

## Jean Charles Snoy et d'Oppuers, Rebuilding Europe: Memoirs


**Caption:** In his memoirs, Baron Jean-Charles Snoy et d’Oppuers, former Secretary-General of the Belgian Ministry of Economic Affairs and former Head of the Belgian Delegation to the Intergovernmental Conference on the Common Market and Euratom, recalls the atmosphere during the signing, on 25 March 1957 in Rome, of the Treaties establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom).

**Source:** SNOY ET D'OPPUERS, Jean-Charles. Rebâtir l'Europe, Mémoires. Paris: Duculot, 1989. 220 p. ISBN 2-8011-0861-8. (Document Duculot). p. 120-121.

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[...]

On 24 March, we were in Rome for the signing of the Treaties. My wife was with me, and we stayed at the Villa Doria Pamphili, the residence of Baron Joseph van der Elst, the Belgian Ambassador.

There were still working meetings at the Capitol on the morning of the 25 March, notably to discuss last-minute amendments submitted by the Dutch delegation on the appointment of substitutes for Assembly Members. That idea was thrown out because it was vital to avoid changing anything that had been so arduously worked out by the six delegations. Yves Devadder, my delegation's legal expert, was so tired that he contracted hepatitis while in Rome, and I had to ask Pierre Pescatore, the legal adviser from Luxembourg, to keep an eye on Belgium's interests instead.

On that Monday, 25 March, there was torrential rain in Rome. Nevertheless, there were crowds in the squares and streets close to the Capitol. The Treaties were formally signed at 4 p.m. in the Hall of the Horatii and Curiatii in the Capitoline Palace. All of Rome's bells rang out resoundingly, bearing forth the hopes of a European future. The plenipotentiaries, including Spaak and myself for the King of the Belgians, sat at a long table, with members of the delegations behind them. An address was given by the Mayor of Rome and another by Prime Minister Antonio Segni. The City of Rome presented to each of the plenipotentiaries a gold medal representing the she-wolf with Romulus and Remus. The Foreign Ministers had decided in the morning to set up an interim committee and to appoint me chairman until parliamentary ratification brought the Treaties and institutions into force. So I became, for several months, the guardian of the new European Communities, and with me I had the friendly team of heads of delegation: Robert Marjolin, Carl Ophüls, Vittorio Badini, Johannes Linthorst Homan and Lambert Schaus.

On 26 March, Paul-Henri Spaak gave a brilliant lecture on the Treaties at the Banco di Roma. It was in French, and it was broadcast live on Italian radio.

On 28 March, I was received in a private audience by Pope Pius XII. The audience lasted 20 minutes, during which time he astounded me with his surprising knowledge of the Treaties and of their political implications, of which he warmly approved. He had listened to Spaak's talk on 26 March.

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