

The 'Pierre Werner and Europe' research project

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Introduction

One of the major research projects currently under way at the CVCE is dedicated to the European vocation and achievements of Pierre Werner, a former Prime Minister, Finance Minister and Foreign Minister of Luxembourg, unanimously recognised as one of the architects of Economic and Monetary Union.

The first stage of the research project particularly focuses on the plan for the establishment by stages of an economic and monetary union (more widely known as the Werner Report or the Werner Plan), drawn up by a group of experts chaired by Pierre Werner and officially presented on 8 October 1970 in Luxembourg.

The project will then concentrate on the events that subsequently led to Economic and Monetary Union, as seen through the eyes of Pierre Werner and from the perspective of his own contribution; it will also examine a number of issues in which the former Luxembourg Prime Minister was particularly involved, such as the question of the seats of the institutions, the Luxembourg Compromise, the accession of the United Kingdom, and cooperation between the Benelux countries and the Belgo-Luxembourg Economic Union (BLEU).

In connection with this project, a cooperation agreement with the Werner family has provided the CVCE's researchers with privileged access to Pierre Werner's family archives. These archives, which had long remained unexplored, have already yielded a host of original documents that shed new light on various aspects of the European integration process and also on the role of Luxembourg and its European policy. This wealth of archive material presents two decades of European integration history from the perspective of a figure who was involved in a wide range of debates and decisions on European issues by means of his various political roles between 1959 and 1984.

The preparatory work already published on our site includes biographical and bibliographical references, chronological information and sound and video extracts from interviews conducted by the CVCE with members of Pierre Werner's family and people who worked alongside him throughout his career.

All the results of the project will be published in the long term as part of a series of digital research corpora that will be of invaluable benefit to the academic community. The first corpus will focus on the Werner Plan. It is also intended that these research corpora should incorporate and exploit a diverse range of other documentary resources, including sound, video and image archives and the oral accounts recorded by the CVCE.

In addition to the purely academic value of this undertaking, the project will serve to emphasise the relevance of some of the questions raised and the answers put forward at the time — particularly with regard to the development of the Werner Plan — in the light of the current monetary and financial crisis. In other words, the project will also highlight the role that past experience can play in building the Europe of the future.

A public presentation of the research project and its initial results took place on 27 January 2011 during a conference in which Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of Luxembourg and President of the Eurogroup, gave a lecture entitled 'From the Werner Plan to the euro: 40 years of success and crisis'.

The 'Pierre Werner and Europe' project is directed by Elena Danescu, Doctor of Economics and Researcher at the CVCE. It enjoys the support of the Werner family, the Pierre Werner Foundation and a patronage committee that will be specifically set up for the occasion. The CVCE is immensely grateful to them and expresses its heartfelt thanks for their contribution.