to the political", openly supporting the theses of "classical" historiography that accused the supporters of revisionism of hypocrisy.⁸⁹⁸ As a result, they argued, European historiographies lost prestige compared to scholars from other continents. From this assumption, the AEH Executive Board inferred the second objective of the conference. According to the AEH's Eurocentric perspective, the Executive Board aimed, on the one hand, at a "revival" of European historiography concerning the inferiority complex towards other continents; on the other hand, to dilute the superiority complex that pushed the European historiography to reject every innovative instance. These two tendencies resulted in the "abdication" of European scholars facing their colleagues from outside the continent. In the Executive Board's view, the American, Asian, and African historiographies were oppressing European historical research. In contrast, the AEH Bicentenary conference offered an opportunity to recalibrate these relationships by enhancing the work of European scholars on the French Revolution. Towards a broad involvement, the Executive Board invited interested scholars to organise a wide-ranging initiative.⁸⁹⁹

The members of the Association responded positively to the invitation. As a result, President Saitta proudly announced that the AEH would publish the complete congress programme in early 1988.

4.3 The history of European historiography on the French Revolution.

Therefore, the first official AEH conference had the threefold objective of defending the "classical" paradigm of the Revolution from revisionism, strengthening internal ties within the Association, and attracting new scholars. The AEH Executive Board emphasised the conference to solve the Association crisis. With different nuances, the Board unanimously

⁸⁹⁶ «L'imperialismo di questa o quella istituzione che voleva un Bicentenario in unica direzione perchè non sorgessero occasioni di "défaillances"». Ibid, II.

⁸⁹⁷ «Un ammaliatore che aveva imposto a lungo un regno duro e impietoso sulle storiografie europee». Armando Saitta, 'A proposito di una "post-face"', in Italian Historical Institute, *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, III vol., 268.

⁸⁹⁸ AEH's Executive Board meeting report, 20 Oct. 1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 17, dossier 4.

⁸⁹⁹ Armando Saitta, 'Bollettino A.S.E.', *Critica Storica* XXIV, no. 4 (1987): 689–692, 690.

argued that a few years after the first General Assembly in 1985, the AEH needed new impetus and greater involvement.⁹⁰⁰

However, perceptions of this crisis were quite different. President Saitta was concerned about the substantially stable membership numbers since the founding of the AEH. He argued that the difficulties inferred from the non-sectorial nature of the Association, which risked dispersion due to the all-encompassing involvement of scholars specialised in diverse fields. On the other hand, Saitta continued, «the organisation of sectorial congresses is expensive and unsatisfactory: rather, it is preferable to organise general congresses like the one on the French Revolution».⁹⁰¹ Similarly, Hartmut Galsterer proposed wide-ranging topics to enhance the Association's potential and involve as many members as possible. Galsterer, Eloy Benito Ruano and Cinzio Violante noted that the same problem about different areas of specialisation also existed within national Associations.

This substantial agreement concerning wide-ranging conferences was countered by an intense conflict on the excessive “Italianisation” of the AEH. Franco Sartori raised the issue by reporting the criticism of numerous non-Italian members of the Association who complained about the almost exclusive use of Italian in the bulletin on “Critica Storica”.⁹⁰² Furthermore, several members criticised the majority of essays relating to historical research in Italy, thus a lack of European scope. Taking up his colleague's cue, Francesco Barone proposed to write articles in an international language such as English or French; similarly, Ruano urged to draft at least the abstracts of the essays in the four most representative languages of the continent, adding German and Spanish to Barone's proposal. On the other hand, Saitta expressed strong disagreement about the criticism of the bulletin's language. He stressed his full commitment to the organisation of the bulletins, and, at the same time, he denounced the scarce collaboration of non-Italian members. Similarly, Galsterer considered the criticism of the bulletin unjustified and wondered whether it could be possible “to make Europe” using only one or two languages like English or French. Despite the different opinions, the Executive Board unanimously approved a motion to encourage the use of English.⁹⁰³

The controversy surrounding the language of the bulletin concealed a widespread malaise over the profound “Italianisation” within the Association and, apparently, President Saitta's centralisation of power. Violante expressed perplexity about the constant Italian venue for the

⁹⁰⁰ AEH's Executive Board meeting report, 28 Jan. 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 9, dossier Congress Organisation.

⁹⁰¹ «Se si organizzano congressi settoriali si spendono soldi e non si accontenta nessuno: piuttosto, è preferibile organizzare congressi ampi come quello sulla Rivoluzione francese». Ibid, 3.

⁹⁰² Ibid, 7.

⁹⁰³ Ibid, 13.

Executive Board gatherings and proposed to “de-Italianise” the Association by convening meetings in other European cities such as Brussels, Strasbourg, and Luxembourg.⁹⁰⁴ Accordingly, Ruano urged a more outstanding commitment to the involvement of European members, not just Italians, in the Association's ordinary activities. Within the Executive Board, a widespread perception of an exclusionary Italian leadership among the Association's non-Italian members emerged.

The criticism of the Italian component, especially of Saitta, coincided with his progressive one-person leadership. As he admitted, in the early years of the Association, «the presidency was forced to take responsibility for certain decisions due to the weight of the Association [...] without convening the Executive Board».⁹⁰⁵ Officially, Saitta's decisions were due to the costs that the AEH's scant finances would face for each meeting, a reason that also justified holding the assemblies in Italy. Indeed, the majority of the Executive Board members were Italian. However, this custom, on the one hand, affected the democratic and collegial structure that the Association adopted; on the other hand, it discouraged the active participation of non-Italian scholars. For his part, the President boomed against the little collaboration of members and complained about heavy responsibilities. This situation displeased all the actors involved and laid the ground for the future decline of the AEH.

The President confirmed his centrality in the organisation of the 1989 conference. First, only Saitta was committed to searching for the necessary funds, relying primarily on Italian national funds. In 1986, Saitta grumbled about the lack of funding for the project, which he estimated in roughly five hundred million Italian liras.⁹⁰⁶ However, the IHIMCA budget consisted of one hundred million Italian liras.⁹⁰⁷ Saitta considered the amount insufficient and hoped for extraordinary funding from the Italian Minister of Cultural Heritage. In a letter addressed to the Italian Communist Party deputy Renato Zangheri, Saitta welcomed the positive attitude of Minister Antonino Pietro Gullotti concerning additional funding.⁹⁰⁸ However, the following year Saitta complained to Zangheri concerning the approval of the

⁹⁰⁴ Ibid, 8.

⁹⁰⁵ «La presidenza si è vista costretta ad assumersi la responsabilità di alcune decisioni in considerazione del peso one [...] senza riunire il Consiglio Direttivo». AEH's Executive Board meeting report, 28 Jan. 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 9, dossier Congress Organisation, 2.

⁹⁰⁶ Report of Armando Saitta concerning the programme of the Bicentenary of the French Revolution, 1986, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder III.2, dossier Bicentenary French Revolution. Five hundred Italian liras are roughly two hundred and fifty thousand euros.

⁹⁰⁷ Roughly fifty thousand euros.

⁹⁰⁸ Letter of Armando Saitta to Renato Zangheri, 6 Oct. 1986, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXXIX, dossier Renato Zangheri 1963–1989. Saitta and Zangheri had a long-standing personal relationship, dating back to Saitta's presidency of the Italian Marxist journal *Movimento Operaio* in the mid-1950s. Cf. notes 776–779.

Italian Law 371/1987, which excluded any supplementary financing.⁹⁰⁹ After vigorous protests from the IHIMCA President, Bill 1355, approved in deliberation by the Italian Senate's 7th Standing Committee on "Public Education, Cultural Heritage, Scientific Research, Entertainment and Sport", provided the IHIMCA with extraordinary funding of 150 million Italian liras for the two years 1989-1990.⁹¹⁰ The amount needed to be more adequate to cover the expenses for the AEH conference in 1989. As a result, «to face the costs, the Association has to rely on its energies, which were decidedly reduced, since the AEH has always counted, and we are proud of this, on the voluntary work of its members and the self-financing of membership fees».⁹¹¹ Indeed, the conference resulted in a loss of over sixty million Italian liras,⁹¹² which was covered by an increase in AEH membership fees for the year 1990.

Secondly, the President of the AEH handled the speakers at the conference on an essentially individual basis. Explaining the delay in the publication of the programme, which was planned for January 1988 but was published in September, Saitta explained that he engaged in «copious correspondence for more than a year with colleagues and teachers from all the countries of Europe, which revealed a great, profound diversity of "interest" of the different national cultures in the history of historiography».⁹¹³ Indeed, the President wrote hundreds of letters to communicate with every participant of the conference and managed the contacts in detail. He structured a programme divided into "geographical-national" lectures relating to the historiography of the French Revolution in individual countries and "historiographical-cultural" contributions, which provided the participation of ancient and medieval historians in addition to early modern and modern scholars.⁹¹⁴ The 1983 conference

⁹⁰⁹ Letter of Armando Saitta to Renato Zangheri, 27 Oct. 1987, ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXXIX, dossier Renato Zangheri 1963–1989. Saitta was decidedly irritated about the shortage of funds for his programme. He blamed the substantial funding to the Italian National Committee for the Bicentenary of the French Revolution established by Decree of the President of the Italian Republic on 25 June 1987. See: Giulio Andreotti, 'L'Ottantanove e l'Italia', *Vita Italiana* IV, no. 4 (1989): 5–6.

⁹¹⁰ 40th stenographic record of the 7th Permanent Commission "Public Education, Cultural Heritage, Scientific Research, Entertainment and Sport" of the Italian Senate, 6 Apr. 1989, Italian Senate Historical Archives, series Commissions and Councils, folder Standing Committees, dossier 7th Standing Committee (Public Education), Stenographic Reports, 10th Legislature (from 02 July 1987 to 22 April 1992). The amount is roughly equivalent to seventy-five thousand euros.

⁹¹¹ «Per affrontare i costi, l'Associazione deve far ricorso a tutte le sue energie, peraltro decisamente ridotte, considerato che l'A.S.E. è vissuta sempre, e di ciò siamo orgogliosi, sul volontariato dei suoi iscritti e suol'autofinanziamento della quota sociale». Letter of Armando Saitta to Hartmut Galsterer, 20 Sept. 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1989.

⁹¹² Roughly thirty thousand euros.

⁹¹³ «Una copiosa corrispondenza per più di un anno con colleghi e docenti di tutti i paesi europei, che ha rivelato una grande e profonda diversità di "interesse" delle diverse culture nazionali per la storia della storiografia». Armando Saitta, 'Bollettino A.S.E.', *Critica Storica* XXV, no. 3 (1988): 485.

⁹¹⁴ Letter of Armando Saitta to Franco Sartori, 12 Aug. 1988, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1988.

on Europe aimed at conceiving a “new” collective history of Europe that could challenge nationalisms; similarly, the 1989 conference was «the beginning of a broad collective history that grasps the crucial points of European historiography from 1789 to the present concerning a fundamental event for the history of Europe and the whole humanity».⁹¹⁵ The doubt remains whether these statements resulted from shared reasoning by the members of the Association or, instead, they were the President's intentions transposed onto a collective level.

Despite financial and organisational hurdles, the first official AEH conference was held from eighteenth to 23rd May 1989. The Executive Board deliberately chose a date to avoid the overlap with the international congress in Washington, scheduled for 4 to 6 May of the same year, and to valorise the world congress in Paris in July 1989.⁹¹⁶ Initially planned in Rome, the venue was moved to Pisa, where Saitta had excellent contacts with the “Scuola Normale Superiore” due to his education. The President emphasised the “Scuola” as a highly-symbolic location since it was founded in 1810 during the Napoleonic period in Italy. Despite the conflicts in the preliminary phase concerning the excessive “Italianisation” of the AEH, the Executive Board did not consider any other European city to host the conference.

In the same period, the geopolitical map of the European continent was about to shift radically. The conference hosted scholars from 22 countries, including six countries of the Soviet bloc. The involvement of «a large and qualified delegation of historians from Eastern Europe»⁹¹⁷ was emphasised by Saitta, who proudly expressed his enthusiasm «in realising that the Association of European Historians succeeded in its significant effort and that a real “hole” could only be referred to Yugoslavia and for this, I apologise».⁹¹⁸ Indeed, despite the cumbersome hurdles, an increasing number of Eastern Europe scholars were attached to the AEH from 1985 to 1989. The following graph shows the AEH members’ trends from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and USSR in the period 1984-1989:⁹¹⁹

⁹¹⁵ «L'inizio di un'ampia storia collettiva che coglie i punti cruciali della storiografia europea dal 1789 ad oggi riguardo ad un evento fondamentale per la storia dell'Europa e dell'intera umanità». Letter of Armando Saitta to the participants of the congress, 9 Jan. 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1989.

⁹¹⁶ Armando Saitta, ‘Bollettino A.S.E.’, *Critica Storica* XXV, no. 3 (1988): 485.

⁹¹⁷ «Un’ampia e qualificata delegazione di storici provenienti dall’Est europeo». Vittorio Criscuolo, ‘Un congresso sulla storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese’, *Critica Storica* XXVI, no. 2–3 (1989), 405–28: 405.

⁹¹⁸ «Nel constatare che l’Associazione degli Storici Europei ce l’ha fatta nella sua non piccola impresa e che di “trou” vero e proprio si può parlare solo per la Jugoslavia e di ciò chiedo scusa». Saitta, ‘Preface’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, VI. Indeed, no contact with historians from Yugoslavia is mentioned in the sources.

⁹¹⁹ AEH member lists, 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

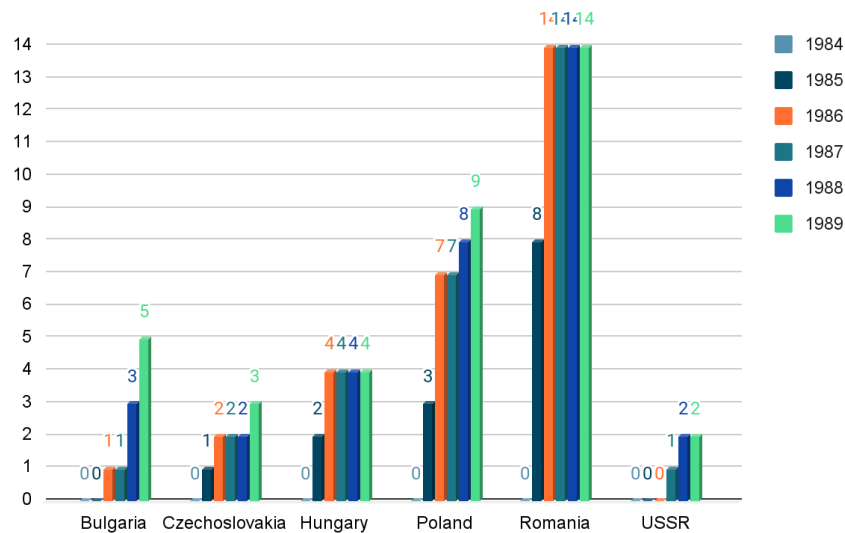


Fig. 5 - AEH inscriptions from Soviet Bloc between 1984 and 1989

Source: AEH member lists, 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

The involvement of historians from the Soviet bloc, as explained above, was far from simple.⁹²⁰ The narrow criteria of political distance from communist regimes set by the AEH Executive Board significantly restricted the field of action. As witnessed by several scholars, participation in conferences or Associations like the AEH required prior authorisation from an official institution.⁹²¹ Even if an independent scholar was interested in the AEH, he or she still had to pass through a formal political check. To this extent, the AEH Executive Board undertook to facilitate the participation of scholars from the Soviet bloc. In addition to the weaving of direct contacts, the Board repeatedly established that in exceptional cases, fee non-payment of the fee did not compromise the AEH membership.⁹²² Concerning the conference on the French Revolution, President Saitta stated that the Soviet bloc historians would charge the AEH with logistical and procedural costs.⁹²³ Indeed, several scholars from those countries complained about the lack of funding for participating in the conferences, which could jeopardise their availability. The AEH gave them an official invitation letter and a statement for an all-encompassing board, lodging and transportation free of charge.

⁹²⁰ Cf. notes 810–812.

⁹²¹ Letter of György Spira to Armando Saitta, 5.12.1986, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1986; letter of Alexandru Zub to Armando Saitta, 12 Apr. 1987, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1987; letter of Anatoly Ado to Armando Saitta, 17 Mar. 1988, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1988.

⁹²² Letter of the AEH Executive Board to Alexander Pol, 19 July 1987, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1987; letter of the AEH Executive Board to Georgi Mihailov, 28 June 1988, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1988.

⁹²³ Letter of Armando Saitta to Karel Herman, 18 July 1988, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1988. All expenses were listed in the AEH budget for the year 1989.

It is worth noting the number of Romanian historians, mainly due to the close relationship between Saitta and Stefan Pascu, President of the historical section of the Romanian Academy.⁹²⁴ Pascu had close contacts with Italy, where he graduated from the Vatican in Palaeography, Diplomatics and Archivistics and directed the Romanian Academy in Rome from 1940 to 1942. Surprisingly, Romanian historians were the great absentees from the conference on the French Revolution. Although four lectures by Romanian scholars were scheduled, they all forfeited shortly before the start of the meeting. Opening the conference panels, President Saitta announced the defection and stated that «Europe is changing, and it is too obvious, for me to explain it here, the reason for the sudden, total absence of Romanian historians».⁹²⁵ In a lengthy letter addressed to Saitta on 18 May 1989, the historian Dan Berindei announced the absence of the entire Romanian delegation for political reasons.⁹²⁶ Berindei claimed they had been forbidden to leave their country and could not attend the conference.⁹²⁷

In contrast to the Romanian scholars, Hungary even had more conference speakers than the registered members of AEH. Despite they experienced similar financial hurdles, the full payment of expenses by the conference organisation allowed for significant participation of Hungarian historians. Indeed, the Hungarian government did not seem hostile to the international participation of scholars involved in the AEH. This condescension is quite surprising, considering that the coordinator of the Hungarian delegation was the Marxist historian György Spira, with whom Saitta exchanged several letters from 1986 onwards.⁹²⁸

⁹²⁴ Several letters between the two scholars can be found at IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1987–1988.

⁹²⁵ «L'Europa è in trasformazione, ed è ovvia, perchè io debba qui spiegarla, la ragione dell'improvvisa, totale assenza degli storici rumeni». Inaugural speech by Armando Saitta, 18 May 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 10, dossier Abstracts and Lectures. Despite Saitta's statement, events that occurred in Romania in 1989 remain a most contentiously debated issue of Romania's recent history. It presents many controversial aspects which have led to different and even opposing interpretations. On this debate, see: Peter Siani-Davies, 'Romanian Revolution or Coup d'état?: A Theoretical View of the Events of December 1989', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 29, no. 4 (1 December 1996): 453–65; Richard Andrew Hall, 'The Uses of Absurdity: The Staged War Theory and the Romanian Revolution of December 1989', *East European Politics and Societies* 13, no. 03 (1999): 501–42; Raluca Grosescu, 'The Trials of the Romanian Revolution', *Cultures of History Forum*, 17 January 2019, 1–10.

⁹²⁶ Letter of Dan Berindei to Armando Saitta, 18 May 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 10, dossier Commitment letters from Romania to USSR.

⁹²⁷ Incidentally, it is worth mentioning that Berindei was a controversial personality during the communist regime. After being excluded from scientific research for political reasons between 1952 and 1955, he collaborated with the Romanian secret service from 1962. But the secret services described Berindei as independent of the regime and critical of the country's official representatives. On the topic, see: Stoica Lascu, 'DAN BERINDEI (NOVEMBER 3, 1923–DECEMBER 23, 2021)–THE OLD DEAN OF TODAY'S ROMANIAN HISTORIANS, NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF SOCIETY AND THE COUNTRY, OF THE AUTHENTIC HISTORICAL VALUES THAT HE HAS SERVED ALL LIFE', *Istorie/History* 41, no. 1 (2022): 113–22.

⁹²⁸ Several letters between the two scholars can be found at IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1986–1987–1988.

Spira was among the founders of the “Tudományos Dolgozók Demokratikus Szakszervezete” (Democratic Union of Scientific Workers) in 1988, the first legal organisation of opposition to the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party in the Kádár era.⁹²⁹ Spira was able to exploit his influence within the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, where he became one of the leading figures concerning the Hungarian Revolution of 1848.⁹³⁰ His lecture guided the entire Hungarian panel towards a critique of the counter-Revolutionary approach of studies on the French Revolution in Hungary since 1789.⁹³¹ In contrast, Spira and his colleague Peter Hahner recognised an overemphasis on the French Revolution since the Second World War, which was instrumental in legitimising Stalinism.⁹³² Rather, they proposed a “European reading” of the Hungarian Revolution through a link to the broader Revolutionary period from 1789 onwards; nevertheless, they rejected any counter-Revolutionary or over-emphatic instrumentalisations for political purposes.

The indication of the Stalinist period as an essential watershed was a common thread in the 1989 conference lectures from the Soviet bloc. This theme was extensively analysed by two USSR scholars, Anatoly Ado and Vladimir Dounaevski, distinguished members of the USSR Academy of Sciences.⁹³³ They emphasised the particular focus of Soviet historiography on the agrarian question and especially the debate concerning the influence of the French Revolution on the role of small peasant property.⁹³⁴ Following the magisterial works of the

⁹²⁹ Concerning the role of dissident intellectuals in Hungary in the period, see: András Bozóki and Agnes Simon, ‘Rolling Stones: Dissident Intellectuals in Hungary (1977–1994)’, *East European Politics* 37, no. 2 (3 April 2021): 352–785.

⁹³⁰ György Spira, *A Hungarian Count in the Revolution of 1848* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1974). The Hungarian Revolution of 1848 has become one of the cornerstones of Hungarian national identity, especially after 1956. See: Gábor Gángó, ‘1848–1849 IN HUNGARY’, *Hungarian Studies* 15, no. 1 (22 July 2005): 39–49.

⁹³¹ Kálmán Benda, ‘Les Jacobins français vus par ses contemporains hongrois’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. II, 261–71; Eva Ring, ‘Des pamphlets hongrois et la Revolution française à la fin du XVIII siècle’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. II, 271–82; Sándor Lukácsy, ‘La Revolution française fans la littérature et l’historiographie hongroise (1867–1914)’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. II, 299–306.

⁹³² Peter Hahner, ‘L’histoire et l’idéologie dans l’historiographie hongroise de la Revolution française depuis 1945’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. II, 307–318; György Spira, ‘Cosa è stata la Rivoluzione francese: caso tipico o classico?’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. II, 319–26.

⁹³³ Anatoly Ado, ‘L’histoire paysanne de la Revolution française dans l’historiographie russe et soviétique’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, 205–16; Vladimir A. Dounaevski, ‘L’historiographie soviétique de la Grande Revolution française (1789–1799)’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, 216–32.

⁹³⁴ Incidentally, Ado’s major work on the French peasantry during the Revolution is worth noting. His historiographical provenance is the “classic”, socialist tradition of the French Revolution (Albert Mathiez, Georges Lefebvre, Albert Soboul) as well as the socialist-liberal Russian thinkers (Nikolai Ivanovich Kareiev, Ivan Loutchisky, Rostislav Loukine). Ado’s theoretical strength was hinged on the Marxist-Leninist interpretations of history. He argued that the small and middling-sized peasant, allegedly the carrier of egalitarian, democratic, small-scale, agrarian capitalism, was fighting on two fronts: against a decaying, but a

late nineteenth century,⁹³⁵ Ado and Dounaevski identified a significant decline in attention to the topic from the October Revolution onwards. From 1917, they argued, the primary focal point shifted to the direct relationship between the Jacobin period and the Revolution. Subsequently, the two Soviet scholars identified the end of Stalinism as the turning point for a return to a study of the 1789 Revolution more detached from political instrumentalisation.⁹³⁶ Similarly, a widespread link emerged between the individual national histories and the French Revolution. Polish historians Monika Senkowska-Gluck and Alina Barszczewska-Krupa emphasised the special connection between the events that occurred in late-eighteenth-century France and the Polish “Great Emigration” between 1831 and 1848.⁹³⁷ In general, the two scholars argued that the sole direction of Polish historians’ approach concerning the French Revolution was its impact on Poland or, at most, the attitude of French public opinion towards Poland. This historiographical “nationalism” continued even after the Second World War, only softening since the late 1970s thanks to the scholars Jan Baszkiewicz and Stefan Meller.⁹³⁸

The “historiographical nationalism” was the recurring theme of lectures even by scholars from northern European countries. János Perényi, analysing Swedish studies on Revolutionary France, emphasised the substantial detachment of Swedish culture from the European intellectual tradition in the twentieth century, except for the period between 1885 and 1930, which included Erik Gusav Geijer's and Simon Johannes Boethius's remarkable studies on the French Revolution.⁹³⁹ Similarly, Åsmund Egge argued that the study of the

very exploitative feudal system, and against the increasing challenge of the large-scale estate. This fight of “les petites” against “les gros” was most evident in the Ile-de-France, in Picardy, and the Vexin Normand, where the “fermier” and the “labourers” had increased the size of their properties to the detriment of the “petit propriétaires”. As a result, a new rural proletariat emerged, which had significant consequences for the economic development in France. See: Anatoly Ado, *Paysans en Revolution: Terre, pouvoir et jacquerie (1789-1794)* (Paris: Société des études robespierristes, 1996); Gwynne Lewis, ‘Paysans En Revolution: Terre, Pouvoir et Jacquerie, 1789-1794’, *The English Historical Review* 113, no. 451 (1 April 1998): 486–89.

⁹³⁵ On the topic, see: Giovanna Cigliano, ‘Rivoluzione Francese e Storia Universale Nella Russia Zarista’, *Studi Storici* 48, no. 3 (2007): 733–60.

⁹³⁶ More recently, some scholars have challenged historical research on Stalinism even concerning its influence on the Soviet historiography. See: Kevin McDermott, ‘Archives, Power and the “Cultural Turn”: Reflections on Stalin and Stalinism’, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 5, no. 1 (1 January 2004): 5–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1469076042000223383>; Polly Jones, *Myth, Memory, Trauma: Rethinking the Stalinist Past in the Soviet Union, 1953-70* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

⁹³⁷ Alina Barszczewska Krupa, ‘La Revolution française dans l’historiographie de l’époque de la Grande Émigration Polonaise (1831–1848)’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. III, 79–86; Monika Senkowska–Gluck, ‘L’historiographie polonaise de la Revolution française’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. III, 87–96.

⁹³⁸ Jan Baszkiewicz, *Maksymilian Robespierre* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1976); Stefan Meller, *La Revolution Française En Touraine, Chinon* (Poitiers: Projets éditions, 1989).

⁹³⁹ János Perényi, ‘Swedish historians and French Revolution. The paradox of historiography’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. III, 233–45.

history of foreign countries never played a prominent role in Norway's historical research, which instead focused on the analysis of the national historical and cultural identity.⁹⁴⁰ In this context, the historian Kare Tønnesson was a notable exception. He followed the Marxist paradigm on the French Revolution, especially Georges Lefebvre thought,⁹⁴¹ and was a member of the International Committee on the French Revolution chaired by Vovelle. Applying a “classical” paradigm, Tønnesson mainly studied the popular movement in opposition to the Thermidorians, which he argued was an autonomous expression of class struggle linked more to Jacques-René Hébert than to the Jacobins.⁹⁴²

The national perspective of study on the French Revolution was further analysed in the lecture on Irish historiography. Patrick Hyde Kelly highlighted the response of Irish intellectuals contemporary to the Revolutionary period.⁹⁴³ Kelly, however, placed Ireland within the Atlantic Revolution paradigm of Palmer and Godechot, as from 1782, the country experienced numerous upheavals related to the attempt at parliamentary independence and the desire for Catholic emancipation.⁹⁴⁴ He emphasised the role of the Society of United Irishmen, born in 1791, to promote human rights as appeasement between different religious groups, the emancipation of Parliament, and the proclamation of a republic independent of the United Kingdom.⁹⁴⁵ As a result, Kelly argued that the Irish scholars of the time viewed French events from the perspective of an internal application of that model. The debate focused on comparisons with the Glorious Revolution of 1688, supported by Arthur O'Connor, a member of the Society of United Irishmen, and George Miller, an academic historian.

In the same vein, Belgian historical research was substantially influenced by the significance of the 1789 Revolution on its territory. Marie-Rose Thielemans stated that the analysis of this

⁹⁴⁰ Åsmund Egge, ‘Les historiens norvégiens et la Revolution française’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. III, 51–62.

⁹⁴¹ On the topic, see: Stéphane Buzzi, ‘Georges Lefebvre (1874-1959), ou une histoire sociale possible’, *Le Mouvement Social* 200, no. 3 (2002): 177–95, <https://doi.org/10.3917/lms.200.0177>.

⁹⁴² Kåre D. Tønnesson, *La défaite des Sans-culottes: mouvement populaire et réaction bourgeoise en l’an III* (Oslo: Presses Universitaires d’Oslo, 1959). Incidentally, Albert Soboul defined Tønnesson’s volume «a suggestive book, of lucid intelligence». See: Albert Soboul, ‘Kare D. Tønnesson, *La défaite des sans-culottes. Mouvement populaire et réaction bourgeoise en l’an III, 1793-1795*’, *Revue d’Histoire Moderne & Contemporaine* 7, no. 4 (1960): 312–17.

⁹⁴³ Patrick Hyde Kelly, ‘Irish writers and the French Revolution’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. III, 327–53.

⁹⁴⁴ Some years earlier, Walter Benjamin Kennedy argued a different perspective on the Irish Jacobins. He defined the Irish Jacobins as a non-cohesive group which never agreed what part of the Revolutionary tradition applied to Ireland’s problems. See: W. Benjamin Kennedy, ‘The Irish Jacobins’, *Studia Hibernica*, no. 16 (1976): 109–21.

⁹⁴⁵ See also: James S. Donnelly, ‘Propagating the Cause of the United Irishmen’, *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 69, no. 273 (1980): 5–23; Nancy J. Curtin, ‘The Transformation of the Society of United Irishmen into a Mass-Based Revolutionary Organisation, 1794-6’, *Irish Historical Studies* 24, no. 96 (1985): 463–92.

crucial period in Belgian history was divided by ethnic, regional, political and ideological differences. She stressed the paradox of national-centred historiography in a country whose historical events were deeply connected to the general interests of European politics. Nevertheless, internal opposition hegemonised the debate. Flemish scholars emphasised the counter-Revolutionary peasant war of 1798, while the Walloons extolled France as their cultural homeland. Similarly, Catholics condemned the religious policy of the Revolution, while liberals were divided between supporters and detractors of Jacobinism, and Marxists emphasised the economic-social consequences of the Revolution, like the spread of capitalism and the proletarianisation of large portions of the population.⁹⁴⁶ To this extent, Philippe Raxhon depicted Henri Pirenne as the protagonist of the break, with historical research on the Revolution closed within national boundaries. According to Raxhon, Pirenne's main contribution to this field of study was the stimulus to consider Revolutions in a global context. In other words, Raxhon argued that Pirenne laid the foundation for an extra-national study of the Revolutionary period.⁹⁴⁷

Southern European scholars' perspective on the study of the Revolution study confirmed the broad tendency towards the national dimension. As Georges Vlachos pointed out, Greek historians analysed the French Revolutionary period concerning the outbreak of the Greek Revolution in 1821 and the influence of French principles on Greek constitutions up to 1830.⁹⁴⁸ In the same period, Spanish historiography contrasted the French Revolution with the Spanish uprisings of 1820-21. Manuel Moreno Alonso defined this paradigm as a constant in Spanish historical research.⁹⁴⁹ This thesis was confirmed by José Andres-Gallego, who focused on Menendez Pelayo's studies at the end of the eighteenth century.⁹⁵⁰ Pelayo identified in the historical research on the French Revolution a hegemony of liberal and Marxist strands, which were banned during Francisco Franco's dictatorship. As Andres-Gallego noted, more recently, the fall of Francoism reopened the historiographical debate on the Revolution, also including Furet's revisionism.

⁹⁴⁶ Marie-Rose Thielemans, 'De Jemappes (1792) à Waterloo (1815): courants de l'historiographie belge aux XIX siècles', in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. I, 209–60.

⁹⁴⁷ Philippe Raxhon, 'Henri Pirenne et la Revolution française', in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. I, 261–74. See also: John Mundy, 'Henri Pirenne: A European Historian', *Journal of European Economic History* 6, no. 2 (1977): 473–95.

⁹⁴⁸ Georges Vlachos, 'Revolution française et Revolution nationale hellénique. Une perspective double pour l'historiographie greque du XIX et du XX siècles', in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. II, 219–60.

⁹⁴⁹ Manuel Moreno Alonso, 'L'historiographie espagnole sur la Revolution française', in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. I, 341–67.

⁹⁵⁰ José Andrés-Gallego, 'La Rivoluzione francese nella storiografia e nella storia della Spagna dal 1939', in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. I, 367–78.

Even the “silences” of European historiographies on the Revolution originated from national motivations. So the Dutch historian Peter van Kessel argued in his analysis of French Revolutionary studies in the Netherlands. He described how, at the birth of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815, historians focused on the influences of the Revolutionary period at the end of the eighteenth century. Scholars wondered about the causes of internal changes, mainly whether the ongoing modifications derived from the previous period or were merely an effect of the European Restoration. Van Kessel argued that the national spirit led Dutch historians to abandon the study of the French Revolution and to place the roots of the Dutch nation-state in the anti-Spanish revolt between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁹⁵¹

Similarly, Portuguese historian Luis Reis Torgal emphasised the lack of direct historical research on the French Revolution in Portugal, especially in the twentieth century. Torgal ascribed this low interest to António de Oliveira Salazar’s dictatorship since the regime considered the Revolutionary ideals dangerous to its authority. Following the fall of the dictator, a new historiography of Marxist inspiration began to study late-eighteenth-century France.⁹⁵² For different reasons, but with the same results, Anna Agnarsdóttir claimed that Icelandic historiography largely neglected the debate on the Revolution. In the context outlined by Agnarsdóttir, Icelandic historians have scarcely analysed the Revolutionary period, except for a few isolated cases, such as Magnús Stephensen and Páll Melsteö, who emphasised the moderate forces of the Revolution in the nineteenth century. From the twentieth century onwards, Agnarsdóttir continued, Icelandic historians’ intense focus on economic and social history led to a substantial detachment from studies of the Revolution.⁹⁵³

⁹⁵¹ Peter van Kessel, ‘A historiography at the service of the state: the Dutch case’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. III, 63–78. In 1962, Robert Wheaton provided a different perspective. He argued that John Lothrop Motley’s “The Rise of the Dutch Republic”, first published in 1863, remarkably influenced the successive Dutch historical writing even concerning the French Revolution. Wheaton emphasised Motley’s comparison between the Dutch and French Revolutions, where Motley noted several similarities. See: John Lothrop Motley, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* (London: Strahan & Company, 1863); Robert Wheaton, ‘Motley and the Dutch Historians’, *The New England Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (1962): 318–36. Similarly, in 1995, Jeremy Popkin studied the possible influences of the Dutch patriot movement on Revolutionary France in the mid-1780s. See: Jeremy D. Popkin, ‘Dutch Patriots, French Journalists, and Declarations of Rights: The Leidse Ontwerp of 1785 and Its Diffusion in France’, *The Historical Journal* 38, no. 3 (1995): 553–65. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Van Kessel’s argument on the prevalence of the Dutch national perspective on the French Revolution remains valid, as both of the above cases emphasise the Dutch role in events at the end of the eighteenth century.

⁹⁵² Luis Reis Torgal, ‘La Revolution française et l’historiographie du Portugal’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. III, 97–110.

⁹⁵³ Anna Agnarsdóttir, ‘The historiography of the French Revolution in Iceland’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. II, 353–66.

Surprisingly, Italy also came out from the conference as a country with several gaps in French Revolutionary studies.⁹⁵⁴ This picture emerged from AEH President Armando Saitta's lecture "echoes and silences" in Italian historical research.⁹⁵⁵ He was surprised by the lack of organic work on the French Revolution in Italy. Nevertheless, Saitta retraced the stages of Italian studies on the Revolution from Vincenzo Cuoco to Francesco De Sanctis to Alessandro Manzoni, up to Gaetano Salvemini's work, which, although outdated, Saitta appreciated for its ability to grasp institutional, economic and cultural processes.⁹⁵⁶ Proudly, the President of the AEH claimed his role in the entry of Lefebvre's paradigm in Italy through the Laterza publishing house, for which, in 1958, Saitta edited a miscellaneous volume with essays by Albert Soboul, George Rudé, and Richard Cobb.⁹⁵⁷ According to Saitta, the volume began a fruitful dialogue between Italian culture and European historiography.

One of the main protagonists of this dialogue, Saitta argued, was Albert Soboul. The conference ended with focusing on the French historian and his interpretation of the Revolutionary period. The portrait of the French historian was outlined by East German historian Walter Markov, who, however, was not able to attend the congress in person.⁹⁵⁸ Saitta, closing the panels as President of the Association, expressed satisfaction with the quality and breadth of the lectures. At the same time, he hoped that the congress was only the beginning of a broad European debate on the Revolution of 1789. Relentlessly, Saitta attacked Furet's revisionism by rejoicing about his possible "geological glaciation" during the Bicentenary celebrations. Taking the cue from Soboul's sharp polemic, the AEH President stated that:

⁹⁵⁴ For an overview of Italian historiography on the French Revolution, see: Antonino De Francesco, *Mito e storiografia della 'grande rivoluzione': la Rivoluzione francese nella cultura politica italiana del '900* (Napoli: Guida Editori, 2006).

⁹⁵⁵ Armando Saitta, 'La storiografia italiana sulla Rivoluzione francese: echi e silenzi', in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. II, 491–544.

⁹⁵⁶ On the topic, see: Antonino De Francesco, 'Il Meglio Che Io Abbia Scritto in Vita Mia: Note Sulla Rivoluzione Francese Di Gaetano Salvemini', *Nuova Rivista Storica* LXXXIX, no. 2 (2005): 281–340.

⁹⁵⁷ Georges Lefebvre et al., *Sanculotti e contadini nella Rivoluzione francese*, ed. Armando Saitta (Bari: Laterza, 1958).

⁹⁵⁸ Walter Markov, 'Hommage à Albert Soboul', in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. III, 259–266.

«The so-called return to the “political” should not be intended as a return to narrative history: instead, one should only refer to a return to the “political” when the economic, the social, the institutional, the mental, etc., have become structured in the “political” as its juice and blood, as converging forces within it for the realisation of a certain action, a certain reality».⁹⁵⁹

During the conference, Saitta expressed an unquestionably more radical position than Michel Vovelle. In his opening speech, the French historian contested the accusation of “ideological monolithism” that had been levelled against the History of the French Revolution chair at the Sorbonne University in Paris during the preparatory work for the Bicentenary. He referred to the “revisionists” attack against the historiographic strand inaugurated by Lefebvre through the Institute of the History of the French Revolution, founded in 1937 at the Sorbonne. Retracing the different phases of the History of the French Revolution chair, Vovelle defined as “a myth” the accusations of a one-direction “classical” paradigm. On the contrary, he claimed that the studies on the Revolution at the Sorbonne were varied and rich in different historiographic paradigms.⁹⁶⁰ Furthermore, Vovelle emphasised the considerable effort that historians worldwide had made to organise the Bicentenary, which witnessed historical research on the Revolution «in full awakening».⁹⁶¹ Incidentally, this was the same balanced position that the French historian would take a few months later at the World Congress in Paris, which Vovelle described as “neither anathema nor liturgy” but instead hosted a lively debate between historians from different strands.⁹⁶²

However, Saitta's radical position was not a solitary case at the conference. Several lectures focused on defending the “classical” paradigm. In his contribution, the Italian historian Paolo Viola analysed the discontinuity of thought between the two masters of the “classical” strand, Albert Mathiez and Georges Lefebvre, which the “revisionists” depicted as a monolithic block. Viola declared that the break between the two scholars lay in the dichotomy between the objective dimension of the Revolution, which was interpreted by Lefebvre as a product of historical events, and the subjective dimension, which was privileged by Mathiez in its

⁹⁵⁹ «Il cosiddetto ritorno al “politico” non deve essere inteso come ritorno alla storia narrativa: si dovrebbe invece parlare di ritorno al “politico” soltanto quando l'economico, il sociale, l'istituzionale, il mentale, ecc. si siano strutturati nel “politico” e ne siano diventati succo e sangue, essendosi trasformati in forze convergenti all'interno di esso per la realizzazione di una determinata azione, di una determinata realtà». Armando Saitta, ‘A proposito di una Post-face’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. III, 267–9: 268.

⁹⁶⁰ Michel Vovelle, ‘La chaire d'Histoire de la Revolution française à la Sorbonne’, in Italian Historical Institute, ed., *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. I, 5–15.

⁹⁶¹ «L'historiographie de la Revolution est en plein réveil». Ibid, 15.

⁹⁶² Vovelle, *La bataille*, 101–26.

Jacobin and voluntarist declination.⁹⁶³ Mario Francesco Leonardi recalled the theme in his lecture stressing a considerable distance between Mathiez and François-Alphonse Aulard. The former had readily picked up the novelty of Jean Jaurès' studies on class struggles within the political conflicts; the latter, on the other hand, was more focused on social history relating to the peasant question and the abolition of feudality.⁹⁶⁴ In the same vein, French historian Claude Mazauric pointed out in his lecture that a principal value of Marxist historiography still emerged during the conference. In other words, opposing Furet's view, Mazauric argued that the “classical” paradigm could still help scrutinise numerous aspects of the French Revolution.⁹⁶⁵ Overall, analysing the conference lectures, one might argue a substantial agreement between Mazauric's thesis and all other participants.

This clear stance was derived not only from scientific but also political motivations. In addition to the international debate, especially in Italy, the discussion concerning the Bicentenary broadly involved politicians. As Marco Di Maggio has extensively analysed, the 1989 anniversary was an important event in measuring the relationship between the two major parties of the Italian left, namely the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and the Italian Communist Party (PCI).⁹⁶⁶ In January 1989, the Italian newspaper “l'Espresso” published several articles dedicated to the Bicentenary. Significantly, it interviewed the two leaders of the PSI and PCI, respectively Bettino Craxi and Achille Occhetto, on the significance of the French Revolution. The former recognised that communists were heirs of the Bolshevik Revolution and the French Revolution, especially Jacobinism; at the same time, however, he stated that the most problematic legacy of both Revolutions was the illusion that violence could regulate society. Craxi affirmed the superiority of reformism over any Revolutionary-type option, overcoming classical social democratic perspectives and confirming adherence to a liberal democratic value system.⁹⁶⁷ Similarly, the latter argued that communists were no longer a direct subsidiary of Jacobinism, which was the bearer of

⁹⁶³ “Storografia francese da Albert Mathiez a Georges Lefebvre” lecture by Paolo Viola, 22 May 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 10, dossier Abstracts and Lectures. On the topic, see: Peter M. Jones, ‘Georges Lefebvre and the Peasant Revolution: Fifty Years On’, *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 3 (1990): 645–63.

⁹⁶⁴ “La storiografia rivoluzionaria da Aulard a Cochin (1889–1918) lecture by Mario Francesco Leonardi, 21 May 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 10, dossier Abstracts and Lectures. On the topic, see: Joseph Tendler, ‘Alphonse Aulard Revisited’, *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 20, no. 4 (1 August 2013): 649–69.

⁹⁶⁵ “Sguardi marxisti contemporanei sulla storia della Rivoluzione francese” lecture by Claude Mazauric, 22 May 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 10, dossier Abstracts and Lectures.

⁹⁶⁶ Marco Di Maggio, ‘Dal “Vangelo socialista” alla Bolognina. Le sinistre degli anni Ottanta e la Rivoluzione’, in *Sfumature di rosso: La Rivoluzione russa nella politica italiana del Novecento*, Marco Di Maggio (Torino: Accademia University Press, 2017), 269–305.

⁹⁶⁷ Bettino Craxi, Francesco Adornato, ‘Pensaci Giacobino, La Storia è Dei Moderati’, *L'Espresso*, 29 January 1989.

totalitarianism and the exalter of violent Revolutionary ideals.⁹⁶⁸ As Di Maggio has emphasised, in the context of the assimilation of the Revolutions of 1789 and 1917, the two leaders converged in condemning the French Revolution, particularly the Jacobin period.

Interestingly, Italian Republican Party member Giovanni Spadolini, President of the Italian Senate and the Italian Central Council for Historical Studies, had a markedly different view of the French Revolution. In his telegram for the Pisa conference in 1989, Spadolini extolled the Bicentenary as an auspicious occasion to recall the close relations between French and Italian democratic cultures in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁹⁶⁹ He highlighted the link between the freedom struggles of the Jacobins and Girondins and the “heroes” of the Italian Risorgimento. Elsewhere, Spadolini stated, «without the French Revolution, and the backlashes of the first Jacobin republics, we would not have had the flourishing of conspiracies for freedom and national independence».⁹⁷⁰ In decidedly enthusiastic tones, he also attributed the genesis of the Italian Resistance between the two world wars to the ideals of the Revolution.

In the context of “damnatio memoriae” of the French Revolution due to its juxtaposition with the Bolshevik Revolution and Stalinism, Spadolini's positions expressed at the opening of the 1989 conference were appreciated by Saitta. Explicitly, one of the conference's stated aims was to counter the “cooling” of interest in the Revolution. As outlined by the Italian historian Luciano Guerri, in the late 1980s, “revisionism” became abused and gained a hegemonic position. In turn, the revisionists constructed an orthodoxy, and any possible dissent caused the accusation of totalitarian or populist nostalgia.⁹⁷¹ In contrast, Saitta wished for the «geological glaciation of François Furet [...] who has long imposed on European historiographies, also thanks to the subordination of large and illustrious publishers who have contended for Furet's books on the national market».⁹⁷² Consequently, the AEH President

⁹⁶⁸ Achille Occhetto, Francesco Adornato, ‘Parigi, Sei Tu La Nostra Rivoluzione’, *L'Espresso*, 29 January 1989.

⁹⁶⁹ Telegram of the President of the Italian Senate and of the Italian Central Council for Historical Studies, 18 May 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 10, dossier Abstracts and Lectures.

⁹⁷⁰ «Senza la Rivoluzione francese, e i contraccolpi delle prime repubbliche giacobine, non avremmo avuto il fiorire delle congiure per la libertà e l'indipendenza nazionale». Giovanni Spadolini, ‘La Francia, l'Italia e La Grande Rivoluzione’, *Vita Italiana* 4, no. 4 (1989): 12–21 : 13. Spadolini studied in depth the links of the French Revolution with both the American Revolution and the Italian Risorgimento, with a perspective similar to Palmer and Godechot's 'Atlantic Revolution'. See: Giovanni Spadolini, ‘L'idea d'America Nella Cultura Europea’, *Rivista Di Studi Politici Internazionali* 59, no. 4 (236) (1992): 491–98; Cosimo Ceccuti, ‘Giovanni Spadolini’, in *Toscani: Presidenti Del Consiglio, Presidenti Della Repubblica*, Pier Luigi Ballini (Firenze: Polistampa, 2013), 93–106.

⁹⁷¹ Luciano Guerri, ‘Raffreddare e Inveire: A Proposito Del Bicentenario Del 1789’, *Passato e Presente* 8, no. 19 (1989): 3–12 : 4.

⁹⁷² «Glaciazione geologica di François Furet [...] che si è lungamente imposto storiografie europee, anche grazie alla subordinazione di grandi e illustri editori che si sono contesi i libri di Furet sul mercato nazionale». Saitta, ‘A proposito di una “post-face”’, in Italian Historical Institute, *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. III, 269.

emphasised Spadolini's words «of lively cultural participation and thoughtful assessment of the place that the French Revolution of 1789 has had in our history».⁹⁷³

Simultaneously, the President of the AEH highlighted the Association's long path since the 1983 conference.⁹⁷⁴ Saitta implicitly marked the substantial difference between the conference on Europe, organised and sponsored in collaboration with the EC institutions, and the conference on the French Revolution in 1989. Indeed, the first official AEH conference was held under the sole Italian institutions' patronage. The support ranged from several ministers in the government led by the Christian Democrat Giulio Andreotti to the President of the Italian Republic, Francesco Cossiga. In contrast, no EC or other countries' representatives participated or were involved. The detachment from CE institutions became unmitigated.

Incidentally, it is worth noting that the European Communities (EC) did not give special prominence to the Bicentenary. Jacques Delors' European Commission (EUCO) actively supported several conferences of the Liaison Committee of European Historians (LCEH) concerning the European integration process in the same period. The LCEH invested many resources into its third conference organised in Rome in March 1987, which focused on the relaunching of Europe and the Treaties of Rome.⁹⁷⁵ In Rome, the Liaison Committee involved eyewitnesses, in addition to historians of international relations, aiming to foster an exchange of views and employ oral history methods. As Antonio Varsori has argued, the primary logic in the choice of conference themes was the chronology of the European integration process from different perspectives.⁹⁷⁶ Accordingly, the fourth LCEH conference in Luxembourg in 1989 analysed the period between the Schuman Plan and the Rome Treaties.⁹⁷⁷ In the same year, the LCEH and EUCO supported a new research project on "European identity" from a historical perspective launched by René Girault.⁹⁷⁸ Although Delors declared that the EUCO was officially committed to the celebrations of the Bicentenary,⁹⁷⁹ the Commission's interest

⁹⁷³ «Di viva partecipazione culturale e di meditata valutazione del posto che nella nostra storia ha avuto la Rivoluzione francese del 1789». Saitta, 'Preface', in Italian Historical Institute, *La storia della storiografia europea sulla Rivoluzione francese*, vol. I, III-IV. Incidentally, it is worth mentioning that Saitta and Spadolini had a deep personal friendship. Several letters between them are available at ACSNSP, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder XXXIV, dossier Spadolini, Giovanni.

⁹⁷⁴ Ibid, II.

⁹⁷⁵ Enrico Serra, *The Relaunching of Europe and the Treaties of Rome: Actes Du Colloque de Rome, 25-28 Mars 1987*, Veröffentlichungen Der Historiker-Verbindungsgruppe Bei Der Kommission Der Europäischen Gemeinschaften (Bruxelles: Bruylant, 1989).

⁹⁷⁶ Varsori, 'From normative impetus', 14.

⁹⁷⁷ Gilbert Trausch, *The European Integration from the Schuman-Plan to the Treaties of Rome*. (Bruxelles: Bruylant, 1993).

⁹⁷⁸ Loth, 'La contribution', 50-1.

⁹⁷⁹ Question écrite n° 0392/87 de M. Robert Delorozoy (LDR - F) à la Commission des Communautés européennes: Europe et bicentenaire de la Revolution française, 25 Sept. 1987, HAEU, PE2-27603.

was more focused on legitimising the European integration process than on the Bicentenary of the Revolution.

Yet, the issue raised a heated debate within the European Parliament (EP). In July 1986, a MEP of the European People's Party, Carmen Llorca Vilaplana, invited the EP to establish a committee for the second centenary of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.⁹⁸⁰ She framed the Declaration as the initial moment of the French Revolution and a source of inspiration for subsequent human rights developments, especially for the EC.⁹⁸¹ In the same vein, socialist MEPs Anne-Marie Lizin and Marie-Noëlle Lienemann proposed the celebration of the Bicentenary «considering that the European impact of the French Revolution was decisive in shaping contemporary political behaviour throughout Europe».⁹⁸² Predictably, the proposals triggered vehement conflicts, especially from right-wing exponents. As described above, by the late 1980s, the French Revolution was outlined as the inspiration for the Bolshevik Revolution, especially Stalinism.⁹⁸³ Accordingly, the MEP of the Technical Group of the European Right, Bernard Antony, tabled a motion arguing that «the memory of this bloody Revolution has been exalted by all the great dictators and mass murderers of contemporary history».⁹⁸⁴ He harshly described the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen as the prologue to totalitarianism and the Revolution as the beginning of the destruction of natural communities and intermediate bodies, and the origin of the anti-Christian sentiment in Europe. In an entirely ideological perspective, Antony attacked the proposed commemoration of the Bicentenary and urged national governments to refrain from positively celebrating the anniversary and instead focus on commemorating the victims of Nazism and Bolshevism.⁹⁸⁵

With a considerable delay, the EP found a mediation in January 1989 for an official committee to commemorate both the French Revolution and the Declaration of the Rights of

⁹⁸⁰ Commémoration du bicentenaire de la Revolution Française, 9 July 1986, HAEU, PE2-11653.

⁹⁸¹ For a critical perspective concerning human rights and European integration, see: Marco Duranti, *The Conservative Human Rights Revolution: European Identity, Transnational Politics, and the Origins of the European Convention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

⁹⁸² Commémoration du bicentenaire de la Revolution Française, 19 Dec. 1986, HAEU, PE2-12491.

⁹⁸³ Cf. note 971.

⁹⁸⁴ Commémoration du bicentenaire de la Revolution Française, 29 Oct. 1986, HAEU, PE2-12244.

⁹⁸⁵ On the comparison between Nazism and Stalinism, see: Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Concerning the use of this comparison by the right-wing politicians in the twentieth century, see: Martin A. Lee, *The Beast Reawakens: Fascism's Resurgence from Hitler's Spymasters to Today's Neo-Nazi Groups and Right-Wing Extremists* (London: Routledge, 2013). Recently, global historians have challenged both the "classical" and the revisionist paradigms concerning the French Revolution. They have emphasised that the French Revolution was not just "one big thing": democracy, centralisation, violence, protototalitarianism, human rights, or imperialism. Instead, global historians have argued that the Revolution of 1789 was "world-historical" since it affected so many things in many, often contradictory, directions. See: Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max Nelson, *The French Revolution in Global Perspective* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2013), 10–1.

Man and the Citizen.⁹⁸⁶ The resolution essentially included the Vilaplana and Lizin/Lienemann motions, recognising the value of both anniversaries and extolling their legacy to contemporary Europe. However, the official motivations were primarily juridical rather than historical-political. Surprisingly, the Parliamentary Juridical Commission for Citizens' Rights, chaired by the socialist Marie-Claude Vayssade, was charged with analysing the proposals received on the subject and expressing an opinion. After two years of work, this Commission, in an essentially vague formula, argued that:

«the French Revolution of 1789 constitutes a turning point in European history. Rather than its military and geographical consequences, it marked our continent in the field of ideas [...] it is not a question of judging the Revolutionary events as such, but rather noting their importance for European history and their influence on the affirmation, dissemination and preservation of numerous great principles».⁹⁸⁷

Consequently, the report primarily focused on the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen, particularly on its influence on the subsequent constitutional developments of European states. In the report, several rulings of the European Court of Justice were cited, as well as the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 1950 and the Preamble to the Single European Act of 1986. Vayssade finally urged the European Parliament to exploit the occasion of the Bicentenary to reaffirm the importance of fundamental rights and the democratic process in the EC.

Considering this background and the enduring uncertainties of the AEH concerning the politicisation of historical research, it is unsurprising that the Association of European Historians did not even consider the partnership with the EP. Instead, the 1989 conference outlined an attempt to construct Europeanness through a bottom-up process outside the EC institutions. Two elements confirm this process. First, as evidenced by the analysis of the conference lectures, the study of the French Revolution within European countries had been essentially based on national paradigms for two centuries. The vast majority of contributions emphasised the systematic comparison of the events of the Revolution with individual national histories. The AEH, with similar intentions to the 1983 conference, hoped that the congress would mean a starting point towards a European reading of the Revolution, this time without the support of EC institutions. The organisers aspired to make the Association the

⁹⁸⁶ Commémoration en 1989 du bicentenaire de la Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen, 18 Jan. 1989, HAEU, PE2-18702.

⁹⁸⁷ Ibid, 7.

meeting point for European historiographies on the subject. At first glance, the proposal would only affect the scientific community of historians. Instead, the ambition was to promote a European, and no longer national, view of history, starting with the French Revolution and successively to the entire history of the continent. Compared to the conference on Europe, the AEH in 1989 aimed at influencing educational and cultural cooperation from “outside”, rather than directly intervening in the EC teaching policies. Incidentally, the role of history teaching and teachers in the Association became increasingly irrelevant.

Secondly, the Europeanness that the AEH tried to build significantly included several scholars from the Soviet bloc. While the fall of the Berlin Wall was imminent, it is essential to mention that the AEH included the Soviet bloc within its idea of Europe long before the late 1980s.⁹⁸⁸ The Association diverged from emphasising the concept of “Central Europe” in the mid-1980s. According to Milan Kundera, the invention of a concept of “Central Europe” in that period reflected an intellectual and political project to differentiate from the backward “Eastern Europe” and to emphasise “returning to Europe” after forceful separation by barbaric Soviet forces.⁹⁸⁹ Hann et al. have further stressed that, during the Cold War, there were frequent references in the West to Soviet totalitarianism as being linked to traditions of “Oriental despotism”.⁹⁹⁰ As a result, Iver Neumann has argued, in the twentieth century, “the East” has become a generalised social marker for Europe’s other in European identity building. To this extent, Neumann has not considered the end of the Cold War as a watershed since he still observed a lasting East/West dichotomy in European history after 1989.⁹⁹¹ What made Orientalist assumptions about East-Central Europe effective was that, rather than working simply on an East-West dichotomy, it worked in multiple shades of “otherness”. In the word of Merje Kuus, this dichotomy created a “flexible othering” which led not to a dissolution of Eastern Europe as it united with “proper” Europe, but rather a multiplication of “Eastern Europes”.⁹⁹²

⁹⁸⁸ Cf. note 793.

⁹⁸⁹ Milan Kundera, ‘The Tragedy of Central Europe’, *Quadrant* 28, no. 10 (1984): 45–51.

⁹⁹⁰ Chris Hann, Carolin Humphrey, and Katherine Verdery, ‘Introduction: Postsocialism as a Topic of Anthropological Investigation’, in *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*, Chris Hann (London: Routledge, 2003), 1–28.

⁹⁹¹ Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: ‘The East’ in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 207–9.

⁹⁹² Merje Kuus, ‘Europe’s Eastern Expansion and the Reinscription of Otherness in East-Central Europe’, *Progress in Human Geography* 28, no. 4 (2004): 472–89: 479. What also made effective the Orientalist “othering” was the fact that it was not simply imposed by Western Europe, but rather internalised and used by each country and region against its neighbours. For countries in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, claims to Europeanness still nowadays are accompanied by attempts to push the discursive borders of Europe to their East

To this extent, we can define the AEH as a forerunner of Europeanness without distinction of blocs, which would be one of the leading “battlegrounds” from the 1990s onwards. Sedef Arat-Koç has critically analysed the enlargement of Europe in recent decades. He has argued that, instead of contesting Europe and expanding it to include all heterogeneity, this enlargement has instead confirmed a monolithic conception of “Europe”, as culturally and politically defined by Western Europe. This process has led to a hyper-consciousness, new or heightened anxieties about Europeanness based on distinctions between East and West, North and South. Concerning the post-Cold War period, Arat-Koç has emphasised that one of the most important outcomes of a heightened narcissism around Europeanness has been an ongoing expansion of exclusionary racist and culturalist logic across Europe.⁹⁹³ Against this background, the AEH took a step towards a broader Europeanness by overcoming the blocs and the cultural barriers. The concept of the “other” was still present but referred to entities beyond the Atlantic to the west, and beyond the Urals to the east. Although from a distinctly Eurocentric perspective, with the “spirit of Europe” in the background, the 1989 conference publicly marked the Association's growth path from 1983 onwards.

As a result, the AEH involved a large delegation of Eastern European scholars in the conference:

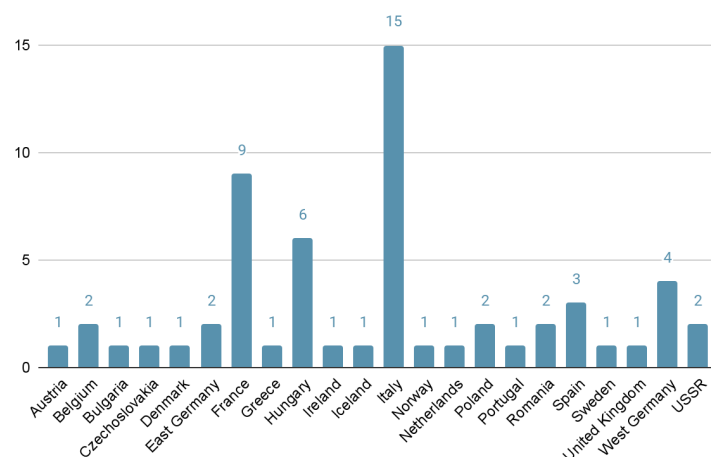


Fig. 6 - Number of participants in the 1989 conference per country.
Source: IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 10, dossier Participants.

or South. On the topic, see also: Merje Kuus, *Geopolitics Reframed: Security and Identity in Europe's Eastern Enlargement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁹⁹³ Sedef Arat-Koç, ‘Contesting or Affirming “Europe”? European Enlargement, Aspirations for “Europeanness” and New Identities in the Margins of Europe’, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 18, no. 2 (1 June 2010): 181–91.

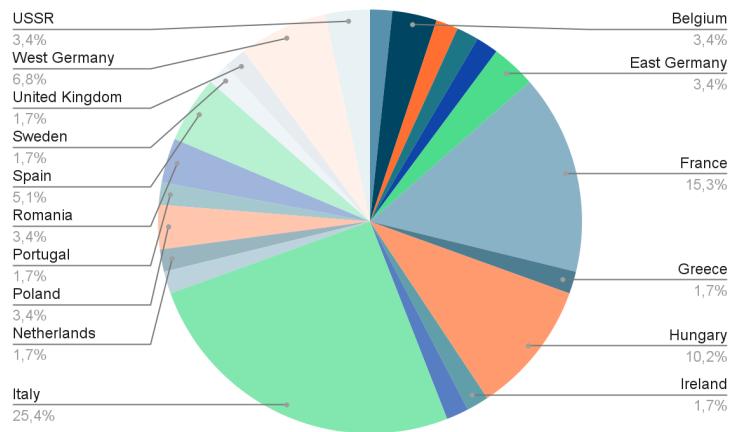


Fig. 7 - Percentage of participants in the 1989 conference per country.
Source: IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 10, dossier Participants.

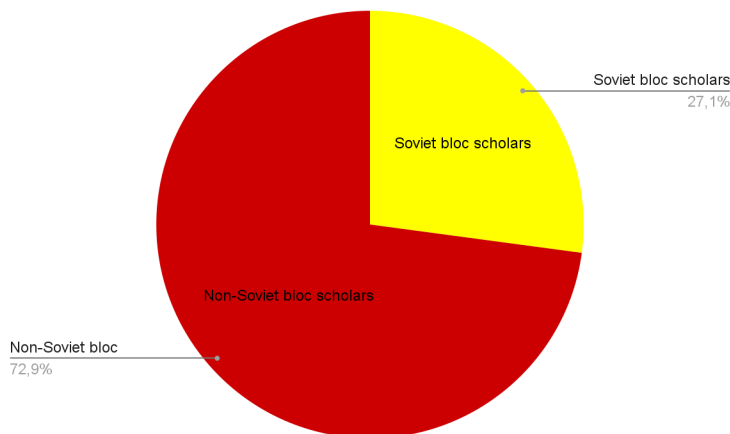


Fig. 8 - Percentage of participants in the 1989 conference per bloc.
Source: IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 10, dossier Participants.

Conclusions

Following the final detachment from the European Communities, the AEH began to take its first steps as an autonomous organisation. Although outside the EC institutions, the Association did not give up promoting Europeanness to overcome “historiographical nationalism”. The first significant activity was elaborating a possible journal on European historiography. After a lively debate, the journal was transformed into a bulletin within the Italian journal “Critica Storica” edited by AEH President Armando Saitta. Fears prevailed among AEH members concerning the difficulties of another scholarly journal with significant funding difficulties. The proliferation of journals, including the similar “Storia della

Storiografia” from 1982,⁹⁹⁴ and the crisis in the scientific publishing market at the time led to a downsizing of the suggestion of a new AEH journal.

However, in addition to the form, the bulletin produced content controversy. The prevalent use of the Italian language, partly due to the majority of Italian members of the Association, discouraged the participation of non-Italian members. The debate on the bulletin revealed a deeper problem of excessive “Italianness” within the AEH. This aspect, which later became increasingly problematic, marked one of the sharpest contradictions of the Association, which was conceived as European but was essentially enlivened by Italian scholars.

The bulletin became the primary medium of the first official AEH congress on the history of European historiography on the French Revolution. The topic, incidentally the main object of Saitta's studies since the beginning of his career, was linked to the 1789 Bicentenary. In the context of a broad international debate on the celebrations, and especially on the meaning of the Revolution between the classical and revisionist paradigms, the AEH was taking sides with the French Marxist school. Within the framework of “Bataille”, the Association attacked Furet and openly supported the validity of the Marxist lens for analysing the Revolution.

The lectures at the conference emphasised, with different nuances, the overall national perspective of Revolutionary studies in various European countries. Consequently, the conference's intention to “Europeanise” the studies and communication of the revolutionary period was all the more necessary. No participant, however, considered a point of view more expansive than just the European continent. Neither Palmer and Godechot's “Atlantic thesis” nor the global dimension of 1789 found room in the conference. Deliberately, the AEH excluded any perspective that might question the centrality of the European continent and its historiographies. As in the 1983 conference, overcoming “historiographical nationalism” coincided with a marked Eurocentrism.

This Eurocentrism was broader than EC borders. Following the reasons for detachment from the EC, the Association successfully engaged several scholars from the Soviet bloc. However, one might argue that politics significantly influenced participation. Some scholars could not attend the conference due to a lack of governmental authorisation; others were prevented from attending precisely because they were affiliated with official institutions of communist governments. The AEH only accepted historians unconnected to political power and communist parties. As a result, the participation of scholars from Eastern Europe was numerous but carefully selected.

⁹⁹⁴ Cf. note 84.

Overall, the 1989 conference attempted to promote Europeanness with a strongly Eurocentric character. Without the support or collaboration of the EC, the AEH aimed at a “bottom-up” change of European cultural policies. Despite the lack of attention paid by political institutions to the history of Europe as opposed to the history of the integration process, the AEH tried to stimulate debate on the need to Europeanise, in a broad sense, perspectives on history starting from the French Revolution.

5. The sunset of the AEH (1989-1992).

Following the first official congress in 1989, the Association of European Historians reached a crossroads. The renewal of the Executive Board and the President provided the opportunity for an in-depth analysis of the Association's structure. The members faced a choice between the continuity of work, which implied a strong centralisation of powers in the hands of Armando Saitta and the Italian scholars, and renewal in a more European sense, which meant a “leap into the void”. Despite a substantial agreement towards the first alternative, considered as a transitional period towards a broader, non-Italian organisational set-up, Saitta's sudden death in May 1991 forcibly entailed a “handover” of activities and a practical test of the AEH's dependence on its founder President. Was the Association a one-person rule? How did the activities of the Association change after the President's death? How was the promotion, or non-promotion, of Europeanness after this watershed? This chapter first analyses the discussion concerning the election of new AEH officers after 1989 and the desire to continue expanding towards Eastern Europe. However, Saitta's death urged for appointing a new President, and consequently, a debate on the new leadership of the Association emerged, which is examined in the second section. The transition to the new presidency coincided with the organisation of the AEH's second official congress on the occasion of the Fifth Centenary of the “Discovery of America” in 1992, the Association's first test after the death of the founding President. The third paragraph analyses the historiographical paradigm of the congress and challenges the possible promotion of Europeanness. Despite efforts to maintain the Association alive, Saitta's death marked its gradual decline.

5.1 After the Berlin Wall: the AEH framework following 1989.

While the Berlin Wall started to creak, the AEH had already involved a small but noteworthy percentage of scholars from Eastern Europe. With great pride in its achievements, the Association prepared for the renewal of its management bodies and a new general assembly. After the exertions of the 1989 conference were over, the members of the AEH gathered in a general assembly to elect the new Executive Board. At the meeting, the AEH President Saitta and the outgoing Executive Board encouraged a radical renewal of the Association's leadership. The appeal to the AEH members was to «vote with a truly European and not exclusively national outlook», bearing in mind that «the participation of the various countries

of Europe is quantitatively very diverse».⁹⁹⁵ The hope was the formation of an Executive Board including smaller countries or scholars with little involvement in the Association.

However, the election results turned in the opposite direction. Out of ten Executive Board members, five were Italian: Francesco Barone, Franco Sartori, Mario Francesco Leonardi, Cinzio Violante, and Alberto Monticone. The majority of the remaining 5 belonged, in the words of the AEH President, to the “little Europe”: Pierre Villard and Jacques Godechot from France; Eloy Benito Ruano from Spain; Hartmut Galsterer from Germany, while Thomas Riis from Denmark was the only exception.⁹⁹⁶ Moreover, all non-Italian members had already been elected to the previous Executive Board, as well as the Italians Barone, Sartori and Violante. The outcome of the vote significantly irritated Saitta, who privately confided his disappointment for «a short-sighted view of the Association, which will not bear good fruits».⁹⁹⁷

Overall, greater integration of European countries into the Association remained a suggestion rather than an objective. Aside from the repeated statements, Saitta and the Executive Board took no steps towards the broader inclusion of non-Italian members. The bulletin continued to be published in Italian and was included in an Italian journal. Saitta, despite his intentions, needed to effectively train a scholar who could take his place as President. A kind of “vicious circle” was taking shape: the President complained about the lack of participation in the AEH's activities; simultaneously, he held all the logistical and financial resources for the management. Consequently, it is unsurprising that only members within the President's inner circle took the initiative within the Association.

This lack of renewal caused two types of consequences. Firstly, a progressive disinterest of members in the Association's activities emerged. 187 out of 512 members participated in the vote in May 1989. A much lower percentage than the previous vote in 1985, in which 254 members voted out of 419.⁹⁹⁸ The significant drop in voting participation illustrated the scarce regard of several members for the core activities of the Association. In the four years between the first general assembly in 1985 and the new election of the Executive Board in

⁹⁹⁵ «Votare con sguardo veramente europeo e non esclusivamente nazionale»; «la partecipazione dei vari Paesi dell'Europa è quantitativamente assai varia». The AEH President and the AEH Executive Board, 'Bollettino A.S.E.', *Critica Storica* XXVI, 1 (1989), 154.

⁹⁹⁶ Report of the AEH general assembly held on 21 May 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1989.

⁹⁹⁷ «Una visione miope dell'Associazione, che non porterà buoni frutti». Letter of Armando Saitta to Franco Sartori, 27 May 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1989.

⁹⁹⁸ AEH voters lists, Aug. 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

1989, the AEH leadership failed to effectively engage a large proportion of the members, who remained formally registered but practically inactive.

Secondly, the Executive Board increasingly supported continuity in the management of the AEH. Realising that a substantial replacement was impossible in the short term, several members preferred the most straightforward and safest solution: to confirm the previous structure, pending new developments. Franco Sartori clearly expressed this position, emphasising the importance of continuity in the Association's project, regardless of the game-actors change.⁹⁹⁹ Pierre Villard and Hartmut Galsterer reinforced this perspective by emphasising the need to train new members concerning AEH management activities.¹⁰⁰⁰ Going further, Thomas Riis urged caution in the immediate involvement of new scholars in the Executive Board, especially from Eastern Europe. He was concerned about the suitability of Polish, Romanian, or Hungarian scholars for management roles in the Association.¹⁰⁰¹

Riis's words recall Francis Fukuyama's considerations concerning the supposed "end of history" in 1989. Fukuyama argued that, in the twentieth century, liberalism contended first with the remnants of absolutism, then bolshevism and fascism, and finally, an updated Marxism. At the end of the century, the ultimate triumph of Western liberal democracy led to an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism. He wondered if the end of the Cold War coincided with the end of history, the endpoint of humankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. Fukuyama, with regret, concluded that the so-called post-historical period was beginning. Indeed, the passing of Marxism-Leninism, first from China and then from the Soviet Union, meant the death of a living ideology of world-historical significance. This did not automatically imply the end of international conflict; rather, Fukuyama stated that 1989 was a turning point of transition between history and post-history.¹⁰⁰²

Simultaneously, a new claim for a post-national European identity emerged. Morgane Le Boulay has extensively debated the European history "boom" among historians since the end of the 1980s. Many of these scientific endeavours shared the same ambition: rethinking history from a transnational perspective to support the advent of a united Europe.¹⁰⁰³ In Germany, the fall of the Berlin Wall led historians to question its consequences on historical

⁹⁹⁹ Letter of Franco Sartori to Armando Saitta, 25 May 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1989.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Letter of Pierre Villard to Armando Saitta, 12 Oct. 1989, *ibid.*; Letter of Hartmut Galsterer to Armando Saitta, 20 Oct. 1989, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰¹ Letter of Thomas Riis to the Executive Board, 10 Dec. 1989, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰² Francis Fukuyama, 'The end of history?', *The national interest* no.16 (1989): 3-18.

¹⁰⁰³ Le Boulay, *La Fabrique*, 113-26.

science. As explained above, between 1949 and 1989, the West and East Germany had distinct institutional frameworks, methodological models, and world views.¹⁰⁰⁴ After the fall of the Berlin Wall, West German historians experienced a “moral superiority” over their East German colleagues, who had “compromised” with the Soviet regime and were forced to adapt to the Western paradigm.¹⁰⁰⁵ However, since 1989, both East and West German scholars have faced the issue of unifying two systems of historical research.¹⁰⁰⁶ In scholarly debates, the idea grew that reunification should proceed parallel with European construction. According to this perspective, the country would solve its identity problems by emerging a post-national European identity.

Against this background, Thomas Riis' misgivings concerning Eastern Europe scholars in the AEH reignited the internal discussions on eastward enlargement. His doubts concerned precisely the hurdles in integrating Soviet bloc historians into the Association's leading roles. While recognising the excellent work done by the AEH to involve these scholars, Riis urged caution, especially in that particular historical period. He stated that «involving Eastern European scholars without a thorough examination of the risks in the current political context, could be a dangerous sidestep».¹⁰⁰⁷

However, most of the AEH Executive Board did not agree with Riis' statements. Jean-René Suratteau argued that the period encouraged collaboration with historians from the dissolving Soviet bloc.¹⁰⁰⁸ Similarly, Sartori urged to campaign for new membership from Eastern Europe actively. Adriano Prosperi and President Saitta went further, stating that Western European historians had the precise task to «accompany the entry of Eastern European scholars into Western civilisation».¹⁰⁰⁹ By employing awareness-raising campaigns, they proposed establishing a special commission to formulate specific projects through the different schools of historical research.

These positions recall what some global historians have effectively described as a “Western-centric view of Eastern Europe”. According to this interpretation, Eastern Europe is

¹⁰⁰⁴ Cf. notes 677–679. On the topic, see also: Lutz Raphael, ‘Der Beruf Des Historikers Seit 1945’, in *Geschichtswissenschaften. Eine Einführung*, ed. Christoph Cornelissen (Munich: Fischer, 2000), 39–52.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Michel Christian and Emmanuel Droit, ‘Écrire l’histoire du communisme : l’histoire sociale de la RDA et de la Pologne communiste en Allemagne, en Pologne et en France’, *Genèses* 61, no. 4 (2005): 118–33.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Jürgen Kocka, ‘La Réunification et La Recherche Historique Allemande (Germany’s Reunification and Historical Research)’, *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d’histoire*, no. 34 (1992): 32–36.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Letter of Thomas Riis to the Executive Board, 10 Dec. 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1989.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Letter of Jean-René Suratteau to the Executive Board, 28 Jan. 1990, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1990.

¹⁰⁰⁹ «Accompagnare l’ingresso degli studiosi dell’Europa orientale nella civiltà occidentale». Report of the Executive Board meeting held on 9 June 1990, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1990.

commonly intended as a victim and passive recipient of Western “medicine” for its ailments. This cure enabled the region to abandon its isolation and engage with the one true civilisation.¹⁰¹⁰ According to the US intellectual Gale Stokes, 1989 represented removing a temporary roadblock to globalisation, ending traditional colonialism, and allowing Eastern Europe to enter post-history.¹⁰¹¹ As a result, in the words of the German left-liberal public philosopher Jürgen Habermas, the “revolutions” of 1989 represented the idea that the great civilisations of the world would converge towards the institutional and cultural configurations of Western society.¹⁰¹² The notion of a “wind of change” blowing in from the West to sweep away stale Eastern dictatorships dominated both popular Western images and scholarly frameworks of the Communist era in Eastern Europe. Historical frameworks to understand the transformation of Eastern Europe frequently concentrated on the integrative processes towards a world dominated by the West.

The so-called “transitologists” have normalised a convergence in Western economic and political values. They argued that in 1989, the Communist regimes in Europe started a meaningful political, economic, and social change towards democracy. Although in a process marked by deep conflicts and asymmetries, the “transitologists” linked the possible “democratisation” of the former USSR countries with their progressive adherence to the Western democratic ideal. They urged to create an economic society supportive of democracy that required more than just markets and private property. By transcending “illiberal liberalism”, “transitologists” hoped for socially constructed integrative identity politics, instead of endlessly fragmenting ones. In other words, new political projects towards democracy must be inspired by the quality of consolidated democracies in the West.¹⁰¹³

Some postcolonial scholars have suggested that Eastern Europeans assumed a “Western gaze” which constructed their backwardness and peripherality.¹⁰¹⁴ Ewa Thompson described the relationship between Poland and the West as a “surrogate hegemon”. She traced its roots to

¹⁰¹⁰ James Mark et al., *1989: A Global History of Eastern Europe*, New Approaches to European History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 6–7.

¹⁰¹¹ Gale Stokes, ‘Purposes of the Past’, in *The End and the Beginning: The Revolutions of 1989 and the Resurgence of History*, Vladimir Tismaneanu, Bogdan C. Iacob (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2012), 35–53: 52.

¹⁰¹² Jürgen Habermas, ‘What Does Socialism Mean Today? The Rectifying Revolution and the Need for New Thinking on the Left’, *New Left Review* 183, no. 1 (1990): 3–22.

¹⁰¹³ Guillermo O’Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1986); Juan J. Linz, Alfred Stepan, and Sayre Wallace, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1996); Kathryn Stoner and Michael McFaul, *Transitions to Democracy: A Comparative Perspective* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2013).

¹⁰¹⁴ Lucy Mayblin, Aneta Piekut, and Gill Valentine, ‘Other’Posts in ‘Other’Places: Poland through a Postcolonial Lens?, *Sociology* 50, no. 1 (2016): 60–76.

the period of partitions at the end of the eighteenth century and argued that similar processes were at work in the socialist period.¹⁰¹⁵ In both cases, much Polish intelligentsia emigrated from Poland, and the narrative on Polish socio-cultural life was relocated outside the country. The narratives developed by Polish intellectuals in Western Europe, who were seeking explanations for the partitions or commented on internal affairs in socialist Poland, confirmed the inferiority of Polish society and, according to Thompson, Poles started internalising the orientalisng gaze of the West. Through the decades, the Poles adopted the discourse of the conquerors, blaming themselves for the failure of the Polish state, and simultaneously the belief in western supremacy emerged. 1989 brought independence and a chance to reassess relationships between the West and the East. Neoliberal politics privileged the modernisation discourse of “transition”, which positioned Poland and other postsocialist countries as lagging behind the capitalist West. In the immediate period after the fall of the Berlin Wall, postsocialist Poles again internalised the orientalist “gaze”, which depicted the country as “backward”.¹⁰¹⁶

This inferiority complex could be observed even within the AEH. In the words of Romanian historian Dan Berindei, member of the Association:

«In the meantime, many things have happened! Finally, we are also free! The youth revolution has ended a dictatorship that weighed heavily on us [...] At last, we will be able to participate freely in conferences in countries such as Italy, France and Austria. For too long, researchers in our country have not had access to the prestigious and qualified historical research of Western Europe. We are ready to overcome our scientific, cultural, and economic backwardness!».¹⁰¹⁷

¹⁰¹⁵ The Partitions of Poland were three partitions of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth that took place toward the end of the eighteenth century and ended the existence of the state, resulting in the elimination of sovereign Poland and Lithuania for 123 years. The partitions were conducted by the Habsburg monarchy, the Kingdom of Prussia, and the Russian Empire, which progressively divided up the Commonwealth lands among themselves in the process of territorial seizures and annexations. See: Jerzy Lukowski, *The Partitions of Poland 1772, 1793, 1795* (London: Routledge, 2014).

¹⁰¹⁶ Ewa Thompson, ‘Whose Discourse? Telling the Story in Post-Communist Poland’, *The Other Shore: Slavic and East European Cultures Abroad, Past and Present* 1, no. 1 (2010): 1–15. For a different interpretation, see: Claudia Snochowska-Gonzalez, ‘postcolonial Poland—On an Unavoidable Misuse’, *East European Politics and Societies* 26, no. 4 (2012): 708–23.

¹⁰¹⁷ «Entre temps, bien des événements se sont passés! Enfin, nous sommes aussi libres! La révolution des jeunes a mis fin à une dictature qui nous pesait lourdement [...] Enfin, nous pourrions participer librement à des conférences dans des pays comme l'Italie, la France, l'Autriche. Pendant trop longtemps, les chercheurs de notre pays n'ont pas eu accès à la recherche historique prestigieuse et qualifiée de l'Europe occidentale. Nous sommes prêts à surmonter notre retard scientifique, culturel et économique!». Letter of Dan Berindei to Armando Saitta, 3 Mar. 1990, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1990.

Berindei's perspective went further by involving the economic dimension. As the leftist economist Andre Gunder Frank argued, Eastern Europe had been turned into the West's "Third World" to become the object of economic transformation by international institutions. Franck emphasised that Eastern Europe's supposed backwardness was due to historical economic differences and relations between the two parts of Europe rather than ideological socialism or political planning. He analysed that, during the decade of the 1980s, the world economic crisis had been expanding in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, causing stagnation and deterioration of living standards. As a result, Frank continued, the economic crisis and related economic factors contributed materially to the desire and ability of social, ethnic, and nationalist movements to mobilise in that period for far-reaching political ends.¹⁰¹⁸ Among multiple factors, Franck stated that the collapse of the Soviet economy was due to its participation in the same world economic system as everyone. Thus, the policies of accelerated economic integration and marketisation of the East were more an effect than the cause. More significantly, the industrial economies of the West were increasingly capable of transferring a significant part of the adjustment costs resulting from the world economic crisis to the "second world" East as they already did to the "third world" South. In so doing, Frank concluded that the "second" world was also being "Third Worldised".¹⁰¹⁹

Accordingly, most of the AEH Executive Board supported the idea of Western civilisation-driven modernity.¹⁰²⁰ This one-way thought adhered to the principles of the modernisation theory, which propagated the idea that societies in non-Western regions were not deserving of their past and were destined to emulate the West.¹⁰²¹ The approach of the AEH proceeded in this direction. When the general assembly reaffirmed the sole involvement of individual scholars from Eastern Europe and not of collective entities, be they political or cultural, it kept on its cultural model. Rather than questioning the new interaction with historians from the former Soviet bloc, the AEH proceeded directly with a dissemination

¹⁰¹⁸ André Gunder Frank, 'Soviet and East European "Socialism": A Review of the International Political Economy on What Went Wrong', *Review of International Political Economy* 1, no. 2 (1 June 1994): 317–43. For a different perspective, see: Alec Nove, 'What Went Wrong with Andre Gunder Frank', *Review of International Political Economy* 1, no. 2 (1 June 1994): 345–50.

¹⁰¹⁹ Andre Gunder Frank, 'Nothing New in the East: No New World Order', *Social Justice* 19, no. 1 (47 (1992): 34–61.

¹⁰²⁰ Recently, the conventional perception of socialist nations as isolated and out of global trends until their shift towards capitalism in the 1990s has been contested by global historians. They have challenged this distorted view and claimed that Eastern Europe has had a long history of global interconnections. These historians refute the idea that 1989 was the fulfillment of an inevitable destiny and instead argue that it was a part of a much broader - and still ongoing - debate regarding Eastern Europe's position in the global landscape. See: Mark et al., 1989, 6–15.

¹⁰²¹ Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, 'Modernization: Theories and Facts', *World Politics* 49, no. 2 (1997): 155–83.

campaign in the direction of Central and Eastern European countries. Considering the new political context, the AEH prepared a massive but selective involvement of historians “freed” from the bloc division.¹⁰²² Indeed, the proposal of a united Europe without blocs under the aegis of Eurocentrism and Western ideals was one of the AEH's primary objectives from its inception.

The AEH's activity towards a “broader” Europe since 1985 foreran the late-1980s period characterised by a diversification of the approach to history teaching and historical research on Europe and Europeanness. The new integration impulse in the second half of the 1980s and the early 1990s markedly affected the study on the history of European integration. The Single European Act of 1986 and the European Commission (EUCO) leadership by Jacques Delors in the late 1980s led to the establishment of some fundamental programmes in higher education.¹⁰²³ In 1987, the Erasmus programme was created. Despite the assumptions of traditional literature, the approval of the Erasmus programme was far from simple.¹⁰²⁴ As Simone Paoli pointed out, the programme resulted from contradictions and compromises that brought together several political and institutional directions. Based on a significant shove from the EC Ministers of Education and the European Parliament, the Erasmus programme improved the standard curricula both financially and educationally. The common study programmes were mainly intended as a tool to foster academic cooperation between the EC countries. In contrast, the Erasmus programme was explicitly qualified to strengthen the development prospects of the single market.¹⁰²⁵ Consequently, the Erasmus programme did not promote simple collaboration between educational institutions; instead, it boosted student mobility to support a knowledgeable workforce for the single market, improve job skills, and even support Europeanness. In contrast to the educational cooperation promoted by the AEH, which was based on principles of cultural unity, the Erasmus programme completed the inclusion of educational policies in market strategies begun in the mid-1980s.¹⁰²⁶

Differently, in 1989, the Jean Monnet Action was established to create and strengthen Europe and European integration studies through co-funding Jean Monnet chairs and courses in politics, law, economics, and history. Although the Jean Monnet Action emphasised the teaching dimension, it revealed a substantial commitment of the EUCO to European

¹⁰²² Report of the AEH general assembly held on 29 Aug. 1990, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1990.

¹⁰²³ Varsori, ‘From Normative Impetus’, 15.

¹⁰²⁴ A valuable example is: Dino Brasioli, ‘Erasmus, Comett e Yes: Tre Programmi per La Cultura Europea. Studio Sulle Iniziative Comunitarie Volte a Favorire Gli Scambi Giovanili’, *Affari Sociali Internazionali* 24, no. 1 (1988): 36–53: 44–5.

¹⁰²⁵ Paoli, *Il sogno*, 203–7.

¹⁰²⁶ Cf. notes 664–668.

integration history. As Antonio Varsori has analysed, during that period, the conclusion of the Cold War, the effective handling of German reunification, and the establishment of the Treaty of the European Union generated an upbeat context. According to Varsori, some academic circles rekindled their support for Europeanist values and, even exploiting the monetary benefits of the Jean Monnet Action, motivated more scholars to engage the European integration. This dynamism was demonstrated by the emergence of the European Community Studies Association in 1987, which enhanced both formal and informal research networks with strong connections to the EC institutions.¹⁰²⁷ At the time, most members of the Liaison Committee of European Historians (LCEH) also became Jean Monnet chairholders, with Jaqueline Lastenouse playing a pivotal role in the new Commission policy.¹⁰²⁸ Significantly, the AEH members remained out of the “great game”, remarking on their political autonomy and avoiding interaction with other historians networks affiliated with the EC.

Nevertheless, the approaching shift concerning Europe was ripe. In 1989, Renè Girault launched a research project on “European identity” to identify and define its characteristics from a historical perspective. According to EC institutions’ growing interest in identity-building initiatives, such as the EU flag and anthem, the research project was supported both by the LCEH and the EUCO. According to Girault, the project would overcome the chronological and methodological limitations of the LCEH and focus on the entire twentieth century with a transnational approach. Girault aimed to involve historians with different backgrounds and scholars from other disciplines, including political scientists, economists, sociologists, and geographers. He engaged twenty-two scholars from EC countries and one Hungarian scholar.¹⁰²⁹ It follows that, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the “East enlargement” desire of the AEH was pursued even by historians of other research networks.

Meanwhile, the AEH still tried to forerun the relations with Eastern European historians by organising an Executive Board meeting in one of the former Soviet bloc countries.

¹⁰²⁷ Varsori, ‘From Normative Impetus’, 10–1.

¹⁰²⁸ Emanuele Torquati, ‘L’azione Jean Monnet, Unicum Nelle Iniziative Della Commissione Europea per l’università.’, 111–44.

¹⁰²⁹ Varsori, ‘From Normative Impetus’, 15.

5.2 An Italian club? The succession to the presidency of Armando Saitta.

In early 1990, AEH President Armando Saitta proposed moving the meetings of the Executive Board out of Italy. Encouraged by some new prestigious members of the Association, such as the Polish historian critical of the communist regime Bronisław Geremek, and the Romanian scholar Iosif Constantin Drăgan, Saitta symbolically proposed Romania, which had recently deposed the President of the Socialist Republic of Romania Nicolae Ceaușescu. Indeed, Saitta argued, several Romanian historians were members of AEH and had valuable relations with the presidency.¹⁰³⁰ Drăgan, President of an Italo-Romanian foundation, showed particular enthusiasm for the proposal. Drăgan, an ambivalent figure in Romanian history, proposed the headquarters of his foundation in Bucharest to hold the meeting in the summer of 1990.¹⁰³¹

However, the Executive Board held back the President's aspirations. Pierre Villard, Adriano Prosperi, and Franco Sartori warned the President against making rash decisions. While recognising the symbolic value of a Board meeting in Bucharest, the three historians emphasised the precarious situation in the country and the instability of the international context.¹⁰³² Instead, Hartmut Galsterer proposed holding the meeting in Germany, specifically in Cologne.¹⁰³³ This solution could satisfy the need to "Europeanise" the gathering venues without jeopardising the security of the participants. Cornered, Saitta reluctantly accepted Galsterer's mediation, whom he thanked warmly for organising the meeting.¹⁰³⁴

Moreover, Saitta could not force his hand because of the upcoming Presidential elections. After the unsuccessful attempt for the Executive Board, he hoped for the election of a

¹⁰³⁰ Letter of Armando Saitta to the AEH members, 28 Jan. 1990, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1990.

¹⁰³¹ Letter of Iosif Constantin Drăgan to Armando Saitta, 1 Feb. 1990, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1990. In 1967, Drăgan started the "Drăgan European Foundation", which aimed to promote the "values of the Romanian civilisation". He wrote many historical works associated with the protochronism nationalist movement in Romanian history, which was later promoted by Nicolae Ceaușescu's regime. According to the historian Lucian Boia, Drăgan supported an extreme version of protochronism, claiming that Romania was the cradle of civilisation and the Romanian people were the oldest in Europe. After the Romanian Revolution of 1989, Katherine Verdery alleged that he financially supported Eugen Barbu and Corneliu Vadim Tudor to launch their far-right România Mare newspaper. See: Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism: Identity and Cultural Politics in Ceausescu's Romania* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995); Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness, History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*, CEUP Collection (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2013).

¹⁰³² Letters of Pierre Villard, Adriano Prosperi, and Franco Sartori to Armando Saitta, Feb. - Mar. 1990, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1990.

¹⁰³³ Letter of Hartmut Galsterer to Armando Saitta, 12 Mar. 1990, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1990.

¹⁰³⁴ Report of the Executive Board meeting held on 9 June 1990, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1990.

non-Italian member for the presidency. He declared it was «the natural continuation of a European, not an Italian, Association».¹⁰³⁵ Temporarily, Saitta offered to chair the Association for further two years while finding a suitable historian for the presidency.

The entire Executive Board widely supported the second option. Unanimously, the Board members emphasised that Saitta was the most appropriate candidate to fill the role because he was among the founding members and was consistently committed to the AEH. Sartori stressed that, in the event of a replacement, the new President would have been strongly linked with Rome, where the registered office and the Association's main funding body, i.e. the Italian Historical Institute for the Modern and Contemporary Age, were located. Accordingly, Eloy Benito Ruano and Hartmut Galsterer argued that a rotation of the presidency would mean the death of the AEH because of its close relationship with President Saitta. Furthermore, a non-Italian presidency would have caused several administrative problems due to AEH's registration in Italy, as pointed out by John Kenyon Davies.¹⁰³⁶

As a result, the AEH general assembly, with an ever-decreasing number of voters, unanimously confirmed Armando Saitta as the AEH President:

Fig. 9 - Trend of voters and members in the AEH General Assemblies, 1985-1989

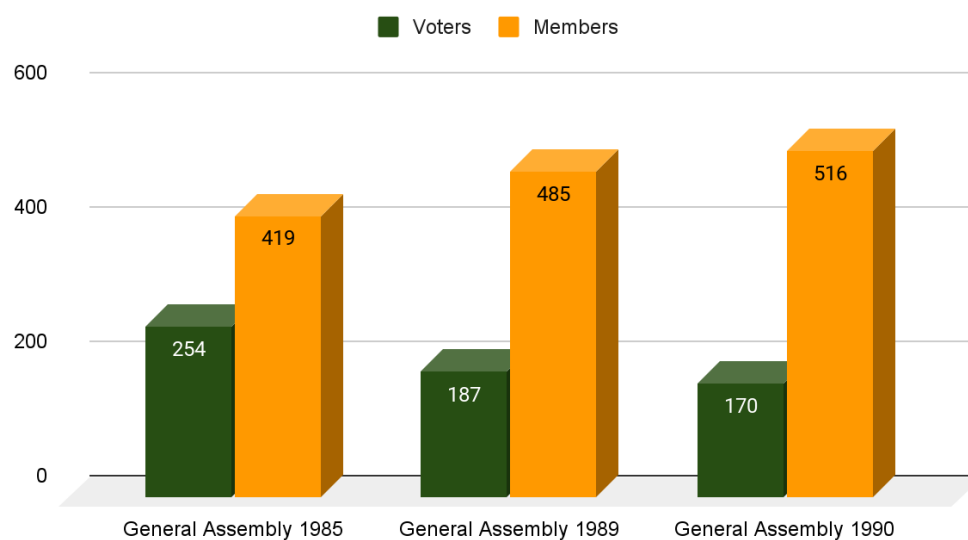


Fig. 9 - Trend of voters and members in the AEH General Assemblies, 1985-1989

Source: IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1990.

The graph clearly shows two different trends. First, between 1985 and 1990, the number of registrations steadily increased. The intense work of President Saitta, who was constantly

¹⁰³⁵ «Il naturale proseguimento di un'Associazione di livello europeo, non italiano». Ibid, 3.

¹⁰³⁶ Ibid, 3-5.

recruiting new members through letters of invitation, allowed a regular influx of new members to the Association. A simple form accompanied by a curriculum vitae was sufficient for membership, and payment of the fee of 40,000 Italian liras was optional in the event of financial inability.¹⁰³⁷ Membership did not entail any special obligations and allowed a scholar to be part of a valuable European-level Association. This simplified procedure, combined with Saitta's work, arguably encouraged many scholars.

On the other hand, the number of participants in general assemblies was continuously declining. This feature was combined with numerous complaints from the President and the Executive Board about the low involvement of members in the Association's activities.¹⁰³⁸ In addition to the above-mentioned issues of language and Italian centrality, even simple participation in General Assemblies and voting became problematic. Saitta was unanimously confirmed as President, but with a voting percentage of less than one-third of the total members. Even the possibility of voting by mail could not increase participation. Crossing the two trends in the graph, we could infer that most AEH members were formally registered with the Association but disinterested in its activities.

The problem of Italocentrism and the one-man Association emerged again vehemently when the President resigned. In February 1991, Saitta announced his inability to chair the Association again due to a disabling illness.¹⁰³⁹ Instead of exploiting the opportunity for a renewal of the presidency, the Executive Board tried to convince Saitta to change his mind. The President received several private letters in which his closest collaborators warned him about the danger of his sudden departure from the AEH's activities.¹⁰⁴⁰ In the words of Adriano Prosperi, «the Association is truly your creature; you fully represent it and offer a valid point of reference for everyone [...] it would be appropriate for you to stay».¹⁰⁴¹

Interestingly, Saitta considered his resignation as a great opportunity. According to the statute, the provisional President was the oldest member of the Board, the Spanish medievalist Eloy Benito Ruano. He enjoyed the trust of the AEH members, and primarily of Saitta.¹⁰⁴² The Spanish historian was a member of the “Real Academia de la Historia”, of the

¹⁰³⁷ Fourty thousands Italian liras corresponds to roughly twenty euros.

¹⁰³⁸ Cf. notes 902–905.

¹⁰³⁹ Letter of Armando Saitta to the AEH members, 28 Feb. 1991, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1991.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Letters of Pierre Villard, Franco Sartori, Eloy Benito Ruano, Hartmut Galsterer to Armando Saitta, Mar.-Apr. 1991, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴¹ «L'Associazione è veramente una creatura tutta tua; tu la rappresenti pienamente e offri un punto di riferimento valido per tutti [...] sarebbe opportuno che tu restassi». Letter of Adriano Prosperi to Armando Saitta, 3 Mar. 1991, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴² Letter of Armando Saitta to Eloy Benito Ruano, 12 Feb. 1991, *ibid.*

Spanish Historical Association, and vice-President of the International Committee of Historical Sciences. Consequently, he was one of the most distinguished members of the AEH. With his candidature, the AEH would finally be chaired by a non-Italian scholar.

Ruano, however, disagreed with his appointment as President. He argued that the presidency should have been Italian as the Association was born from an Italian committee, and Italy had the largest number of members. The Spanish historian pointed out that an Italian President would have ensured continuity of work with Saitta and would have been able to liaise constantly with the IHIMCA, even concerning the publication of the AEH bulletin in the Italian journal “Critica Storica”. Although honoured by the candidacy, Ruano urged his colleagues to find an “Italian” solution for the presidency.¹⁰⁴³

Indeed, as the following graphs show, the overwhelming Italian prevalence in the Association had not changed over time:

Fig.10 - Number of AEH members per country in 1985 and 1991

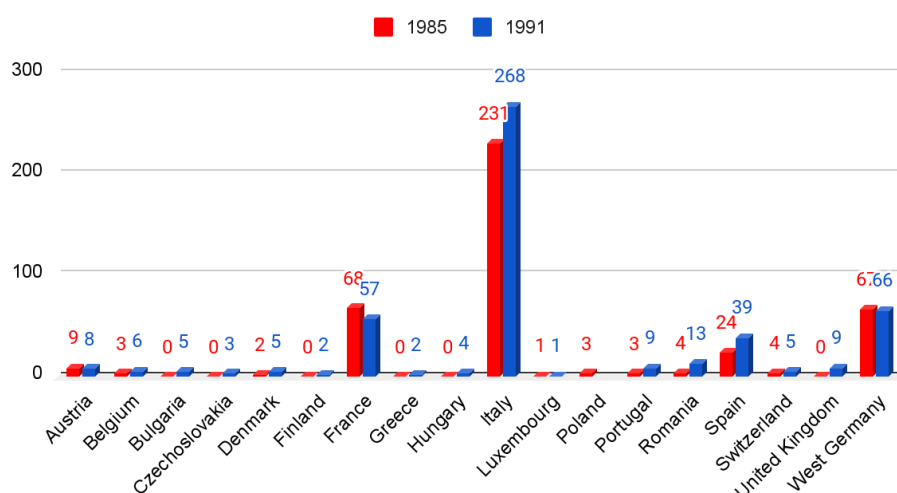


Fig. 10 - Number of AEH members per country in August 1985 and April 1991.

Source: AEH member lists, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

¹⁰⁴³ Report of the Executive Board meeting held on 18 Apr. 1991, *ibid.*

Fig. 11 - Percentage of AEH members per country in 1991

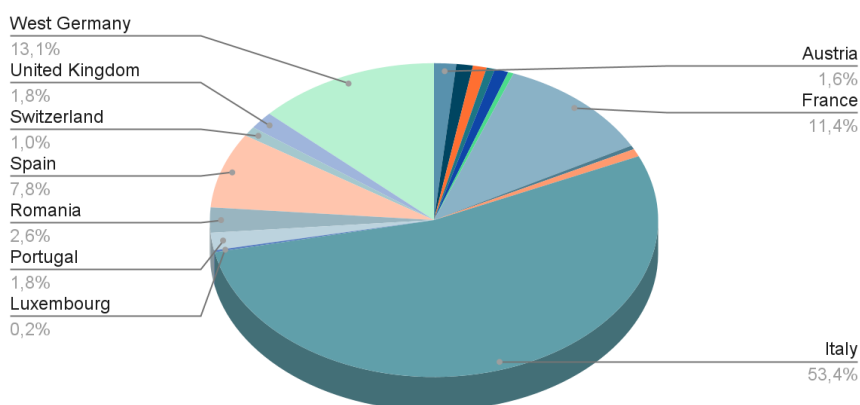


Fig. 11 - Percentage of AEH members per country in 1991.

Source: AEH member lists, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

Ruano's statements provoked a deep crisis in the Executive Board. He stressed the contradiction of a European Association with an overwhelming Italian membership. On eighteenth April 1991, the Board heatedly debated Saitta's succession. Two positions confronted: the first, supported by the non-Italian members of the Board, namely John Kenyon Davies, Thomas Riis, Jean-René Suratteau, Pierre Villard, and Hartmut Galsterer, emphasised the fundamental need for an Italian leadership of the Association; the second, supported mainly by the Italian members of the Board Franco Sartori, Francesco Barone, Mario Leonardi, and Corrado Vivanti, supported Ruano's candidature to begin "Europeanising" the presidency. The compromise confirmed Ruano's candidature as head of the Association and appointed two Italian vice Presidents, Leonardi and Prosperi. The general assembly of 27th October 1991, with substantially the same number of voters as the previous one, elected Eloy Benito Ruano as the new President of the AEH.¹⁰⁴⁴

The election of Ruano revealed multiple factors. Firstly, six years after its birth, the AEH was presided over by a non-Italian historian. Although achieved through a compromise, Ruano's appointment marked a fundamental watershed for the Association. Moreover, the election of the new President, for the first time since the preliminary stages of the AEH in 1981, interrupted the formal link between the Association Armando Saitta. His sudden illness, which led to his death in May 1991, was a powerful instrument of "forced" renewal. At the dawn of a game-changing decade, in which the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ibid.

USSR heavily affected the global balances and Europe's framework, the AEH took a first step towards a broader "Europeanisation" of its structure.

Secondly, Ruano's election marked the transition from an Italy-centred framework to a structure hinged on Western European countries. Despite "recruitment campaigns" in Eastern Europe, crucial roles in the Association were filled by Western European scholars. Even the mere proposal to hold an Executive Board meeting in Romania caused deep mistrust among the AEH members. While acknowledging the objective difficulties in involving historians from the (former) Soviet bloc in leadership roles or in travelling to these countries, the misgivings still seemed linked to ideological rigidities. In addition to the uncertain political climate, the AEH historians urged caution primarily because of the possible politicisation of historical research. Before 1989, the risk of manipulation was due to the communist regime; after 1989, the opposite risk emerged, namely an instrumental use of history to the detriment of the dissolving Soviet bloc. As Valentin Behr recently argued, in the years after 1989, historical research in the former Soviet countries was anything but free from politicisation.¹⁰⁴⁵

Third, the choice of a Spanish historian was particularly significant. Beyond Ruano's prestigious profile, the number of Spanish scholars within the AEH had almost doubled since the Association's birth.¹⁰⁴⁶ According to Saitta and the Executive Board, the credit for this growth was essentially due to the intensive work done by Ruano. They claimed that, by exploiting his institutional roles, the Spanish medievalist involved numerous historians from his country. Indeed, Ruano spread several AEH circulars in his organisations and committed to translating every communication from the AEH Presidency into Spanish.¹⁰⁴⁷

However, the reasons for the increasing participation of Spanish historians in the AEH were arguably broader. During Francisco Franco's dictatorship, a large part of Spanish historiography was anti-democratic, anti-liberal, anti-modern and repressive, devoted to extolling the regime.¹⁰⁴⁸ As Beatriz Rojas and Ernest Sánchez Santiró have argued, in the years of the dictatorship, Spanish historiography stagnated from a methodological point of view, becoming increasingly involuted.¹⁰⁴⁹ The transition and the generational shift allowed Spanish historians to enter a new scientific dimension. Indeed, Mariano Esteban de Vega

¹⁰⁴⁵ Valentin Behr, 'How Historians Got Involved in Memory Politics: Patterns of the Historiography of the Polish People's Republic before and after 1989', *East European Politics and Societies* 36, no. 3 (2022): 970–91.

¹⁰⁴⁶ See fig. 10.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Report of the Executive Board meeting held on 18 Apr. 1991, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1991.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Maria Dolores Algora Weber, 'El aislamiento exterior de España: las "políticas de sustitución" en el régimen de Franco (1946-1955)', *Crítica Storica* XVIII, 4 (1991), 881–92.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Beatriz Rojas and Ernest Sánchez Santiró, *Historiografía Española 1975-2005* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora, 2008), 15–27.

emphasised that, from 1975 onwards, the Spanish historiographical panorama grew considerably and became increasingly plural, with a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches and intellectual trends coexisting. De Vega stressed the growing importance of some disciplines in Spanish academia, particularly the history of historiography.¹⁰⁵⁰ However, while writing in 1991, he observed a substantial lack of participation of Spanish historians in international debates, particularly concerning Europe and European historiography.

Observing Spanish scholars' activities within the AEH, as well as Ruano's presidency of the Association and his role within the ICHS, one might dispute De Vega's statements. Indeed, in the 1980s, the AEH provided a privileged field of action for several dozen Spanish scholars who were interested in the European dimension.¹⁰⁵¹ In 1987, in the Bulletin of the Association, Manuel Bustos Rodríguez investigated the development of the European capitalist market between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries with a special focus on the historiographical debate in Europe on the subject.¹⁰⁵² The following year, Beatriz Cárceles de Gea published an essay on the international implications of the "Junta de Competencias" during the reign of Felipe IV in the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁵³ Again from a European perspective, in 1989, Andrés Barcala analysed the figure of José Andrés de Sanvenerio, a Genoese merchant and historian at the court of Charles III of Spain in the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁵⁴ Finally, in 1991, Maximiliano Barrio Gozalo was interested in the influence of the Spanish "Casa de Sajonia" dynasty in succession to the Polish crown in 1764;¹⁰⁵⁵ in the same

¹⁰⁵⁰ Mariano Esteban de Vega, 'La Historiografía Española Contemporánea En 1991', *Ayer*, no. 6 (1992): 39–50. See for instance: Isabel Moll Blanes, *La vida quotidiana dins la perspectiva històrica: III Jornades d'Estudis Històrics Locals: Palma, 24-26 de novembre de 1983* (Palma: Institut d'Estudis Baleàrics, 1985); Aurora Artiaga Rego, *A desamortización na provincia de Pontevedra (1855-1900)* (Pontevedra: Dip. Provincial de Pontevedra, 1991); Fernando Sánchez Marooyo, *El proceso de formación de una clase dirigente. La oligarquía agraria en Extremadura a mediados del siglo XIX* (Extremadura: Universidad de Extremadura, 1991); Julio Antonio Vaquero Iglesias, *Muerte e ideología en la Asturias del siglo XIX* (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno de España, 1991).

¹⁰⁵¹ Incidentally, it is worth noting that, in 1977, Armando Saitta organised an Italian-Spanish conference at the Italian Historical Institute for the Modern and Contemporary Age concerning power and élites between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. As Francesca Cantù has recently observed, the conference had a clear international scope and was one of post-Franco Spanish historians' first public initiatives abroad by post-Franco Spanish historians. See: Francesca Cantù, 'Il Dialogo Con La Storiografia Spagnola: Il Colloquio Italo-Spagnolo "Potere Ed Élite"' (Roma, 1977), in *Cultura e Organizzazione. Armando Saitta e La Storiografia Italiana Del Secondo Novecento*, ed. Alessandro Laruffa and Marcello Verga (Rome: Viella, 2023), 213–40.

¹⁰⁵² Manuel Bustos Rodríguez, 'España en el desarrollo capitalista mercantil europeo (Siglos XVI-XVIII): Historia y estado de la cuestión', *Crítica Storica* XXIV, no.3 (1987), 535–50.

¹⁰⁵³ Beatriz Cárceles de Gea, 'La Junta de Competencias durante el reinado de Felipe IV. Un proyecto institucional en la monarquía hispana', *Crítica Storica* XXV, no.2 (1988), 317–41.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Andrés Barcala, 'Un comerciante genoves, historiador y polemista en la Corte española de Carlos III', *Crítica Storica* XXVI, no.2–3 (1989), 439–70.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Maximiliano Barrio Gozalo, 'La Casa de Sajonia y la sucesión a la corona polaca en 1764 a través de la correspondencia diplomática', *Crítica Storica* XXVIII, no. 4 (1991), 821–33.

year, Santos Julià participated in the publication of an in-depth interdisciplinary volume on Europe between the two world wars.¹⁰⁵⁶

In addition, Ruano's candidature had a specific purpose related to the second official conference that the Association was preparing. In 1992, indeed, the AEH was planning an initiative on the occasion of the Fifth Centenary of the “Discovery of America”.

5.3 The congress for the 5th Centenary of the “Discovery of America” between the Mediterranean and Atlantic.

The idea of a conference on the Fifth Centenary of the “Discovery of America” circulated privately between former President Armando Saitta and some members of the Executive Board since late 1989. Despite its long gestation, as we will see later, the congress was utterly isolated from the international debate and provided no critical perspective on the anniversary celebrations, colonialism, and genocide of indigenous people. After the success of the conference on the French Revolution, Saitta asked Eloy Benito Ruano for his opinion on a possible new conference for the 1992 anniversary. Privately, the two historians discussed the approach of the initiative, which they defined as «substantially similar to the one held on the occasion of the Bicentenary of the French Revolution: a review of European historiography on the subject».¹⁰⁵⁷ Saitta and Ruano imagined a conference in Spain, specifically in the Balearic Islands, which would assess not only historiography but also «the reciprocal America/Europe relations [...] and the European consciousness of Discovery».¹⁰⁵⁸

The discussion between Saitta and Ruano revealed some worthy elements. Firstly, a conference outside Italy was planned for the first time since the birth of the AEH. Following the intention to “Europeanise” the Association in its activities, Saitta insisted on involving Spanish colleagues in the event's organisation and starting a more collegial management of the AEH. Incidentally, the President of the Association had long-standing relations with Spanish historians, and he was facilitated in engaging Spain for a conference on the “Discovery of America”.¹⁰⁵⁹ Although a national anniversary committee had also been

¹⁰⁵⁶ Pablo Martín-Aceña Manrique, Santos Juliá Díaz, and Mercedes Cabrera Calvo-Sotelo, *Europa en crisis, 1919-1939* (Madrid: Editorial Pablo Iglesias, 1991).

¹⁰⁵⁷ «Sostanzialmente simile a quella svolta in occasione del Bicentenario della Rivoluzione francese: un bilancio della storiografia europea sul tema». Letters between Armando Saitta and Eloy Benito Ruano, Oct.-Dec. 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1989.

¹⁰⁵⁸ «Dei reciproci rapporti America/Europa [...] e della coscienza europea della Scoperta». Ibid.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Armando Saitta was linked to Spain many years before the Rome congress of 1977. He was a lecturer at the University of Granada between 1952-53. During his studies in Spain, Saitta challenged two central themes in the Spanish historiography of the twentieth century. The first essay, published in 1954, analysed the possible

established in Italy, Saitta noted that «Spain is the focus of the Fifth Centenary celebrations».¹⁰⁶⁰

Saitta's statements, however, were markedly problematic considering the international context of the period. The Spanish institutions of culture devoted the entire decade of 1982-92 to the preparation and appearance of the commemorative initiatives. Accordingly, in 1984, the Spanish king Juan Carlos and the Spanish government set up the "Comision nacional para la conmemoracion del V Centenario del descubrimiento de America".¹⁰⁶¹ The Commission, composed of members of Spain's political and cultural institutions, was committed to organising the celebrations in 1992, including the famous Universal Exhibition in Seville.

The commemorations, centred on Spain's role in the "Discovery of America" and the figure of Christopher Columbus, generated sharp controversy. On 9th July 1984, the national commissions established worldwide to celebrate the "V Centenary of the Discovery of America" met in Santo Domingo. The commission representing Mexico announced that the Mexican government would name its Commission for the Fifth Centenary "The Encuentro de Dos Mundos" ("Fifth Centenary of the Encounter of Two Worlds").¹⁰⁶² According to Miguel León-Portilla, some of the attendees expressed their displeasure with the commission's name, which they considered an attempt to deny Spain and Columbus. Some delegations proposed a floral offering to the monument of Christopher Columbus as reparation. On the other hand, some others contested that the idea of an encounter concealed the Spanish invasion and the death of millions of indigenous people. In the context of this debate, the 163 member states of Unesco and the commissions established in Latin America, France, Russia, Poland, and Japan

existence of a medieval Spanish Empire, considered by its proponents as indigenous and characteristic of the "ser de España" rooted in the Spanish national consciousness. See: Armando Saitta, 'Un problema storiografico: l'Impero Spagnolo Medievale', *Rivista Storica Italiana* no.II-III (1954), 240–85; 377–409. The second essay dealt with the history of the kingdom of Granada, established in the extreme and last margin of Muslim Spain, and the historical drama of the transition from Moorish Granada to Catholic Granada. See: Armando Saitta, 'Dal Regno moro di Granada alla Granada cattolica', *Critica Storica* no.III–IV (1980), 349–98; 537–81. Still, during the 1970s, Saitta involved several Spanish historians in a project concerning the Italian Inquisition. See: Agostino Borromeo, 'Armando Saitta e l'Onomasticon Dell'inquisizione Italiana', in *Cultura e Organizzazione. Armando Saitta e La Storiografia Italiana Del Secondo Novecento*, ed. Alessandro Laruffa and Marcello Verga (Rome: Viella, 2023), 163–84.

¹⁰⁶⁰ «La Spagna è il fulcro delle celebrazioni per il quinto centenario». Letter of Armando Saitta to Eloy Benito Ruano, 15 Jan. 1990, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1990. On 24th February 1989, the Italian government established a national committee to celebrate the Fifth Centenary of the "Discovery of America", chaired by Christian Democrat Senator Paolo Emilio Taviani. However, the AEH did not have any contact with this committee. See: Simonetta Conti, *Paolo Emilio Taviani e Le Celebrazioni Colombiane, in Ricordo Di Paolo Emilio Taviani. L'uomo, Il Politico, Lo Storico* (Roma: Società Geografica Italiana, 2003).

¹⁰⁶¹ National Commission for the Commemoration of the Fifth Centenary of the Discovery of America. Real Decreto 1253/1984, de 2 de Agosto, sobre la Comision Nacional para la Conmemoracion del V Centenario del descubrimiento de America.

¹⁰⁶² Silvio Zavala, 'Examen del título de la conmemoración del V Centenario del descubrimiento de América', *Quinto centenario*, no. 12 (1987): 33–40.

unanimously agreed to commemorate the “Quinto Centenario del Encuentro de Dos Mundos”.¹⁰⁶³

Unesco and several researchers defended the possibility of reinterpreting the meaning of this event. The anniversary of 12 October 1492 had been hitherto celebrated in the Americas as “Día de la Raza” (Columbus Day). Conversely, Unesco argued that the time was ripe to construct a historical narrative of the vanquished and not only of the victors, namely the “discoverers”. According to this paradigm, the crucial aim of the V Centenary was to show that 500 years «represent a unique opportunity to reflect on the circumstances and consequences of the meeting of peoples and their cultures, [...] and on the resulting transformations that have so profoundly affected the general evolution of mankind». Unesco's programme sought to incorporate «the voice of the original inhabitants of the American continent» through two programme axes: the first with universal coverage, entitled “A series of encounters”; and the second relating to the indigenous population of America, named “Amerindia 92”.¹⁰⁶⁴

The Unesco programme, which included academic events, prizes and museum exhibitions, sought to rework the versions of the “Discovery”. It tried to overcome the paradoxical images of America conveyed by chroniclers and conquistadors, especially the “Black Legend” of the Conquest, which according to León-Portilla, had damaged relations between Spain and its former colonies.¹⁰⁶⁵ Overcoming these two dichotomous positions implied recognising that the conquered people left evidence of this phenomenon in the vestiges of cities and monuments in the Andean area and Mesoamerica, in stone and clay inscriptions, in books and codices.¹⁰⁶⁶ However, according to Unesco, the main idea of the “Encuentro de Dos Mundos” denomination was to show that the “Discovery” helped to complete the picture of the world and produce a globalising effect affecting humanity to the present day.¹⁰⁶⁷

¹⁰⁶³ Miguel León-Portilla, ‘Quinto Centenario: Tomar En Cuenta a Los Otros’, *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 8, no. 2 (1 July 1992): 155–66: 164–5.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Commemoration of the five hundredth anniversary of the encounter between two worlds, 1492-1992, UNESCO Digital Library, 1989, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000087520> [consulted on 24 Jan. 2023], 5-7.

¹⁰⁶⁵ On the “Black Legend” see also: Rómulo D. Carbia, *Historia de la leyenda negra hispano-americana* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2004); Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez, Antonio Sánchez-Jiménez, and Harm Den Boer, *España Ante Sus Críticos: Las Claves de La Leyenda Negra* (Madrid: Iberoamericana Editorial Vervuert, 2015).

¹⁰⁶⁶ León-Portilla has emphasised that any aberrations and defects were attributed to the Indians of the American continent. A valuable example is provided by Theodore de Bry, who published several volumes with illustrations depicting acts of anthropophagy, cruelty, and fantasies of all kinds supposedly practised by the Indians. See: León Portilla ‘Quinto Centenario’, 161.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Commemoration of the five hundredth anniversary of the encounter between two worlds, 1492-1992, UNESCO Digital Library, 1989, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000087520> [consulted on 24th Jan. 2023], 5.

Parallel to the celebrations organised by Unesco, other initiatives proposed historical reparation, recognition of the violence of the Conquest, and critical distancing even from the name “Encuentro de Dos Mundos”. Sandra Patricia Rodríguez has stressed that, in 1992, the African, Caribbean and Pacific-European Economic Community (ACP-EEC) Joint Assembly blamed Europe for the genocide and exploitation of American and African populations, for which they demanded reparations and the return of usurped properties. In the same vein, the “Centro Cristianismo y Justicia” in Barcelona urged the official authorities of Spain and the Catholic Church to offer public apologies to the Ibero-American people for the exploitation suffered;¹⁰⁶⁸ simultaneously, the Indian Rights Tribunal issued a summon at the International Court of Justice in The Hague against Spain and the Vatican for the crimes of the Conquest and the evangelisation.¹⁰⁶⁹ As Pereña Vicente has discussed, the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP), composed of 52 organisations, expressed its disagreement with the proposal to name the V Centenary as the “Encuentro de dos Mundos”.¹⁰⁷⁰

In addition to the official critical positions, popular movements spoke out against both the “discovery” and “encounter” paradigms. In 1992, Indigenous people in Bolivia inaugurated the First Assembly of Indigenous Nations and marched to La Paz to express their rejection of the V Centenary celebrations; in Mexico, indigenous people and popular Associations met in Mexico City's Zócalo to protest against the celebrations; in Ecuador, indigenous people marched to Quito; in Peru, peasants offered a minute's silence for the victims and paid homage in the Plaza de Armas of Cuzco to the heroes of the Andean resistance; in Colombia, silent marches by peasants and indigenous people took place, as well as in Central American countries. As Miguel Rodríguez has argued, it is meaningful that indigenous communities' active and critical participation in the commemorations of the Twelfth of October found scarce attention in official institutional calendars. Despite the repeated denunciation on that date and the resources mobilised by governments and Unesco's international commissions, Rodríguez continued, one could observe a total lack of recognition for the multicultural and

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ignacio Ellacuría, ‘Quinto Centenario de América Latina. ¿Descubrimiento o Encubrimiento?’, *Revista Latinoamericana de Teología* 7, no. 21 (1990): 271–82. From a critical perspective, in 1988, Enrique Dussel analysed the role of the Catholic Church in the colonisation of the Americas. He hoped that the anniversary would start a deep theological-historical revision in view of a “liberation” of Latin America. See: Enrique D. Dussel, ‘¿Descubrimiento o invasión de América? Visión histórico-teológica.’, *Concilium: Revista internacional de teología*, no. 220 (1988): 481–88.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Rodríguez, ‘Commemoraciones Del Cuarto y Quinto Centenario Del “12 de Octubre de 1492”’: Debates Sobre La Identidad Americana’, *Revista de Estudios Sociales*, no. 38 (2011): 64–75: 69.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Luciano Pereña Vicente, *La leyenda negra a debate. Proceso a la leyenda negra* (Madrid: Universidad Francisco de Vitoria Editorial, 1999).

plural-ethnic nature of the American population, as well as a truthful discussion concerning the five hundredth anniversary.¹⁰⁷¹

This sharp debate did not affect the AEH. Instead, the Executive Board stressed the importance of electing a Spanish President, namely Ruano, to organise the conference in 1992.¹⁰⁷² Even after Saitta's death, during the discussion at the AEH general assembly about the conference, the members expressed a favourable opinion concerning the general theme "From the Mediterranean to the Atlantic". The main objective was the analysis of «the general historical significance of the incorporation of the New World into the Western world, highlighting the relationships and problems that emerged in the culture of European countries following contact with the New World».¹⁰⁷³ Furthermore, the new President, Ruano, stated that «in Spain few historiographic initiatives are planned as part of the celebrations [...] and that, moreover, the events that have been formulated so far are characterised by reticence or protest».¹⁰⁷⁴

Consequently, one could infer that the AEH conference was intended as an opportunity for a historiographical debate "free" from postcolonial suggestions. In the preparatory discussions of the conference, there was no trace of the different interpretations of "discovery", "encounter", or "resistance" concerning the events that occurred at the end of the fifteenth century. Going further, the AEH not only embraced the paradigm of "discovery", but introduced the assimilation of the Americas into Western society. A perspective far removed from both Unesco's proposals and those of the indigenous movements. Using Dipesh Chakrabarty's theoretical approach, the AEH did not question the possible non-universality of European intellectual and historical traditions.¹⁰⁷⁵ In other words, once again, the Association members made no effort to "provincialise Europe", despite the globally resonant debate concerning the 1992 anniversary and some critical essays on Eurocentrism published even by Western scholars in the period.¹⁰⁷⁶

¹⁰⁷¹ Miguel Rodríguez, *Celebración de 'la raza': una historia comparativa del 12 de octubre* (Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana, 2004).

¹⁰⁷² Report of the AEH Executive Board meeting held on 18 Apr. 1991, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1991.

¹⁰⁷³ «Il significato storico generale dell'incorporazione del Nuovo Mondo al mondo occidentale, mettendo in luce i rapporti e i problemi emersi nella cultura dei paesi europei a seguito de contatto con il Nuovo Mondo». Report of the AEH general assembly held on 27 Oct. 1991, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷⁴ «In Spagna sono programmate poche iniziative storiografiche nell'ambito delle celebrazioni [...] e che peraltro le manifestazioni sinora formulate sono caratterizzate da reticenze o contestazioni». *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷⁵ Chakrabarty, 'Provincializing Europe'.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Samir Amin, *L'eurocentrisme: critique d'une idéologie* (Paris: Anthropos-Economica, 1988); Immanuel Wallerstein, 'L'Occident, Le Capitalisme et Le Système-Monde Moderne', *Sociologie et Sociétés* 22, no. 1 (1990): 15–52.

As a result, the Executive Board strongly supported Ruano's proposal. Cinzio Violante and Pierre Villard were interested in examining the consequences of the “Discovery of America” on the European consciousness both in the countries directly involved and those that remained outside the specific event. However, Adriano Prosperi cautioned against analysing every European country as the Association did during the French Revolution congress for reasons of time and resources. Instead, he proposed dividing the lectures into sectors or chronological periods that could more precisely identify the object of the conference. With Mario Francesco Leonardi, Prosperi reiterated the need for an all-Spanish organisation for the conference. Accepting the invitation, the general assembly elected Ruano as President of the Association and appointed the Spanish historian Bartolomé Escandell Bonet as conference secretary.¹⁰⁷⁷

Escandell Bonet seemed the most suitable scholar to organise the meeting. Ruano proposed to hold the conference in the Balearic Islands, specifically in Ibiza, where Escandell Bonet was born and had excellent contacts with the local scientific and political authorities. He had studied modern Spanish monarchy, and specifically, the status of Ibiza in the Crown of Aragon.¹⁰⁷⁸ He did not focus directly on the “Discovery of America” but concentrated on the dynamics of the Spanish monarchy between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁰⁷⁹ Nonetheless, he was closely linked to several members of the Association, especially Agostino Borromeo, for his participation in the “Centro de Estudios Inquisitoriales” and the publication of the volume “Historia de la Inquisición en España y América”.¹⁰⁸⁰ Consequently, Escandell Bonet declared that he was «honoured to hold such a prestigious role on a fascinating subject for me from a historical and historiographical point of view». ¹⁰⁸¹ Incidentally, it is essential to note that Spanish historiography, after the end of Francoism, partially shifted the paradigm concerning the study of “discovery”. As extensively discussed by Juan Gil, during the dictatorship, the history of “discoveries” mainly had imperialist and

¹⁰⁷⁷ Report of the AEH general assembly held on 27 Oct. 1991, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1991.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Bartolomé Escandell Bonet, *Ibiza y Formentera En La Corona de Aragón (Siglos XIII - XVIII)* (Oviedo: Servicio de Publicaciones de l'Universidad de Oviedo, 1992).

¹⁰⁷⁹ Bartolomé Escandell Bonet, *La Formación de La Monarquía Española Moderna* (Madrid: Fies, 1992).

¹⁰⁸⁰ Armando Saitta, ‘Historia de la Inquisición en España y América’, *Crítica Storica* XXVII, 1 (1990), 181–7.

¹⁰⁸¹ «Honrado de ocupar un puesto tan prestigioso en un tema que me apasiona desde el punto de vista histórico e historiográfico». Letter of Bartolomé Escandell Bonet to Eloy Benito Ruano, 30 Oct. 1991, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1991. Incidentally, it is worth noting that in 1992, Escandell Bonet was completing a volume on the methodology of historical research, in which Escandell Bonet aimed to «introduce current scientific contexts and raise the theoretical questions that underlie the procedures and formal conditions of historiographical discourse» («Introducir en contextos científicos actuales y plantear las cuestiones teóricas que fundamentan los procedimientos y las condiciones formales del discurso historiográfico»). See: Bartolomé Escandell Bonet, *Teoría del discurso historiográfico: hacia una práctica científica consciente de su método* (Oviedo: Servicio de Publicaciones de l'Universidad de Oviedo, 1992).

patriotic exaltation characters. After 1975, in contrast, Spanish scholars began to focus on travels, expeditions, and societies increasingly. However, Gil continued, reviewing the works published between 1975 and 1989, one could observe a substantial lack of serious, comprehensive, and critical Spanish monographs on “discoveries”. In other words, the triumphalist and exalting tones of Franchism had changed in Spanish historiography, but Gil found no questioning concerning conquest and colonisation. Instead, the tones of the publications hypocritically tended towards half-measures, dealing with certain aspects of their past and concealing the more divisive features.¹⁰⁸²

This contest was also reflected in the format of the AEH conference, entitled “From the Mediterranean to the Atlantic. Tradition and Innovation in Modern America”. It was held from 21st to 24th October 1992 under the patronage of the Balearic Islands authorities and the Spanish Committee for the 5th Centenary. Unfortunately, primary sources on the lectures presented at the congress are unavailable, nor were the proceedings published. The only information available concerning the conference is included in a short report by Mario Francesco Leonardi in the AEH Bulletin, and a review by the Italian scholar Emma Marras published in the Italian journal “Medioevo: saggi e rassegne”.¹⁰⁸³

According to Leonardi and Marras, the conference primarily hinged on two main topics: missionaries and the figure of Christopher Columbus. The former was introduced in the presentation on the new volume “Balears y America” by Escandell Bonet.¹⁰⁸⁴ His lecture dealt with the ancient Mediterranean roots of the missionary experience in the “New World”. Specifically, Escandell Bonet focused on the figure of the Franciscan Blessed Ramon Llull, who had founded the College of Miramar to train the friars destined for the conversion of the “infidels”.¹⁰⁸⁵

¹⁰⁸² Juan Gil, ‘Historiografía Española Sobre El Descubrimiento y Descubrimientos’, *Revista de Indias* 49, no. 187 (1989): 779–816.

¹⁰⁸³ Mario Francesco Leonardi, ‘Bollettino A.S.E.’, *Critica Storica* XXVIII, 4 (1991), 955–6; Emma Marras, ‘Congresso storico dell’Associazione degli Storici Europei “Dal Mediterraneo all’Atlantico” (Ibiza, 21-24 ottobre 1992)’, *Medioevo: saggi e rassegne* 18 (1993), 182–8. I searched for sources on the conference both in the institutional archives of the entities involved, namely the IHIMCA, the University and the Ajuntament of Ibiza, and the “Real Academia de la Historia”, and in the private archives of the organisers, especially Ruano and Bartolomé Escandell. Unfortunately, the search was unsuccessful. Some lecturers published essays indirectly related to the conference but without contributing much to further define the conference structure. See: Maria Sirago, ‘L’ “Armata Del Mar Oceano” Dei “Vascelli d’alto Bordo a Napoli (1623-1707) al Congreso V Centenario Del Descubrimiento: Del Mediterraneo al Atlantico. Tradicion e Innovacion En La America Moderna, (in Memoriam Prof. Armando Saitta), a Cura Dell’Associazione Degli Storici Europei, Ibiza, 21-24/10/1992,’ *Studi Storici Meridionali* 14, no. 1 (1994): 99–116; Onofre Vaquer Bennasar, *Cristóbal Colón. De los enigmas a las certezas* (Rome: Europa Edizioni, 2020).

¹⁰⁸⁴ Cf. note 1076.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Marras, ‘Congresso’, 184.

From the little information Leonardi and Marras have provided, we can presume that Escandell Bonet's lecture was part of the lively debate on the figure of Llull from the 1970s. According to the extensive literature on this figure, Ramon Llull's career has earned him frequent mentions in histories of thirteenth-century Christian missionising.¹⁰⁸⁶ For forty years, he roamed Western Europe, entreating princes and prelates with schemes for evangelising unbelievers, and made missionary trips to the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa. Between the 1970s and the 1980s, scholars depicted him as a decisive contributor to the development of Christian missionising. Ramon Sugranyes de Franch described Llull as the preeminent conscious theorist of missionary activity.¹⁰⁸⁷ For Robert Burns, he was a crucial figure in the Franciscan missions to the Muslims and the most eminent single wielder of the method of rationalist discourse.¹⁰⁸⁸ Similarly, Robert Chazan argued that Llull was the dominant figure of Christian missionising around 1300.¹⁰⁸⁹

The historiographical debate concerning Llull in the late 1980s and the early 1990s mainly focused on the idea of the crusade and the impact of his evangelising activities. Although he was best known as a prolific author of chiefly philosophical works designed for achieving the religious conversion of all non-Christians,¹⁰⁹⁰ and as a missionary to the same purpose, among his hundreds of works were a handful of treatises and petitions advocating crusade. Pamela Drost Beattie wondered why an enthusiastic promoter of peaceful intellectual conversion simultaneously embraced and promoted crusades. She shed light on the links between mission and crusade in the early fourteenth century and on several aspects of late medieval religious culture.¹⁰⁹¹ Indeed, these links were a matter of debate in the period. Some scholars argued that crusading fervour declined in the face of increased interest in missions or that crusades and missions were championed in opposition to one another.¹⁰⁹² In contrast,

¹⁰⁸⁶ To name the most comprehensive: Jocelyn Hillgarth, *Ramon Lull and Lullism in Fourteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Anthony Bonner, *Selected Works of Ramón Llull (1232-1316)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Mark David Johnston, *The Evangelical Rhetoric of Ramon Llull: Lay Learning and Piety in the Christian West Around 1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ramón Sugranyes de Franch, 'L'apologétique de Raimond Lulle vis-à-vis de l'Islam', *Cahiers de Fanjeaux* 18, no. 1 (1983): 373–93.

¹⁰⁸⁸ S.J. Robert I. Burns, 'Christian-Islamic Confrontation in the West: The Thirteenth-Century Dream of Conversion', *The American Historical Review* 76, no. 5 (1971): 1386–1434 :1397–8.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: Thirteenth-Century Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 161–2.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Mark David Johnston, *The Spiritual Logic of Ramon Llull* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Charles Lohr, 'La Nova Lògica de Ramon Llull', *Enrahonar: An International Journal of Theoretical and Practical Reason* 5, no. 22 (1992): 23–35.

¹⁰⁹¹ Pamela Drost Beattie, "'Pro Exaltatione Sanctae Fidei Catholicae": Mission and Crusade in the Writings of Ramon Llull', in *Iberia and the Mediterranean World of the Middle Ages, Volume I: Proceedings from Kalamazoo*, Larry J. Simon (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

¹⁰⁹² Maureen Purcell, *Papal Crusading Policy, 1244-1291: The Chief Instruments of Papal Crusading Policy and Crusade to the Holy Land from the Final Loss of Jerusalem to the Fall of Acre 1244-1291* (Leiden: Brill,

others disagreed and emphasised the close alliance between missionaries and crusaders.¹⁰⁹³ Beattie included Llull in the second strand, outlining him as representative of a crucial development in later medieval religious culture that increasingly emphasised the concept that religion was something that one practised, not simply a set of propositions to believe in. In a nutshell, she argued that Llull was a promoter of enthusiasm for the crusade into the later middle ages.¹⁰⁹⁴

In contrast, Escandell Bonet described Llull as the precursor of sixteenth-century missionaries. He emphasised how, after suffering martyrdom in Bugia, Llull became the “Doctor Illuminado”, the “Maestro de la Barba Florida” who incorporated the study of Oriental languages and cultures into the curricula of future missionaries.¹⁰⁹⁵ Consequently, Escandell Bonet depicted Llull as the forerunner, with “enlightened” methodology, of the “New World” missionaries who studied the indigenous cultures of the peoples among whom they exercised their apostolate.¹⁰⁹⁶ A thesis contested by the critical literature of the period, especially by Enrique Dussel. Recalling the Heideggerian-inspired thesis of the “invention of America” proposed by Edmundo O’Gorman, which postulated the creative capacity of Western culture to shape America as a distinct and other entity,¹⁰⁹⁷ Dussel denounced how the native inhabitants were conceived as mere “objects” without history or humanity. Specifically, he contested the position of extreme Eurocentrism that regarded the indigenous Americans as a pure “container” of evangelisation that cannot and should not bring any interaction.¹⁰⁹⁸

Adriano Prosperi's lecture confirmed the Eurocentric focus on missionaries at the AEH conference. He analysed the idea of mission from the Mediterranean to Atlantic Christianity, highlighting the transformations of European Christianity following the “Discovery”. The pilgrimage and the collective crusade were characteristic of medieval Christianity, Prosperi continued, while with the sixteenth century, a conception towards the religious and cultural

1975); Paul Rousset, ‘La Croisade Obstacle a La Mission’, *Nova et Vetera*, no. 57 (1982): 133–42; Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission: European Approaches Toward the Muslims* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

¹⁰⁹³ Elizabeth Siberry, ‘Missionaries and Crusaders, 1095–1274: Opponents or Allies?’, *Studies in Church History* 20 (ed 1983): 103–10; Elizabeth Siberry, *Criticism of Crusading: 1095–1274* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); Norman Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades, 1305–1378* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Sylvia Schein, *Fideles Crucis: The Papacy, the West, and the Recovery of the Holy Land, 1274–1314* (Oxford: Brill, 1991).

¹⁰⁹⁴ See also: Pamela Drost Beattie, ‘Crusading and the Penitential Life: James of Vitry’s Crusade Sermon Models and Llull’s De Fine’, *Studia Lulliana* 54, no. 109 (2014): 33–66.

¹⁰⁹⁵ On the topic see also: Anthony Bonner, *Doctor Illuminatus: A Ramon Llull Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

¹⁰⁹⁶ Marras, ‘Congresso’, 184–5.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Edmundo O’Gorman, *La invención de América* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1957).

¹⁰⁹⁸ Dussel, ‘¿Descubrimiento?’, 482–3.

unity of the world increasingly emerged. The realisation of this homogeneous unity was entrusted to missionaries as representatives of human groups specialised in mediation and persuasion.¹⁰⁹⁹

As with Escandell Bonet, one might observe a complete lack of critical perspective. In 1993, analysing the functions and relationships of Christian missionary education, Clayton G. Mackenzie argued that it was an arm of colonial conquest. He stressed that the missionaries and colonists often came from the same country, almost always the same continent, and spoke the same language, as well as worshipped the same god or enjoyed the same privileges. As a result, they jointly set up schools that trained low-level workers to sustain the economies of colonial territories and their metropolises.¹¹⁰⁰ Going further, George E. Tinker critically redefined prevailing notions of missionisation in the Western world. He outlined how missionary outreach to the Native peoples of the American continent has been a history of “cultural genocide”. Examining the dangerous illusion of alleged white-Christian cultural superiority over Native American indigenous, Tinker charged the Christian missionaries with destroying Indian cultures. His well-supported thesis demonstrated that missionaries failed to recognise the cultural and religious traditions of Native peoples and imposed their European cultural values.¹¹⁰¹

Instead, Escandell Bonet and Prosperi’s lectures focused exclusively on possible transformations in the influence of European culture and society in the Americas. In particular, the two scholars, while recognising some common traits in the presence of different European colonisers in the American continent, such as the problematic beginnings in early settlements like La Navidad and Jamestown, marked the profound differences between Protestant missionaries in North America and Catholic missionaries in Latin America. They argued that the former suffered from the strong influence of the oligarchic conception of the Calvinist faith.¹¹⁰² In this context, the work of the Protestant missionary John Eliot, who translated the Bible into the Algonquin language, was an isolated episode in

¹⁰⁹⁹ Marras, ‘Congresso’, 184–5.

¹¹⁰⁰ Clayton G. Mackenzie, ‘Demythologising the Missionaries: A Reassessment of the Functions and Relationships of Christian Missionary Education under Colonialism’, *Comparative Education* 29, no. 1 (1 January 1993): 45–66.

¹¹⁰¹ George E. Tinker, *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

¹¹⁰² Amy Glassner Gordon agreed with Escandell Bonet and Prosperi’s interpretation in the same period. See: Amy Glassner Gordon, ‘The First Protestant Missionary Effort: Why Did It Fail?’, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 8, no. 1 (1 January 1984): 12–18.

the history of the Protestant colonies between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹¹⁰³ The second, on the other hand, was characterised by “great missionary activity”, which took place under the influence of the Church of Rome.¹¹⁰⁴ Surprisingly, Bartolomè Escandell and Prosperi avoided any Association of missionary enterprises with colonialism.¹¹⁰⁵

The same approach guided the second weighty section of the conference, namely the panel on the figure of Christopher Columbus. In briefly describing the lectures on the topic, Marras pointed out how all the speakers agreed on the exaltation of Columbus, considered the symbol of Christianity in the Mediterranean. Specifically, the panel aimed to rehabilitate the figure of Columbus, who, according to the participants, had frequently been denigrated in studies conducted between the 1970s and 1980s. By analysing the transformations in the European imagination following the “discovery”, the scholars involved in the panel depicted Columbus as a crucial figure in Early Modern Europe.¹¹⁰⁶

The theme of a possible devaluation of the figure of Columbus dates back to Colombian studies in the 1970s. During the “International Columbus Studies Conference” held in Genoa in October 1973, the Italian scholar Francesco Giunta introduced his communication by attacking what he saw as the “Decolumbianisation” of the discovery of the American continent. He criticised the interest of some scholars in a possible “Viking approach” to the Americas before Columbus. Expressing a substantial difference between “finding” and “discovering”, Giunta emphasised Columbus' ability to establish lasting connections between the “Old” and “New” worlds. Dealing with the Vikings or other peoples who would “find” the Americas, Giunta concluded, «obscure one of the most significant aspects of the discovery: its Mediterranean character in conception and realisation».¹¹⁰⁷

A few years before the Fifth Centenary, John Lerner emphasised that Giunta and the “pro-Colombian” strand hoped for a new lease of life for Colombian studies during the 1992 celebrations. Lerner analysed the initiatives for the Fourth Centenary in 1892, described as the apotheosis of Columbus. Whatever with local variations, the celebrated man was the

¹¹⁰³ George E. Tinker disagreed with this assumption. See: Tinker, *Missionary Conquest*, 132–68. For an extensive overview of the debate on John Eliot in the period, see: Richard W. Cogley, ‘John Eliot in Recent Scholarship’, *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 14, no. 2 (1990): 77–92.

¹¹⁰⁴ Marras, ‘Congresso’, 185.

¹¹⁰⁵ Incidentally, Clayton G. Mackenzie noted that the Association of missionary enterprises with colonialism, due in no small part to the temporal concurrence of their respective activities, has been viewed with suspicion even by indigenous commentators in both pre- and postcolonial periods. See: Mackenzie, ‘Demythologising’, 62–3.

¹¹⁰⁶ Marras, ‘Congresso’, 186–7.

¹¹⁰⁷ «Oscura uno degli aspetti più significativi della scoperta: il suo carattere mediterraneo nella concezione e nella realizzazione». Francesco Giunta, ‘Contributo Italiano al Chiarimento Della Questione Di Vinlandia’, in *Saggi Sull’età Colombiana*, Alberto Boscolo and Francesco Giunta (Milan: Cisalpino Editore, 1974), 33–48.

colonialist Christopher Columbus, the Christ-bearing dove: father of beneficent white imperialism, which was to dominate the world, and a man who had recently been put forward as a candidate for the canonisation of the Catholic church.¹¹⁰⁸ According to Sandra Patricia Rodríguez, in the Fourth Centenary, the symbolic control of the past by the cult of Columbus and the Discovery inaugurated a commemorative tradition based on conservative ideas that promoted language, religion, property, order and authority, and the promotion of commercial ties as a cultural agenda. Dissenting positions also sought a common reference point based on “mestizaje”,¹¹⁰⁹ but this commemoration was characterised by what, from the 1920s, some scholars named Hispano-Americanism.¹¹¹⁰ Both positions hinged on the idea of race, one based on the greatness of the “Peninsula Iberica”, the other on the importance of mestizaje, but both subscribed to the validation of a hierarchy of strong races over weak races.¹¹¹¹

Instead, different interpretations of the past were openly confronted in the public space in the Fifth Centenary. The "Encounter of Two Worlds" initiative took root in the formal festivities promoted by Unesco and the national commissions associated with this idea. However, at the time of the celebration, social movements contested the commemorative space in the streets and on the symbolic stage of music and art, where they gained recognition and legitimacy. As effectively argued by Emilia De Zuleta, during this Centenary, emphasis was placed on the analysis of race as a conceptual construct, which justified processes of exclusion and segregation against ethnically and linguistically differentiated communities in America and condemned its use in subsequent commemorations. As a result of the social struggles in the twentieth century of groups excluded from the commemorative principles of Hispano-Americanism, the V Centenary showed a dispersion of initiatives which disputed with the official memory of the commemorative scenario. In this way, patriotic and civic rituals were diluted, giving way to social protests for the recognition of popular identities, no longer subject to the Centenary tradition but to the ancestral legacy of the native peoples of America.¹¹¹²

¹¹⁰⁸ John Larnier, ‘The Certainty of Columbus: Some Recent Studies’, *History* 73, no. 237 (1988): 3–23:7.

¹¹⁰⁹ On the topic see: Antonio Cornejo-Polar, ‘Mestizaje, Transculturación, Heterogeneidad’, *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana* 20, no. 40 (1994): 368–71; J. Jorge Klor de Alva, ‘The Postcolonization of the (Latin) American Experience: A Reconsideration of “Colonialism,” “Postcolonialism,” and “Mestizaje”’, in *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*, ed. Gyan Prakash (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 241–76.

¹¹¹⁰ Germán Latorre Setién, *El panamericanismo y el porvenir de la América Española: memoria que obtuvo el premio del Conde de Torreánaz* (Madrid: Establecimiento Tipografico De Jaime Rates, 1924); Eduardo Gómez de Baquero, *Nacionalismo e Hispanismo y Otros Ensayos* (Madrid: Historia Nueva, 1928).

¹¹¹¹ Rodríguez, ‘Debates’, 71.

¹¹¹² Emilia De Zuleta, ‘El Hispanismo de Hispanoamérica. Hispania, The Quincentennial of the Columbian’, *Era* 75, no. 4 (1993): 950–65.

From the little information available, it seems that the lectures on Christopher Columbus at the AEH conference tried to “restore” the classical paradigm. To this extent, the emphasis on Columbus' Christianity is worth noting. Recalling the European-as-Christendom concept that had already characterised the Association's previous conference on Europe,¹¹¹³ Columbus was portrayed as a symbol of the Christianity of the Mediterranean in the Late Middle Ages. Again, according to the accounts of Marras and Leonardi, no critical perspectives on the subject emerged during the congress.

Incidentally, on the eve of 1992, the American National Council of Churches (NCC) passed a resolution condemning the forthcoming celebration of the event.¹¹¹⁴ Going far beyond the Unesco positions, the Governing Board of the NCC declared that «For the descendants of the survivors of the subsequent invasion, genocide, slavery, ecocide and exploitation of the wealth of the land, a celebration is not an appropriate observance of this anniversary». Openly accusing Colombo as the main culprit, the NCC made a profound self-criticism by stating that «the church, with few exceptions, accompanied and legitimised this conquest [...] Theological justifications for destroying native religious beliefs, while forcing conversion to European forms of Christianity, demanded a submission from the newly converted that facilitated their total exploitation».¹¹¹⁵ Some scholars contested such a radical stance,¹¹¹⁶ but the debate was also open in the Christian world. Instead, the AEH conference was impervious to the international discussion, as in the case of the Unesco positions.

Consequently, we might argue that the AEH conference was hinged on the paradigm of “Discovery”. Although during the Fifth Centenary, the denomination of the celebration as the “Encounter of Two Worlds” came into dispute with the “Resistance of the Indigenous Peoples”, especially amid historiographical debates, the AEH instead seemed more interested in the previous Fourth-Centenary paradigm described above.¹¹¹⁷ The sharp debates around the 1992 anniversary showed that commemorations are not static celebrations based on the construction of a perpetual perspective, but rather they shift characters according to the historical context of the commemorative event. It implies that despite maintaining coherence

¹¹¹³ Cf. notes 407–522.

¹¹¹⁴ NCC is an ecumenical partnership of 38 Christian faith groups in the United States. Its member communions include mainline Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, African-American, evangelical, and historic peace churches. Together, it encompasses more than 100,000 local congregations and 40 million adherents.

¹¹¹⁵ A Faithful Response to the 500th Anniversary of the Arrival of Christopher Columbus - A Resolution of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA as adopted by the Governing Board May 17, 1990, <https://www.transformcolumbusday.org/faithful.html> [consulted on 24th January 2023].

¹¹¹⁶ James Muldoon, ‘The Columbus Quincentennial: Should Christians Celebrate It?’, *America* (27 October 1990), 300.

¹¹¹⁷ Cf. notes 1107–1108.

and unity, official memory cannot prevent other memories from remaining latent and becoming visible when the historical conditions are transformed. Official memory cannot perpetually marginalise other memories, and its questioning does not necessarily occur, as Elizabeth Jelin has argued, when institutional ruptures occur at the national level, like coups d'état and dictatorships, or when alternative narratives emerge to face external threats. The need to reorder the meanings of the past also appears in postcolonial contexts, such as Latin America, in which the referents of identity have remained in long periods of calm and apparent consensus.¹¹¹⁸

However, the conservative interpretation of the AEH was not a desert island. According to Yayo Aznar and Diana Wechsler, in both celebrations, Hispanic culture predominated, particularly language and religion as cultural legacies. From their perspective, the whole cultural history of Hispanic culture is a continuous series of censorship, suppression and displacement, especially of the exiles' voice. This process was hidden behind a mythical identity devoid of fissures which, from the misleading exaltation of the heroes' conquest, has encompassed under the confusing and ambiguous word "civilisation", a heritage of language and religion as useful as destructive in its attempt at homogenisation.¹¹¹⁹ The lectures at the AEH conference confirmed this mythical reading of the heroes of the "Discovery", primarily citing the Christian spirituality linked to the figures of Llull, the forerunner of missionaries in the Americas, and Columbus, depicted as a symbol of Christianity.

To this extent, a similarity with the 1983 conference concerning Europe and Christianity emerged. In both cases, Eurocentrism is strictly connected with Christendom. As described by Hugh Seton-Watson, the "mystique of Europe" derives from the earlier mystique of Christendom.¹¹²⁰ Following Perkins' categories to analyse the AEH, the Association conceived Christendom as a key element of the history of the idea of Europe and as a powerful narrative of European identity which survived the secularisation of culture and society over time. The Europe-as-Christendom grand narrative still combined with Charlemagne's ideas and the religio-political realm of medieval Europe as well as the figure of Columbus and the theological tasks of his voyages. In the AEH paradigm, Christendom was a historically-conditioned term with complex connotations reflecting shifts in social contexts and assumptions. It consisted of clusters of ideas and beliefs, principles and theories,

¹¹¹⁸ Elizabeth Jelin, *Las Conmemoraciones: las disputas en las fechas 'in-felices'* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores, 2002), 210–32.

¹¹¹⁹ Diana Wechsler and Yayo Aznar, *La memoria compartida: España y la Argentina en la construcción de un imaginario cultural (1898-1950)* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2005), 16–7.

¹¹²⁰ Seton-Watson, 'What is Europe', 7.

assumptions, prejudices, and cultural conditioning.¹¹²¹ This was a starting point for both the 1983 and 1992 AEH conferences.

However, while the AEH conferences of 1983 and 1989 employed this narrative to support the image of a united Europe aimed at overcoming “historiographical nationalism”, at the 1992 conference, this objective seemed more nuanced. The lectures were not based on national criteria with a European perspective but on thematic areas. The Eurocentrism of the two previous conferences was aimed at a supranational, Europeanist, anti-nationalist perspective of historical research and history teaching. In the conference on the “Discovery of America”, conversely, Eurocentrism was configured as an interpretation of a specific historical event without any further goals of de-nationalisation. Paradoxically, although the 1992 conference marked the first step towards a “Europeanisation” of the AEH after Saitta's death, there seemed to be a promotion of Eurocentrism rather than “Europeanness”.

This shift in Europeanness-building coincided with the end of the Association's activities. After the “Discovery” conference, no further activities of the Association appear in the sources. The last letter from President Ruano to Vice-President Leonardi is dated eighteenth May 1993, in which the two scholars wondered what future the Association might have.¹¹²² At the end of the same year, the AEH's bank account was closed, and the official registration in Italy lapsed.

Conclusions

Following the 1989 conference, the AEH debated a possible renewal towards a “European” structure of activities and central offices. Despite the painstaking work of President Armando Saitta and some members, the Association experienced a persistent mistrust of East European historians. The events of 1989 and the imminent dissolution of the USSR determined a deep scepticism in the active involvement of these scholars. This process was accompanied by a growing disinterest of many members in the Association's core activities, such as general assemblies and scientific schedules. To address the crisis in membership, President Saitta urged for a diversification of the nationalities of both the Presidency and the Executive Board.

¹¹²¹ Perkins, *Christendom and European Identity*, 4.

¹¹²² Letter of Eloy Benito Ruano to Mario Francesco Leonardi, 18 May 1993, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 22, dossier 1991.

However, this chapter shows that the Association remained essentially Italian-centric. The number of Italian members continued to be more than half of the total membership, just as Italian was the majority of the members on the Executive Board. While the number of members increasingly raised, the number of Italians grew at a more than proportional rate. Considering the prevalent Italian segment and the need for a gradual change to “Europeanise” the Association's activities, the AEH members in the 1989 and 1990 elections confirmed a structure centred on Armando Saitta and the Italian members of the Executive Board.

Not even Saitta's sudden death in May 1991 could move the goalposts during the game. His succession to the presidency of the AEH exacerbated the contradictions of an Association conceived in a European sense but marked by Italian national dynamics. Having excluded members from Eastern Europe a priori, the choice fell on a distinguished Spanish member, Eloy Benito Ruano, who stood out through the extensive involvement of scholars from his country in the AEH. However, Ruano made his candidature conditional on extensive support from Italian members, whom he considered the true heart of the Association. The Executive Board accepted Ruano's conditions to elect a non-Italian President who, moreover, would ensure a direct link with ICHS.

The Spanish presidency was also aimed at organising the 1992 conference on the occasion of the Fifth Centenary of the “Discovery of America”. The choice to focus the event on Spain connoted from the outset the scientific paradigm of the conference, which was decidedly Eurocentric and lacked critical lectures. To this extent, the chapter shows that, while not participating in the international debate that emerged from the commemorations, the AEH embraced the paradigm of the “Discovery”. From the analysis of the few available secondary sources, no significant historiographical novelties emerged, but rather some reaffirmations of already widespread theories on Christian missionaries and Christopher Columbus. At a time when the centrality of Europe and its colonial role in the Americas was being questioned, the AEH conference supported a traditional and conservative perspective. The non-publication of the proceedings might confirm the little relevance of the conference.

After the congress, the lack of impetus from the members and, above all, from the Association's main “driving force”, Armando Saitta, led to the demise of AEH. The coincidence in time between the death of the founding President and the end of the Association's activities once again demonstrated the AEH's dependency on Saitta.

Conclusions

When introducing the congress on Europe in 1983, Armando Saitta stressed that «humanity is not just a matter of selling a few refrigerators or the free movement of an agricultural product»;¹¹²³ thus, «it should not be forgotten that a cultural dimension belongs to the EC».¹¹²⁴ He ascribed the disclosure of the European culture to the historians, whose main task was the «dispelling of Maya's veil on the common European roots».¹¹²⁵ Historians should have «woken minds and consciences to a European feeling, and no longer a simple national belonging».¹¹²⁶ Ideally, they should emphasise political initiative concerning the «growing coexistence of peoples, national legacies, and common European heritage».¹¹²⁷

Saitta's suggestions interested a significant group of historians, researchers, archivists, and history teachers to establish an international network that would promote European culture. The network drew inspiration from a marked Eurocentric perspective and, during its initial phase, supported the EC's efforts towards creating a sense of European identity in the early 1980s. This research argues that the endorsement for the EC was a compromise between the European Parliament, particularly the Italian MEP Mario Pedini, and some scholars' apprehension concerning the European crisis. The preliminary AEH attempted a bottom-up European culture-building rather than relying on top-down interpellation as outlined by Patel.¹¹²⁸ Consequently, the association planned to organise conferences, publish materials, and actively engage in the "Europeanisation" of the EC's cultural and educational policies.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the growing commitment of EC institutions to educational policies dovetailed with historians' involvement in European roots, identity, and heritage investigation. Roughly twenty years after Max Beloff's *Europe and Europeans* project amidst the Council of Europe, historians were anew enlisted in legitimating Community through European history.¹¹²⁹ Among others, EC institutions aimed at reforming education by a "Europeanisation" of history teaching. The Italian MEP Mario Pedini and the Parliamentary

¹¹²³ «L'umanità non è solo una questione di vendita di alcuni frigoriferi o di libera circolazione di qualche prodotto agricolo». Armando Saitta, 'Inaugural speech', in Italian Historical Institute for the Modern and Contemporary Ages, ed., *L'Europa. Fondamenti, formazione e realtà* (Rome: Alpha Print, 1984), XIV.

¹¹²⁴ «Non va dimenticato che una dimensione culturale appartiene alla CE» Ibid.

¹¹²⁵ «Dissipare il velo di Maya sulle comuni radici europee». Ibid.

¹¹²⁶ «Risvegliare nelle menti e nelle coscienze un sentimento europeo e non più una semplice appartenenza nazionale». Armando Saitta, 'Europe and the other', in Italian Historical Institute, *L'Europa*, XXVII.

¹¹²⁷ «La crescente coesistenza di popoli, eredità nazionali e patrimonio comune europeo». Ibid.

¹¹²⁸ Patel, 'Integration by Interpellation', 538–54.

¹¹²⁹ Max Beloff, *Europe and Europeans* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957).

Commission for Youth, Culture, Education, Information, and Sport (CYCEIS) worked hard to focus EC's attention on building joint educational and cultural policies. This study argues that the EP played a significant role in developing those policies between the 1970s and the 1980s.¹¹³⁰

Anything but a passive entity, the EP and some of its members were committed to strengthening links between common educational policies and promoting European cultural identity, even encouraging historians' affiliation. The participation of the AEH came after decades of EP influence on educational cooperation. Remarkably, this study highlights the EP's close links with education, culture, and Europeanness since the 1960s. Despite the lack of formal recognition of competence in educational matters, the EP worked to develop collaborations between member states in the field. While traditional literature on the European Parliament argues it was an irrelevant institution until the 1979 elections, this dissertation shows the EP's noticeable activity on educational cooperation more than two decades earlier.

In the early 1980s, EP's role in educational cooperation peaked. The 1979 elections had strengthened its position as it was the only democratically elected body of the CE. The influence of the EP led to the first meeting of EC education ministers in 1980. The EP's legitimacy, particularly the CYCEIS, created a strong balance of power with the European Council and the European Commission concerning education. As a result, the President of the CYCEIS, Pedini, had the legitimacy to undertake autonomous initiatives, such as the involvement of a group of historians led by Saitta to "Europeanise" history teaching.

Against this background, the 1983 congress on Europe suggests a threefold objective. First, the conference brought to light the significant political clout of the Christian Democrats, particularly the MEP Mario Pedini. As pointed out by Wolfram Kaiser, Christian transnational political networks, such as the EPP and other less structured groups, have played a crucial role in shaping European integration.¹¹³¹ Kaiser has emphasised that these networks, and their members, have been decisive in defining policy agendas and forging alliances among networked politicians who have exploited their dual party and governmental roles. According to Jacopo Cellini, Christian Democrats played a significant role in European integration from the 1960s to the 1980s, not only as political parties but as networked party politicians who were able to take advantage of the complex intersection between national and

¹¹³⁰ Laruffa, 'Historians' Affiliation', 289.

¹¹³¹ Kaiser, *Christian democracy*, 325.

supranational, formal and informal politics that shaped the European Community.¹¹³² Additionally, Paolo Acanfora has recently outlined the Italian Christian Democrats' influence on the European integration process during the 1980s.¹¹³³ Pedini worked as one of the "agents", taking advantage of his influential position in EP's cultural and educational policies while promoting the dominance of Christian parties at a supranational level.

Against this background, we might add further consideration. The idea of Europe emerging from the discourse of Christian Democracy is recognisable and distinct, especially concerning its connections to a religious worldview, which is even ascertainable in the early stages of the EPP's history. This ideology dates back to the mid-twentieth century postwar period, specifically to the end of prolonged animosities between Protestants and Catholics. European Christian religious, political, and intellectual life had been divided along denominational lines for centuries. While Catholics and Protestants continued to view denominations as crucial for their self-understanding, they began to find common social organisations, establish joint Christian Democratic political parties and embrace legal equality and religious liberty across Western and Northern Europe. Apparently, in a few decades, Europe's prolonged wars of religion ended abruptly, ushering in a new order of ecumenism and religious pluralism.¹¹³⁴

Traditional literature has not systematically analysed this fundamental shift since it has been considered a predictable consequence of a broader liberalisation in postwar Christian thought and politics. In some scholars' view, Christian politicians, thinkers, and church leaders, traumatised by the Nazis' brutality, emphasised liberal principles of tolerance and religious liberty and embraced their religious neighbours, whether Jews or other Christians.¹¹³⁵ Others have emphasised the role of Cold War anxieties about the expansion of "Godless" communism in fostering ecumenism. According to this interpretation, Catholics and Protestants believed that the United States was the only bulwark against communist aggression. They accepted its insistence on democratic and liberal regimes in Western Europe and ultimately made peace with religious equality.¹¹³⁶ Whatever the origin, ecumenism appears as the offshoot of Europe's broader shift toward embracing basic liberal principles

¹¹³² Cellini, 'The Idea of Europe at the Origins of the European People's Party. The Making of the European Manifesto and of the EPP's Political Programme'.

¹¹³³ Acanfora, 'The DC', 1–18.

¹¹³⁴ Udi Greenberg, 'Catholics, Protestants, and the Violent Birth of European Religious Pluralism', *The American Historical Review* 124, no. 2 (1 April 2019): 511–38: 511.

¹¹³⁵ Barbara Schwahn, *Der Ökumenische Arbeitskreis Evangelischer Und Katholischer Theologen von 1946 Bis 1975* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996); Geoffrey Adams, *Political Ecumenism: Catholics, Jews, and Protestants in De Gaulle's Free France, 1940-1945* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 2006); Paul Misner, *Catholic Labor Movements in Europe* (Washington DC: CUA Press, 2015).

¹¹³⁶ Maria D. Mitchell, *The Origins of Christian Democracy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012); Samuel Moyn, *Christian Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015).

following war trauma. To this extent, elites on both sides of the confessional divide embarked on a new path toward a more tolerant, inclusive, and equal future.

However, recent critical studies have disputed this assumption. Udi Greenberg has extensively analysed how a series of political upheavals between the 1930s and the 1960s led Christian elites to develop new conceptions of religious pluralism and religious freedom, which called for political and legal equality between Christians but simultaneously excluded religious minorities, especially Jews and Muslims. In traditional literature, ecumenism peaked in the early 1960s, when the Catholic Church, during the Second Vatican Council, and the World Council of Churches, the umbrella organisation for hundreds of Protestant churches, officially announced to be “brethren in faith”. Instead, Greenberg critically argues that Catholic-Protestant peace was not merely the product of expanding liberal horizons. He first links the ecumenical shift to Nazism, which promised to unite the two denominations in a militarised racial community, and instigated the first systematic interconfessional cooperation. Christian thinkers and politicians sympathised with the regime’s fierce anti-Marxism and antisemitism, and launched joint publications and organisations. Second, Greenberg shows that the unfolding of decolonisation in Africa and Asia in the 1950s and 1960s further expanded this early Catholic-Protestant cooperation. The loss of European governments’ support for missionary organisations, alongside anxieties about the spread of Islam among newly liberated nations, pushed Christian leaders to solidify an inter-Christian alliance.¹¹³⁷

In the same vein, James Chappell argues that between 1920 and 1960, the Catholic Church became modern. However, Chappell argues that the historical process effecting the modernisation of Catholicism was not primarily shaped by the “nouvelle théologie”, the papal social encyclical tradition, historical-critical biblical scholarship, nor the Second Vatican Council. Indeed, Chappell’s interpretation emphasises that Catholics’ transition to modernity was effected through the Church’s interaction with fascism, antisemitism, debates over labour, and the “reproductive family” and its place in the social order. Central in Chappell’s argument is that, in the forty years of the mid-century, Catholicism ceased fighting to overturn modernity and began agitating for distinctively Catholic forms of modernity. His conception of “Paternal Catholic Modernism” emphasises how anti-communism was at the

¹¹³⁷ Greenberg, ‘Catholics’, 512–3.

very centre of the Church's mission, and in the process, it ended up legitimating collaboration with authoritarian and anti-Semitic regimes in Spain, France, and Germany.¹¹³⁸

In the intentions, the Christian Democrats' idea of Europe was a sort of bridge towards other political cultures: a convergence of views on human rights with Liberalism and social justice with Socialism characterises the Christian Democratic political culture. This feature rendered it less rigidly ideological and more adaptable in political bargaining than other political cultures. Indeed, the European Charter of Values contains some fundamental concepts also present in the European manifesto or the EPP's political program, such as the 1973 Declaration on European Identity or the 1992 Treaty on European Union.¹¹³⁹ However, this idea of plurality and "bridging" was less flexible and negotiable than traditionally asserted in the literature, as recent studies argued.

This feature unfolds the second objective of the 1983 congress, namely the emphasis on the Eurocentric perspective and the Christian roots of Europe. Some scholars have extensively debated the recurring theme of Europe-as-Christendom in discourse about the links between religion, politics, and society.¹¹⁴⁰ However, the chronology of such a congress seems to strike with the Christian Democratic turn towards universalism since the 1960s. As Jacopo Cellini has argued, until the 1940s, official Catholic discourse was committed to "traditionalism," which refers to an intransigent attitude toward modernity. The end of traditionalism in the middle decades of the twentieth century led in two new directions. The first, normally the dominant approach, is deemed "universalism": this is the language of ecumenism, solidarity, and human rights that has been a familiar register for Catholic discourse. The second is deemed "liberation", referring to the broadly anti-systemic and anti-capitalist interpretations of Catholic doctrine that streamed in from Latin America. Going further, Cellini has focused on the foreign policy discourse of Italy's Christian Democratic Party and has stressed that the DC was impregnated with Catholic international ideals. As a result, Cellini concludes, the "universalist" approach was dominant, and that neither traditionalism nor liberation made many inroads within the party.¹¹⁴¹

The analysis of the 1983 congress in this study represents a notable exception rather than refuting Cellini's assumptions. Arguably, the pervasiveness of universalism between the

¹¹³⁸ James Chappel, *Catholic Modern: The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

¹¹³⁹ Cellini, 'The idea of Europe at the Origins of the European People's Party', 94.

¹¹⁴⁰ Peo Hansen, 'European Integration, European Identity and the Colonial Connection', *European Journal of Social Theory* 5, no. 4 (1 November 2002): 483–98, <https://doi.org/10.1177/136843102760513875>; Perkins, *Christendom and European Identity*; for a critical perspective see: Pasture, *Imagining*, 1–31;

¹¹⁴¹ Jacopo Cellini, *Universalism and Liberation: Italian Catholic Culture and the Idea of International Community, 1963–1978* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2017).

1960s and 1980s was less monolithic than Cellini describes. The central axis of the DC's culture of foreign policy, and the mainstream approach of the Catholic culture's idea of the international community, relied less on the emphasis of national features and more on strengthening the trends toward an integrated, fair and cooperative international community, first and foremost in Europe. However, the 1983 congress evidently promoted the grand narrative of common European roots and values to reaffirm the European centrality in a globalised world. Indeed, in a sort of Europe-and-Christendom-centred perspective on universal history,¹¹⁴² the conference described the extra-European histories as marginal forces to the "cradle of civilisation" rather than denying world history or universalism. This framework suited both EC institutions' Europeanness-building and AEH founders' desire to promote Eurocentrism.

Incidentally, this study highlights a peculiar convergence between Pedini and Saitta. In the early stages of his career, Saitta's figure was controversial: he was attacked by Catholics for excessive Marxism, but at the same time, he was not a Marxist in the strict sense.¹¹⁴³ The analysis conducted in this dissertation shows several contacts between Saitta and members of the Catholic world well before the 1980s. However, a common perspective with Pedini on the European perspective was far from obvious, as Pedini wondered if «will we be able to stimulate a different historical critique from the now prevailing Marxist one? Yet Armando Saitta came from that milieu!». ¹¹⁴⁴

Indeed, according to the early work of Saitta in the 1940s basing on Carlo Morandi's thought, the nineteenth century was a political laboratory where various hypotheses of Europeanism emerged and European intellectuals committed to engaging civil society. A nostalgic, conservative, reactionary Europeanism was fostered by those who supported Christian Europe as their core identity and, on the other hand, a Jacobin Europeanism emerged. Saitta claimed that Robespierre was one of Europe's main inspirers for peace. For Saitta, peace could only be achieved through war against tyranny. The concrete example closest to his ideals was the fight against the French monarchy and the European counterrevolution. This juxtaposition of extremes gave rise to nationalist exasperation, transcending the colonial conquest of the great European powers.¹¹⁴⁵ Saitta strongly opposed conservative

¹¹⁴² Drayton, Motadel, 'Discussion', 4.

¹¹⁴³ On the topic see: Marcello Verga, 'Armando Saitta: L'Istituto, l'università, Il Sessantotto', in *Cultura e Organizzazione. Armando Saitta e La Storiografia Italiana Del Secondo Novecento*, ed. Alessandro Laruffa and Marcello Verga (Rome: Viella, 2023), 9–24.

¹¹⁴⁴ «Riusciremo a stimolare una critica storica diversa da quella marxista ormai imperante? Eppure Armando Saitta veniva da quell'ambiente!». Pedini, *Cinque anni*, 395.

¹¹⁴⁵ Armando Saitta, 'L'idea di Europa dal 1815 al 1970', *Movimento Operaio* VII (1956), 403–55.

Europeanism. However, in the first AEH congress, the historiographical perspective was precisely a traditional and Christian Europeanism. A Europe with roots in classical antiquity and centred on the links with Christianity, which was the central theme of the Christian Democrats and the European People's Party in the 1980s to construct a “true” European narrative.

Thus, what was the connection point between the two apparently opposing perspectives? This study identifies the “spirit of Europe” as the shared framework between the two strands. In the mid-twentieth century, German existentialist Karl Jaspers neatly summarised the features of the “European spirit”. This concept has persisted despite the significant impact of the World Wars on notions of a united European identity and civilisation. He argued that the idea of Europe in the second postwar period hinged on three categories: freedom, history, and science. This dialectical framework had been established in the tradition of Europe from the beginning. Jaspers argued that the Bible played a significant role in shaping the dynamic of polarity, as it allowed for the coexistence of contradictory possibilities. He associated Europe's history and identity with the concept of freedom, which he linked to the historical framework of the Christendom narrative.¹¹⁴⁶ This dissertation argues that the notions of freedom, history, science, continued to be compelling features of the “spirit of Europe” among intellectuals even in the latter half of the twentieth century. The Christendom narrative have had an appealing, significant focus on freedom as the antithesis of fatalism and totalitarianism.

In this context, the Christian Democrats’ narrative and Saitta’s thoughts coincided. He committed to involving several historians “to restore” Europe’s centrality against nationalism and globalisation. The 1983 conference was the starting point to formalise the European scholars' international association within the EC, at least in intention. As a result, the AEH project became a meeting point for historians, history teachers, and other professional figures involved in European history. The AEH founders were committed to struggling against Europe-decentralised historiographies and transnational networks. However, in contrast to extra-European cases, European history and European integration history’s networks like the AEH, the Girault project, and the LCEH were directly linked to political institutions, namely the EC. Despite AEH founders' stating that historians should have been detached from political influences, this study shows that the preliminary AEH activities were strictly intertwined with the EC, particularly the EP, until 1985.

¹¹⁴⁶ Karl Jaspers, *The European Spirit* (London: SCM Press, 1948). This analysis is inspired by the work of Perkins, *Christendom and European identity*, 116–7.

In other words, the AEH, in the initial phase, acted as a non-institutional “agent” of Europeanness as a non-institutional actor but coordinated with the Parliament. This research project challenges Morgane Le Boulay's recent assumptions regarding the links of historians with the EC. She postulates an exclusive relationship of Commission officials with historians in the 1980s, particularly the LCEH, to promote the history of European integration.¹¹⁴⁷ From this perspective, in the words of Patel, the Commission would have “interpellated” historians to legitimise European identity in crisis. This study challenges these statements by analysing the promotion of Europeanness by a network of historians who negotiated with the “entrepreneurs” of the EC, mainly the MEP Pedini and the Commission, about their task. The hypothesis is not to deny the Commission's push towards the history of European integration in the 1980s, quite the opposite. Europeanness is a polygon with multiple angles, and the history of the integration process represents one of the poles. Revisiting the history teaching from a European perspective, as well as the history of Europe away from any nationalism, the AEH equally contributed to Europeanness-building.

History, therefore, was an instrument to legitimise and define Europe under construction, accelerating the process of identity building. Some historians aimed to valorise the (supposed) common culture and historical heritage, bring Europeans closer together, and contrast the old national histories. This “new” history of Europe served to reintroduce the traditional civic engagement of the historian. From another perspective, one might argue that such an engagement was similar to a nation-building process, here transposed to Europe. Some scholars have analysed the contradictions of a European identity alongside national identities.¹¹⁴⁸ Who are the Europeans, and how many are there? The answer was not (and is not) obvious, especially considering the political, economic, social and cultural effects that produced, and produces, the rhetoric of “fortress Europe”.¹¹⁴⁹ The preliminary phase of the AEH is a clear demonstration of what Marcello Verga has called the “history policy” of the EC and the Council of Europe, which have encouraged research, but also the dissemination of

¹¹⁴⁷ Le Boulay, ‘La Fabrique’, 111–26.

¹¹⁴⁸ Neil Fligstein, Alina Polyakova, and Wayne Sandholtz, ‘European Integration, Nationalism and European Identity’, *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 50, no. s1 (2012): 106–22, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02230.x>.

¹¹⁴⁹ On the topic, see: Eleonore Kofman and Rosemary Sales, ‘Towards Fortress Europe?’, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Special Issue A Continent in Transition: Issues for Women in Europe in the 1990s, 15, no. 1 (1 January 1992): 29–39, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395\(92\)90031-P](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-5395(92)90031-P); Annette Jünemann, Nikolas Scherer, and Nicolas Fromm, eds., *Fortress Europe?: Challenges and Failures of Migration and Asylum Policies* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2017); Sabine Volk, ‘Speaking for “the European people”? How the transnational alliance Fortress Europe constructs a populist counter-narrative to European integration’, *Politique européenne* 66, no. 4 (2019): 120–49, <https://doi.org/10.3917/poeu.066.0120>; Pieter Bevelander and Ruth Wodak, *Europe at the Crossroads: Confronting Populist, Nationalist, and Global Challenges* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2020).

history and the promotion of cultural heritage, on some themes considered particularly relevant for the understanding of European history and the affirmation of a strong sense of European belonging.¹¹⁵⁰

However, significant transformations occurred between the 1983 conference and the AEH's official establishment in 1985. In the mid-1980s, the professional shift in EC educational policies entailed a hefty divergence between the unborn-child AEH and the Communities' institutions. Furthermore, Delors enhanced EUCO's role in cultural and educational policies. In 1987, he launched the Erasmus programme to spur academic student exchanges among the Member States; in 1989, the Jean Monnet action increased teaching in EC law, economy, political science, and history. Simultaneously, the Jean Monnet action aimed at promoting European integration studies also in the field of European integration history. Most LCEH members became Jean Monnet chairholders, with Lastenouse playing a pivotal role in the new EUCO's policy.¹¹⁵¹ Instead, the AEH members remained out of the "great game", surprisingly not interacting with other historians networks affiliated with the EC. This study not only shows that the structures of the AEH and the LCEH were substantially different, but also that no overlap in membership between the two organisations emerged.

To this extent, it is worth noting that, from the late 1990s, even the Commission's involvement in supporting historical research on European integration history declined sharply due to interest in other disciplines like political science, economy, and law.¹¹⁵² As stressed by Oriane Calligaro, the position of the EUCO concerning the LCEH has been ambiguous since the beginning. The Commission supported the creation of the Liaison Committee, encouraging historians to produce knowledge on the history of European integration. Yet, the EUCO maintained substantial control over its archives, the central source of this research field.¹¹⁵³ This rigidity highlights the challenges to a successful collaboration between an institution and historians. Indeed, the EUCO consistently demonstrated its intention to influence the production of historical knowledge on European integration. While the Commission did not officially act as a direct creator of knowledge, it repeatedly attempted to influence the conditions of production of this knowledge, either through the support of transnational networks, the main objective of the Liaison Committee, or by controlling creation, access, and management of the archives.

¹¹⁵⁰ Verga, 'La Comunità Europea, La «politica Della Storia» e Gli Storici'.

¹¹⁵¹ Laruffa, 'Historians' Affiliation', 291.

¹¹⁵² Varsori, 'From normative impetus', 19–25; Calligaro, 'Negotiating Europe', 38–77; Loth, 'La contribution', 46–8.

¹¹⁵³ Calligaro, *Negotiating Europe*, 51–2.

Consequently, as Wilfried Loth has argued, writing the isolated history of a European institution or process without the overall context of European construction implies a heightened danger of a merely “glory of the house”. This approach risks promoting a history without much scientific value and a history that scarcely interests the public.¹¹⁵⁴ As a result, the LCEH historians were frequently perceived as an inward-looking group by other contemporary historians, even of Western Europe. Wolfram Kaiser has pointed out that historians of European integration paid little attention to theoretical, conceptual, and methodological issues of European integration and EC/EU policies, which they have largely left to political scientists.¹¹⁵⁵ In the words of Antonio Varsori, can this historiography really be limited to the history of the integration process, its member states, supranational institutions, and policy-making? Moreover, would it not be necessary to extend the temporal framework backwards to the periods before 1945–47, to uncover long-term continuities and discontinuities in European history? Finally, is it possible to conceive the history of European integration without taking into account the East-West conflict during the Cold War or the broader international context, including decolonisation and globalisation?¹¹⁵⁶

Although these are mainly open questions, the analysis of the AEH reveals an outstanding issue concerning the politicisation of history. The severing of the relationship between MEP Mario Pedini and the Association also compromised the relationship between the AEH and the EC. Indeed, from the mid-1980s onwards, interest in European history declined, especially from the EC. The Europeanisation of school teaching was strongly emphasised but towards vocational and economically-driven education. Hence, the EC institutions supported a history of European integration which aimed at promoting a Europeanness more focused on the economic process than the common cultural heritage. After the initial collaboration, the AEH did not approve this objective and, more generally, the politicisation of historical research. Consequently, the Association detached from the EC as early as 1985, anticipating the detachment of the LCEH from the Commission in 1999. It follows that the AEH, rather than an exception, was a forerunner of what was to come.

As a result, the AEH framework progressively shifted. This dissertation outlines a turning period between 1983 and 1985 rather than considering the 1983 conference as the AEH starting point. From 1985 onwards, the AEH continued supporting Europeanness without

¹¹⁵⁴ Loth, ‘La contribution’, 52.

¹¹⁵⁵ Wolfram Kaiser, ‘From Isolation to Centrality: Contemporary History Meets European Studies’, in *European Union History. Themes and Debates*, ed. Wolfram Kaiser and Antonio Varsori (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 45–65.

¹¹⁵⁶ Varsori, ‘From normative impetus’, 24–5.

linking with the EC. Significantly, the AEH historiographical paradigm looked beyond the EC boundaries, while the EC institutions were primarily interested in European integration history. Despite extensive internal debates, the AEH composition trend from 1985 onwards suggests that the AEH-EC detachment was not coincidental. Arguably, both sides of the covenant had no more advantages from the collaboration.

The focal point of this shift in the historiographical paradigm was “Eastern enlargement”, a crucial element of difference with the LCEH. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses show that the AEH attempted to involve historians from the Soviet bloc after the breakaway from the EC. Such an evolution unfolds a window into the academic networks that could contribute to the process of *détente*. The history of Europe provided a focus for a small committed group to drive forward a project of transnationalism. This dissertation illustrates an embedding attempt at intellectual and personal networks. The AEH, during the crucial decade of the 1980s, organised international meetings to open contact between Western and Eastern scholars. The meetings did not necessarily entail collaboration or changes in perspectives. While conferences took place within comparative panels, this did not mean that comparative history writing would follow, nor did this “transnational project” necessarily entail “transnational” ideas. Even so, the transnational meetings allowed access to other historical research and methods. The contacts created opportunities, especially for some Eastern European scholars, to make research visits to the West.

A transnational historical approach has facilitated the analysis of this international association. Academic meetings outside the official program of *détente* fostered the types of personal and intellectual exchanges that helped to unlock the barriers. The AEH brought together members of this academic community within the particular political framework of the Cold War and *détente*. Despite sharp internal debates among Western-European members, its relative success witnesses the commitment among these historians to cross the political divides and reveals the authentic political spaces they occupied as scholars and intellectuals. As extensively discussed, this network was not the only one to produce such an attempt. Rather, the AEH was a piece in a mosaic that recent studies are carefully reconstructing. In addition to “official” diplomatic relations and large international organisations, several “underground” academic initiatives collaborated beyond the Berlin Wall.

In historiographical terms, the eastward enlargement had a twofold objective. The first was the analysis of European civilisation from a broad perspective. The AEH considered limiting to base its historical analysis on the borders of the blocs, resulting from a political but not a cultural-historical division. Among the AEH members, while different positions on the active

involvement of Eastern European scholars emerged, it was widely accepted that the object of analysis should be Europe as a whole. In the words of President Saitta:

«Its inalienable aspiration is to exchange information, forge relationships, and inspire common work in all the European countries according to that unitary historiographical heritage, among whose creators it is barely worth mentioning Ranke and Gaetano De Sanctis, Fustel de Coulanges and Mommsen, Tocqueville and Burckhardt; Croce and Menendez Pidal, Rostovzev and Poršnev, Henri Pirenne and Marc Bloch, Namier and Vincens Vives, that differences in regimes and ideologies cannot nullify».¹¹⁵⁷

Consequently, the second, oft-stated goal was the creation of a collective history of Europe that would overcome historiographical nationalism. To this extent, the aim of the Association seemed to be strongly influenced by the formation of its President, Saitta. Since the early stages of his scientific career, Saitta argued that research from a European perspective entailed re-signifying historical events to develop new perspectives in a broader framework than the single national context. For instance, referring to the issue of the Italian Risorgimento, Saitta emphasised that it was a process included in a European scenario. Europe offered Italy the solution for a pacific convivence through a vast federation of peoples capable of absorbing the various local conflicts without trauma. It was the same federalist doctrine that Saitta returned to in 1944-45 through the lens of Saint-Simon and Thierry's considerations of 1814. They supported the idea of linking European nations into a single supranational political body after the Napoleonic wars. In that period, Saitta continued, one could note a strong need for a definitive end to the conflicts and the claim for a European dimension of politics. In 1945, as in 1814, the people finally “breathed” again. Hence the urgency to rethinking Europe not as an inert container but as a civilisation, a political community composed of democratic institutions and solidarity-based economic policies. Political Europe, the “process of European union”, was not a romantic refuge but a concrete project to overcome the “absurdity of all nationalisms”.¹¹⁵⁸ As extensively discussed, Saitta

¹¹⁵⁷ «È sua irrinunciabile aspirazione scambiare informazioni, intessere rapporti, suscitare lavori comuni in tutti i paesi dell'intera Europa in sintonia con quel patrimonio storiografico unitario, tra i cui artefici è appena il caso di ricordare un Ranke e un Gaetano De Sanctis, un Fustel de Coulanges e un Mommsen, un Tocqueville e un Burckhardt; un Croce e un Menendez Pidal, un Rostovzev e un Poršnev, un Henri Pirenne e un Marc Bloch, un Namier e un Vincens Vives e che differenze di regimi e di ideologie non possono vanificare». Letter of the promoting committee to the scholars interested, June 1985, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series II, folder 16, dossier Association-Promoting Committee.

¹¹⁵⁸ Armando Saitta, ‘Prefazione’, in *Henri de Saint-Simon, Agustin Thierry, La riorganizzazione della società europea o della necessità e dei mezzi di riunire i popoli dell'Europa in un unico corpo politico conservando ad ognuno la propria indipendenza nazionale*, ed. Armando Saitta (Rome: Atlantica, 1945).

linked the origins of his pacifist ideal to the European revolutionary period of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁵⁹

Saitta attempted to transpose this paradigm into the AEH. However, at the first conference on Europe in 1983, the framework appeared substantially different. It implied a search for European homogeneity rooted in the exclusive nature of Christendom, a unique association of religion and political power that emerged in late Roman times and came to complete development in the European Middle Ages.¹¹⁶⁰ The conference strongly emphasised Europe's external borders and its need to distinguish itself from others. Instead, the East enlargement after 1985 served to realign with the concept of Europe as a "mosaic". Incidentally, it is worth noting that the Council of Europe has supported this idea since the 1950s, giving a positive accent on what had been seen as a source of conflict and weakness for centuries. Comparably, the EC included the "mosaic" concept in its search for a common identity during the 1970s.¹¹⁶¹

The peak of the AEH eastward enlargement was the 1989 conference on the history of European historiography on the French Revolution. This study highlights that the conference tried to question the nation-state and nationalism, as well as the role of the idea of Europe in the identity construction processes of individual European nations. Taking the cue from the French Revolution, the scholars involved, also from Eastern Europe, noted the prevalence of nationalism in historical research and urged for deeper integration between the different European historiographies. With significant attention to the international debate on the Bicentenary, the AEH openly spoke against the "revisionism" of François Furet and the downsizing of the French Revolution, instead proposing a comprehensive analysis from a European perspective.

Significantly, the latter perspective was not, simply, European. As for the 1983 congress, in 1989, the AEH supported a distinctive Eurocentric strand. Despite the revolutions of the years 1780-1920 being the consequences of global processes, the lectures ignored this issue. Scholars have largely demonstrated that the independence movements in Latin America, the Haitian Revolution, and tensions in Southeast Asia ran parallel to the better-known revolutions in France and the United States. These connected events affected historical practices as history became a crucial instrument to deny or support the revolutionary

¹¹⁵⁹ Cf. p.76.

¹¹⁶⁰ Pasture, *Imagining*, 8.

¹¹⁶¹ Stråth, 'A European identity', 390; Sassatelli, *Becoming Europeans*, 41; Peter A. Kraus and Giuseppe Sciortino, 'The Diversities of Europe: From European Modernity to the Making of the European Union', *Ethnicities* 14, no. 4 (1 August 2014): 485–97, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796814528696>.

enterprises.¹¹⁶² The 1989 conference preserved a profoundly Eurocentric epistemological and conceptual framework; comparably, the consolidation of the Eurocentric perspective assumed a universal-valid outlook.

An essential part of the AEH Eurocentrism dealt with the geographical distinction between Europe and “the rest of the world”. This aspect of Eurocentrism suggests a whole range of crucial differences between Europe and elsewhere. In the case of the AEH, this distinction produced a downsizing of historiographies from other continents, especially those from a post-colonial perspective. However, this Eurocentrism did not flow into a superiority of western civilisation, as Michael J. Wintle has recently argued.¹¹⁶³ The same criticism was also reserved for US historiography, which was guilty of being dragged into the logic of the blocs. This insistence on the distinctiveness and difference of Europe was part of the “Othering” process and invariably implied a qualitative difference, with Europe consistently at the top of the table.

The AEH case study reveals a prominent example of the connections between history writing and Eurocentrism. This Eurocentred history presumes world-views of Europe and, seeking to craft the world in Europe’s image, becomes perhaps the most powerful instrument of Eurocentrism. The AEH witnessed the pervasiveness of Eurocentrism, which has meant its penetration of knowledge systems worldwide through the power of colonial, imperial and post-colonial structures. The European culture is meant as “the correct and best way of doing things”, including historical research. Consequently, European “values” deserve to be universalised and exported even through a Eurocentric narrative of history, which marginalises all others. The AEH reproduced this endless chain of Eurocentric ideology that, by a hegemonic process, expects to impose onto most areas of the globe.

This feature emerged clearly in the 1992 congress for the Fifth Centenary of the “Discovery of America”. The AEH might be included in the paradigm of “inventing America” outlined by José Rabasa in the same period. He sought to underscore the ongoing process of colonisation and decolonisation implicit in the writing, interpreting, and critiquing of early visual representations of and writings on the “New World”.¹¹⁶⁴ “Inventing” implies that

¹¹⁶² Alessandro Stanziani, *Eurocentrism and the Politics of Global History* (New York: Springer, 2018), 146.

¹¹⁶³ Michael J Wintle, *Eurocentrism : History, Identity, White Man’s Burden* (London: Routledge, 2021).

¹¹⁶⁴ José Rabasa, *Inventing America: Spanish Historiography and the Formation of Eurocentrism* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993). As the author explains, the notion of the invention of America first appeared in the title of a book by Hernán Pérez de Oliva, *Historia de la invención de las Yndias*, written in 1528 but lost until 1965. From his perspective, the term “invención” reflects the Latin “inuenire”, to discover. More recently, in 1958, the Mexican historian Edmundo O’Gorman wrote a book with precisely the title “La invención de América”, in which he argues that America was not discovered but invented. For O’Gorman, the idea of a discovery of America is in itself part of the process of invention.

speaking about European expansionism, conquest, and colonisation of the world in the early modern period foregrounds a position on issues about neocolonialism and Eurocentrism. The term New World should be understood not solely as the imaginary geographic space that emerged in the European wish horizon of ideal landscapes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but also as the constitution of the modern conception of the world that results from the exploration of the globe.

The few sources on the 1992 AEH congress reveal a substantial celebratory occasion with little room for a more critical, postcolonial approach. Despite the vibrant international debate, no alternative understanding of the Eurocentric version of the “discovery” emerged. In this respect, the 1992 conference substantially differs from the previous ones. In 1983, the meeting on Europe was included in a broad European debate on identity and the teaching of history. Comparably, in 1989, the Bicentenary of the French Revolution stimulated a heated international historiographical discussion between the “classical” and “revisionist” paradigms on the Revolution, which characterised the AEH conference. In the case of the “Discovery”, the AEH seemed impervious to the debates concerning the significance of the Fifth Centenary. Indigenous leaders preferred the term invasion both over discovery, which reduced the indigenous peoples of the Americas to objects whose reality depended on the European gaze, and over the encounter proposed by Unesco, which suggests a symmetrical relation of power in exchanges between Europeans and Amerindians. The latter was contested for ignoring the Europeans' opportunistic exploitation of conditions favouring military and political occupation. Either way, the AEH totally missed the debate.

As a result, a critical question emerges: why did the 1992 congress disregard the international discussion? We could put forward a few hypotheses. First, it is worth noting that the 1992 conference, like its predecessors, occurred during “big” European anniversaries. The meeting on Europe was originally planned in 1982 as part of the 25th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome. Comparably, the conference on the French Revolution corresponded to the Bicentenary of 1989. Finally, the congress took place on the occasion of the Fifth Centenary of 1492. All meetings, with different nuances, supported a strongly Eurocentric paradigm critical of new historiographical trends. In this sense, the 1992 conference appears in line with the previous ones, arguably with a more explicit colonial paradigm.

However, while international scientific committees organised previous conferences, 1992 was essentially in charge of Bartolomé Escandell Bonet and Eloy Benito Ruano. The two Spanish

historians set up a programme that responded to their scientific inclinations and the prevailing paradigm in official circles. Ruano and Bartolomé Escandell aligned with the official interpretation of the Spanish government, whose National Commission for the anniversary stated precisely “Descubrimiento de América”. One of the main events of the Spanish celebrations, namely the Seville Universal Exhibition of 1992, had a marked Eurocentric and colonial structure. Ana Souto has argued that the “Expo 92” recalled the Ibero-American Exhibition (IAE), celebrated in Seville in 1929. Souto emphasises that the organisation of international exhibitions aimed at showcasing technological and colonial advances as well as the construction of colonial identities.¹¹⁶⁵ In other words, it seemed to be a mere excuse to reinforce commercial links with Latin America.¹¹⁶⁶ The main interest of the Expo, as Isidoro Moreno Navarro argued, was to portray a national, modern and united identity to Europe through its role and contribution to culture in America and the recent achievement of democracy in Spain.¹¹⁶⁷ Definitely, as Anthony Gristwood has pointed out, Expo 92 was repeating the same mistakes of 1929: it played the neo-imperialist role again, highlighting the “discovery” of America and Seville as an “intercultural bridge or meeting place”.¹¹⁶⁸ In this context, Bartolomé Escandell and Ruano, who had close political ties with the Spanish government, conformed to the official narrative.

Moreover, apart from the two Spanish historians, the Association did not particularly contribute to the organisation of the conference. The sudden death of Armando Saitta in May 1991 upset the already precarious balance of the AEH. This study shows that even the election of a new President caused heated debates and opposing positions. Ruano's candidature was largely automatic as a result of the provisions of the statute and his willingness to take charge of the 1992 conference. While the few active members of the AEH wondered whether and how the association would survive the death of its founding President, Ruano and Bartolomé Escandell organised the meeting quickly and with little funding. As a

¹¹⁶⁵ Ana Souto, ‘Post-Colonial Legacies in Seville: Traces of the Iberoamerican Exhibition, 1929’, *Entremonts: UPF Journal of World History* 9 (2017): 74–104.

¹¹⁶⁶ Eric N. Baklanoff, ‘Spain’s Economic Strategy toward the “Nations of Its Historical Community:” The “Reconquest” of Latin America?’, *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 38, no. 1 (1996): 105–27, <https://doi.org/10.2307/166397>.

¹¹⁶⁷ Isidoro Moreno Navarro, ‘América y el nacionalismo de estado español del IV al V Centenarios’, *Revista de estudios regionales* 34 (1992): 53–78:59.

¹¹⁶⁸ Anthony Gristwood, ‘Commemorating Empire in Twentieth-Century Seville’, in *Imperial Cities. Landscape, Display and Identity*, ed. Felix Driver and David Gilbert (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 155–73:166. Furthermore, the Expo 92 organisation did not include Latin America in the planning of the exhibition: the organisers built a pavilion, Plaza of the Americas, in which the former colonies were meant to be displayed together, America as a unit. Mexico, Chile, Venezuela and Cuba opted to build their own pavilions, in an effort to regain their own space, independent from the neo-colonial project and the idea of Latin America simplified in just one pavilion. See: Penelope Harvey, *Hybrids of Modernity: Anthropology, the Nation State and the Universal Exhibition* (London: Routledge, 1996), 144–8.

result, the lectures brought no new contributions to historiography, the conference completely ignored the international debate, and the proceedings were not published.

Against this background, the thesis highlights Armando Saitta's strong influence on the Association. The AEH grew out of his initial interlocution with the Christian Democratic MEP Mario Pedini with a view to the Europeanisation of history programmes. A goal that reflected Saitta's interest in teaching and school textbooks, which had a strong echo in Italy long before the birth of the Association.¹¹⁶⁹ The detachment from the EC and the involvement of Soviet bloc historians were strongly fostered by the President, who was also a crucial player in the choice of conference topics. However, his attempt at “turnover” in the AEH top roles was not supported by the members, who relied on the enormous commitment of President Saitta. The problematic organisation of the first conference after his death and the subsequent decline of the association reflects the close, almost personal relationship between Saitta and the AEH.

Besides Saitta, this research project shows a large majority of Italian members. Apart from the Italian President's commitment and the Association's Italian origin, the significant participation of Italian scholars suggests a strong associative need among Italian scholars. The existing literature on the topic agrees on the weak associative incentive of Italian historians during the twentieth century.¹¹⁷⁰ Until the 1970s, Italian historians were scarcely attracted to professional associations, which were divided into bodies with a predominantly institutional character and, on the other hand, groups connoted in an ideological, specialist, or localist sense. It does not seem far-fetched to attribute to this weakness the poor cohesion of the Italian historians and the prevalence of informal and barely visible, but well-tempered and tenaciously antagonistic, forms of membership and ties. As witnessed by the case of the (un)relationship between AEH and LCEH, this conflictual relationship model transcended Italian national borders. Despite strong similarities in the field of study and political interlocutors in the first half of the 1980s, this study shows that the two networks had little - and informal - interactions. Rather, the few private interlocutions were extremely contentious, testifying to a jealousy of one's own “little garden”.

Until the late 1970s, the only relevant professional association of historians in Italy was the “Società degli Storici Italiani” (Society of Italian Historians). Founded in 1963 by a small

¹¹⁶⁹ Cf. notes 275–276.

¹¹⁷⁰ Ennio Di Nolfo et al., ‘Le Associazioni Degli Storici Italiani’, *Contemporanea*, no. 2 (2000): 289–311, <https://doi.org/10.1409/10111>; Isabelle Chabot et al., ‘Le Nuove Associazioni Degli Storici e La Promozione Della Ricerca’, in *L'organizzazione Della Ricerca Storica in Italia. Nell'ottantesimo Anniversario Della Giunta Centrale per Gli Studi Storici*, ed. Andrea Giardina and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Rome: Viella, 2018), 215–56.

group of historians under the leadership of the medievalist Giuseppe Martini, the “Società” followed the trend of Italian academic life. Specifically, it was affected by the vehement controversy at the end of the 1960s concerning the liberalisation of university access, the birth of the mass university, the multiplication of courses imposed by the reforms of the faculty statutes, and the emergence of history faculties. The growth in the number of professors led to intense enrolment pressure on the “Società”.¹¹⁷¹ We might deduce that the growth in numbers and the changing relationships between disciplinary fields and the political debate heavily affected the “Società” during the 1970s. In 1984, Franco Andreucci reported a heated discussion concerning the nature and prospects of the Society, highlighting the confusion in the organisation of historical research in Italy, blaming the Society for being unrepresentative of Italian historiography and excessively confined to the “halls” of the academy.¹¹⁷²

Against this background, from the early-1980s Italy, a tendency to establish thematic associations that were more cohesive and circumscribed emerged. These associations differed substantially both from the corporate professional “Società” and the elitist model of the academies. Instead, they aimed to promote historical research from a broader perspective, going beyond the world of the university.¹¹⁷³ With this intention, the “Società Italiana degli Storici dell’Economia” (Italian Society of Economic Historians) was founded in 1984 and the “Società Italiana delle Storiche” (Italian Society of Women Historians) in 1989. The AEH, therefore, grasped a growing need in the Italian scenario and offered the opportunity to participate in an international-oriented network. The substantially “open” and non-elitist structure differentiated the AEH from other international networks like the LCEH, which were hinged exclusively on academics. The following graph shows the composition of Italian AEH members by profession in 1991:

¹¹⁷¹ Di Nolfo et al., ‘Le Associazioni’, 290–1.

¹¹⁷² Franco Andreucci, ‘L’organizzazione Della Ricerca Storica: Istituzioni Centrali e Forme Associative’, *Studi Storici* 25, no. 4 (1984): 973–84.

¹¹⁷³ Chabot et al., ‘Le Nuove Associazioni’, 25–6.

Fig. 12 - Number of Italian AEH members per profession

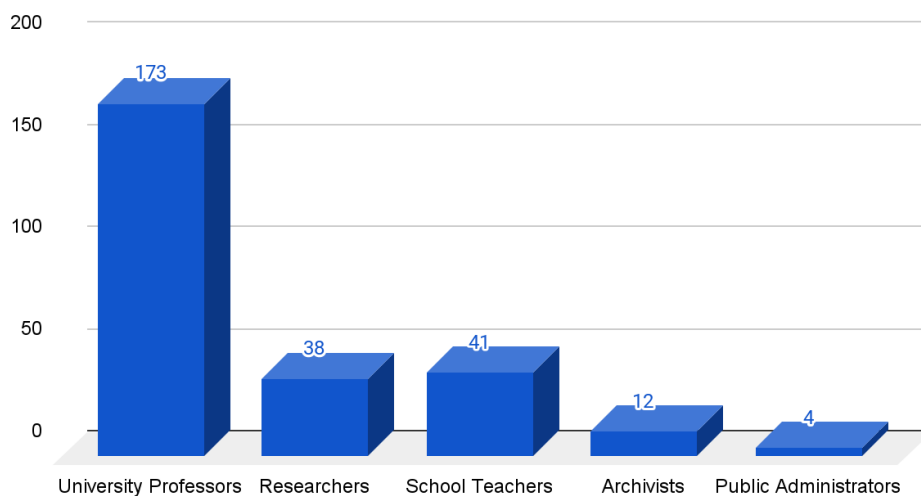


Fig. 12 - Number of Italian AEH members per profession in April 1991.

Source: AEH member lists, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

Fig. 13 - Percentage of Italian AEH members per profession

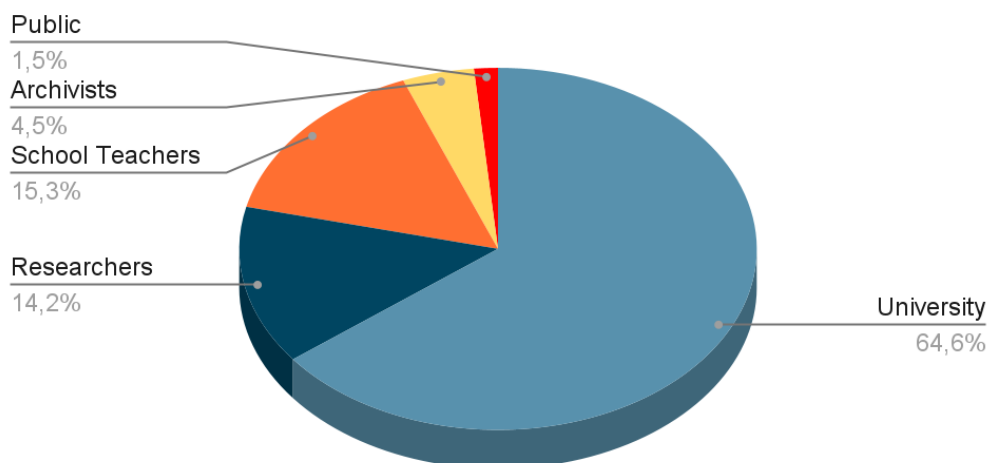


Fig. 13 - Percentage of Italian AEH members per profession in April 1991.

Source: AEH member lists, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

We can observe this heterogeneous composition even in the general structure of the AEH:

Fig. 13 - Number of AEH members per profession

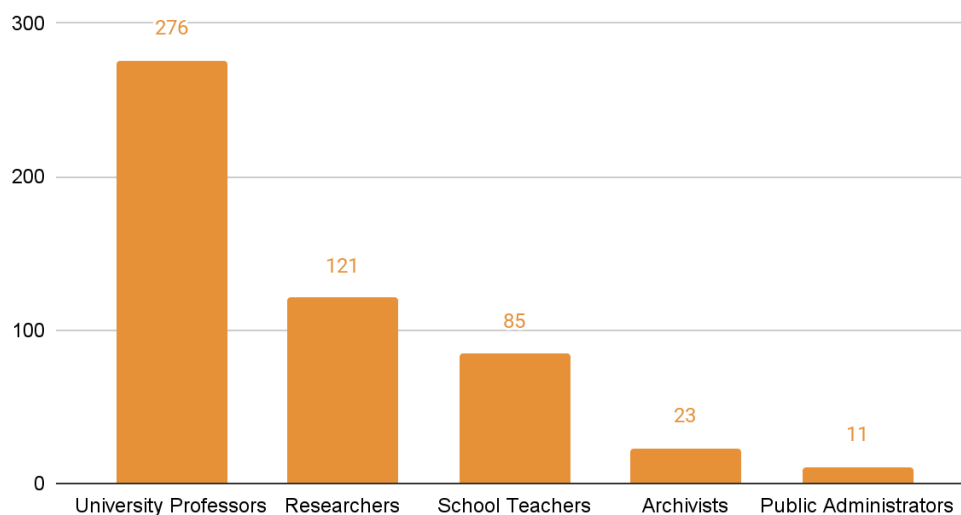


Fig. 14 - Number of AEH members per profession in April 1991.

Source: AEH member lists, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

Fig. 15 - Percentage of AEH members per profession in April 1991.

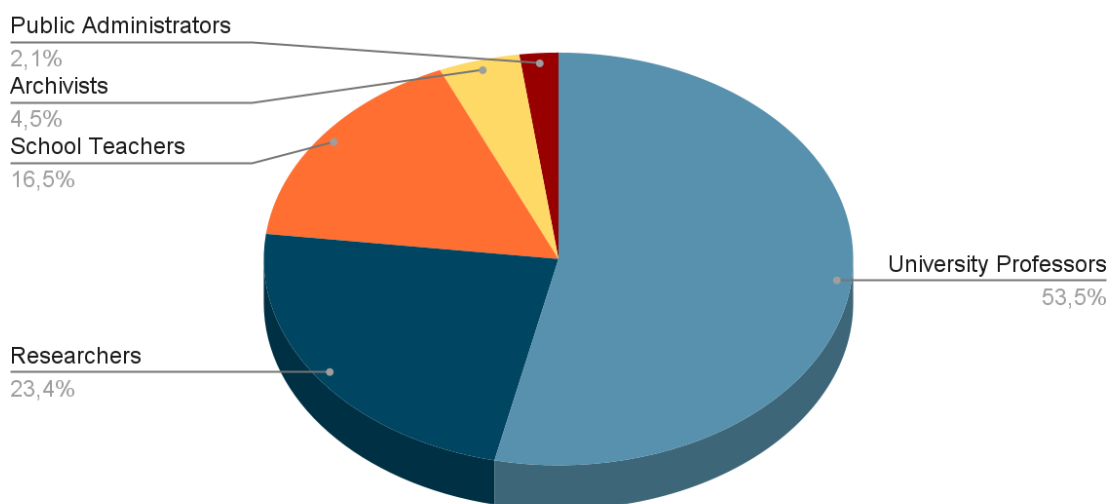


Fig. 15 - Percentage of AEH members per profession in April 1991.

Source: AEH member lists, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 16, dossier Association of European Historians.

The AEH, therefore, housed a broader membership than just academics. It differed considerably from the networks of historians of the period relating to European history, especially the LCEH. We can identify two opposing strands in the period. The first aimed at founding a new field of research: the history of European integration. Specifically, the LCEH focused on studying the “little Europe” of the EC, its historical events, and its political and economic structures. A history mainly intended for academics and EC officials. This cluster included specialists in contemporary international relations who were committed to writing a history of the present time.

On the other hand, the second strand had the ambition to rethink the history of Europe over the long term. This group included the AEH and the project initiated in 1985 by Fernand Braudel and then chaired by Jacques Le Goff. These two cases show that, during the 1980s, historians who attempted to develop transnational projects on the history of Europe and its civilisation had harsh relations with EC institutions. Remarkably, both the AEH and the Braudel/Le Goff project emphasised the importance of the independence of historical research from political institutions, a position not shared by the EC institutions.

Although the two strands were both promoters of European cooperation, their vision was radically opposed. This opposition was intimately linked to their position within the scholarly community: the historians of European integration specialised in contemporary, political, economic, and “événementielle” history; conversely, the others had a broader horizon both in the chronological span, including ancient, mediaeval, and early modern history, and in their field of research, which included the social, cultural, and religious history from a “longue durée” perspective. The latter paradigm was irreconcilable with the bloc division of Europe, which restricted European integration, and its history, to a small part of the continent. Consequently, the representation of Europe that the EC, especially the Commission, developed in the 1980s did not coincide with the second current.

The failure to write a collective history of Europe was thus linked to the development of the integration process. Above all, these projects enjoyed scarce support from EC institutions due to the different representation of Europe. The focus of these projects on teaching made the relationship even more complicated. While in universities, some teaching courses were already dedicated to the history of Europe and its civilisation, in schools, the complex path of educational cooperation produced an objective difficulty in teaching these subjects. As this study analyses, during the 1980s, the EC institutions, and to some extent also the Council of Europe, viewed educational cooperation in schools in terms of economic rather than cultural

enhancement. In a nutshell, the institutions preferred teaching about European cooperation rather than reconstructing a shared past.

In conclusion, this dissertation looks beyond the EC institutions and delves into cultural policies. Rather than criticising the weaknesses of the EC's initiatives through the lens of nation-states, it challenges the centralised top-down view of European culture that is imposed on a passive audience. Instead, this study highlights the various representations of Europe and evaluates what the truly mean of the institutional concept of "unity in diversity". By analysing the diverse voices involved in promoting Europeanness within the EC, the AEH case study provides a valuable point of view for understanding the differences between institutional and noninstitutional perspectives on Europeanness. Despite the EC's stated goal of promoting "unity in diversity", institutional actors have predominantly favored a depiction of European homogeneity.

During the 1989 congress, the AEH President Saitta stressed «the great and valuable participation of Eastern European countries to critically examine the whole Europe without any monopolising closure of methodologies and strands».¹¹⁷⁴ These few words reveal the essence of AEH's intentions to establish a "new" European and Eurocentric narrative, with notable Italian involvement centred around its main actor Armando Saitta.

¹¹⁷⁴ «L'ampia e qualificata partecipazione dei Paesi dell'Europa dell'Est per analizzare criticamente l'intera Europa senza chiusure monopolizzanti di metodi e filoni». Armando Saitta's opening speech, 18 May 1989, IHIMCA, Armando Saitta fund, series I, folder 8, dossier Congress Pisa 1989 speeches.

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