

## Robert Schuman, a life lived on the borders

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### 1872

The Treaty of Frankfurt provided an option for inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine. Until 1 October 1872, residents of the annexed territories were entitled to opt for French nationality on condition that they emigrated to France. After this deadline, they would be considered as German subjects.

The number who chose this option and left the annexed territory in 1871–72 was estimated at 128 000.

### 1886

Jean-Pierre Schuman did not exercise this option and automatically became a German national when Alsace-Lorraine was annexed. Having moved to Luxembourg, in 1886 he was therefore a German émigré. However, in the five-yearly censuses held in Luxembourg, Jean-Pierre Schuman declared himself to be a ‘Lothringer’ (a citizen of Lorraine).

Eugénie Duren acquired German nationality following her marriage to Jean-Pierre Schuman. Robert Schuman was therefore born in Luxembourg with the nationality of the Empire, for all citizens of Alsace-Lorraine had the nationality of the Empire.

### 1904

When Robert Schuman reached the age of 18, he had the option under Luxembourg legislation of requesting Luxembourgish nationality, as did any child born in Luxembourg of foreign parents. Article 10 of the Civil Code also stipulated that children born of parents who had lost their French nationality could claim French nationality if they became resident in France. Robert Schuman kept his German nationality.

### 1919

After the Armistice brought the First World War to an end in November 1918, France regained three *départements*: the Upper Rhine, the Lower Rhine and the Moselle. Robert Schuman automatically acquired French nationality. He therefore ‘became’ a French citizen at the age of 32 after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, and he would retain French nationality until his death in 1963.