

Interview with Hans-August Lücker: the attitude of the participants in the Val Duchesse negotiations (Bonn, 15 May 2006)

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[François Klein] How did the talks with the delegations from the other countries go?

[Hans-August Lücker] Well now, personal ties, personal calculations and personal evaluations all played a very important part in proceedings amongst the participants.

We knew ourselves to be a select group — don't read too much into that — tasked with building Europe. Europe was a work in progress and it was our job to build it. That was a signal honour, but at the same time a weighty responsibility. There was no place here for vanity or demands for priority. Everyone had to have a hearing, and people had to be prepared to allow that. Not a matter of having to, but a matter of wanting to, wanting to communicate with the others because they too had their point of view. And that sentence just about says it all. We were friends across party lines and we knew that the politicians had given us a noble task to perform. And failing in this task was not an option. As Mansholt said: 'I want Europe, but Lücker wants it too, and if we disagree we must try to find common ground.' There's no other way.

And our host was Paul-Henri Spaak ... In all honesty — if we look at the stature of Schuman, Adenauer and de Gasperi, to me Paul-Henri Spaak is a step or so down from them. But he stands with them. And what, I wonder, would have happened if Paul-Henri Spaak had not worked so hard on Belgium's behalf? Do I need to answer that?

Probably not. You have to feel that, you know. You have to grasp it with your mind and draw your own conclusions. And when I think back to that wonderful evening in Paris, when we all sat down to dinner together, well! What a cosmopolitan bunch we were. *Civis europaeus sum*.

We had not abandoned our national thinking, but we had already transferred our national thinking, and the related quality of patriotism, to Europe. *Civis europaeus sum*. Shades of that proud boast of the ancient Romans: *Civis romanus sum*.