

Video recollections: 'Behind the scenes at the signing'

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[Albert Breuer] The treaty consisted of page one, with the preamble and all that, the last page with the signatures, and in between there was nothing. But it worked. It was really incredible, and they did not know — the signatories — they had not been told! I mean, if we had told them that they were signing something like that, they would have refused.

[Pierre Pescatore] It all had to be prepared by the Italian government printing press, with fine Roman lettering. But the work was not quite finished by the time of the signing session. In the end, what we suggested to the Conference secretariat and the Italian government, as the date could not be changed, was to ensure that the first page, which bore the name of all the contracting parties, and the last page, which set forth the final clauses, was ready, and we would cope as best we could for the signing session. The main problem was preventing the journalists looking at it too closely, you know. It all went off very smoothly and the ministers did not realise they were signing a stack of white pages.

[Albert Breuer] The press were absolutely determined to see inside the document and photograph the pages. They held it like that. Ha, ha, ha! To save face.

[Hubert Ehring] You know, the Italian state takes its diplomatic obligations very seriously, and this particular occasion was organised on a grand scale. After all, the Capitol really is an eminent historic location. Personally I had a little office in the Capitol museum, opposite some Dutch old masters which were hanging there.

[André Dubois] The thing we also all remember is that it was raining in Rome. But the church bells all over the city were ringing, and in the Eternal City, that is quite something, you know.

The walls of the city were covered with posters — and I believe you have a copy in your archives — posters with six joyful young women dancing in a ring, with skirts sporting the colours of the national flags of the six countries. I too have a copy of it at home. Actually I don't think there are many of us left who attended the signing session, which is only to be expected. But it certainly was probably one of the high points of my career. After that I attended many other signing sessions, accession treaties and so on, but this really was ... It was the foundation of European integration.