

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS (deadline Thursday 30 March 2023)

Colloquium

9-10 November 2023

Faculty of Law, Economics & Social Sciences of Tours

Paxa Europa

The European Union: a place of peace living on borrowed time?

Scientific oversight

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Conference Argument

Building the European Union or the promise of lasting peace. Today, peace seems to be on thin ice, given the numerous threats that are putting it to the test; threats which are both internal and external. The rise of populism, multiple crises, the rise of 'illiberal' democracies and Brexit are causing tensions at the heart of the European Union. The war in Ukraine, migratory pressures and terrorist attacks are forcing the EU to react in order to preserve a long-standing but still fragile peace.

At the end of the Second World War, the European continent was on its knees. It no longer had the means to take on by itself the existential question of its unity and coherence. It emerged from the conflict cut in half, torn between the American and Soviet powers. The Eastern and Western blocs were facing each other, with two different value systems, two economic models and two strategic visions. Peace had only just returned, but it has already being tested.

In the East, Stalin imposed a territorial rampart supposed to protect the USSR. Moscow's 'satellite' countries were forced to embrace communist ideology, under the threat of Red Army tanks. Both Hungary, during the Budapest uprising (1956) and Czechoslovakia, during the Prague Spring (1968), were bloodily forced into line while the annexed, former Baltic States revolted several times up to the mid-1950s and suffered the same fate.

In the West, peace was an absolute priority and based on democratic values, rediscovered freedoms and Franco-German reconciliation. The founding fathers of European integration, Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi, Paul-Henri Spaak, Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman, had in common the fact that they had lived through the transition from the 19th to the 20th century, along with its accompanying tragedies. In their view, peace could only be established on a lasting basis if countries were united. The all-powerful nations had caused chaos and two world wars, so it was imperative not to fall back into the trap of nationalism; State sovereignty had to give way. This idea had already been suggested in pan-European circles between the two world wars. It was behind the thinking of the founding fathers and was amplified by major federalist gatherings such as the Congress of Europe in The Hague in May 1948.

At a time when peace was being carried by the winds of federalism, Jean Monnet came up with a formula that balanced pragmatism and ambition. He was aware that a classic federal system was an illusion which would lead to a rejection of centuries-old State sovereignty, so he proposed to reverse the process. On 9 May 1950, Robert Schuman presented this plan which was strategically based on the imperative of peace. The beginning of his speech set the tone: "World peace cannot be safeguarded without creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it", adding lucidly that "A united Europe was not achieved and we had war". The starting point, he believed, would be economic: "Europe will not be built all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity". Coal and steel production surpluses made France fear that Germany's economic recovery would happen too quickly, so this sector was placed at the heart of a future supranational Community. With the European Coal and Steel Community Treaty (ECSC, 18 April 1951), the Europeans were able to preserve peace by federalizing the war economy and the first sentence of the Treaty's preamble was identical to that of the Schuman Plan.

The Cold War quickly exposed Western Europe to the Soviet threat. On 28 September 1948, the Belgian Prime Minister, Paul-Henri Spaak, stated bluntly at the UN: "The basis of our policy is fear" but peace required defence resources. The treaty establishing the Western Union (17 March 1948) was signed by France, the United Kingdom and the Benelux countries. It included a mutual defence clause which allowed member States to respond collectively in the event of armed aggression. The means to do that, however, had to be available.

Europeans realised they had little choice. Their security could only be guaranteed by the American superpower. On 4 April 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was created to protect them from the Soviet threat and Article 5 of this treaty included a mutual defence clause. On 19 August 1949, the USSR carried out its first nuclear test. NATO became unavoidable.

Very quickly, the political transformation of the European construction was set in motion. On 27 May 1952, the first objective of the European Defence Community project was to "to contribute to the maintenance of peace, particularly by ensuring the defence of Western Europe against any aggression, in cooperation with the free nations, in the spirit of the United Nations Charter, and in close liaison with organizations having the same purpose." However, this text outlining the beginnings of a European army, was rejected by France on 30 August 1954. The tumultuous politics of the Fourth French Republic aside, the geopolitical context had changed. The Soviet threat receded significantly when Nikita Khrushchev arrived in the Kremlin on 14 September 1953 and opted for détente. The new doctrine of Soviet foreign policy changed direction and would henceforth be one of 'peaceful coexistence'.

Nevertheless, the Soviet threat remained and Western Europeans were reminded of this with the Euromissiles crisis in the early 1980s. The end of the decade was marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall (9 November 1989), triggering the greatest geopolitical upheaval of the late 20th century. On 25 December 1991, the USSR collapsed, leaving a weakened Russian Federation. The satellite States turned westwards and several Soviet Republics, including Ukraine and Georgia, became independent. The Cold War was consigned, for then at least, to the history books.

Peace, however, was still under threat as the collapse of the USSR led to the collapse of Yugoslavia, igniting the Balkan powder keg. The Yugoslavian civil war, in the heart of the European continent, took the European Community (EC) by surprise and the absence of a common EC diplomacy revealed its weakness. The Maastricht Treaty (7 February 1992) established the European Union (EU) that included a diplomatic dimension: the Common Foreign and Security Policy was intended to strengthen “the European identity and its independence in order to promote peace, security and progress in Europe and in the world”, a formula taken up by subsequent treaties and the Lisbon Treaty.

The landmarks of the European construction show that peace has always been the priority. Leaving aside conflicts linked to decolonisation, no European State that has become a member of the Community - and subsequently of the EU - has had war on its soil. For more than 70 years and the ECSC Treaty, Europe has enjoyed its longest period of peace. This victory should not make us forget how fragile it is in the face of internal and external crises.

On 24 February 2022, the invasion of Ukraine took the Russian threat into a new dimension, leaving little room for talk of peace. On the day of the attack, the European Council decided to sanction Moscow and the following day, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Josep Borrel), stated: “Europe cannot win this confrontation without learning to speak the language of power.” On 28 February, a taboo was broken when the European Commission President (Ursula van der Leyen) announced the release of €450 million to deliver arms to Ukraine. Despite being deemed “obsolete” by Donald Trump in 2017 and “brain dead” by Emmanuel Macron in 2019, NATO now appears more vital than ever to our security. Germany's defence budget has doubled, passing the symbolic 2% of GDP and in line with the demands made by the US since 2014. The Russian threat to peace in Europe has resurrected the fears that Europeans experienced in the darkest hours of the Cold War.

As is often the case with European commemorations, the 60th anniversary of the CDEs is an occasion for assessment, questioning and criticism. The colloquium organised by the Tours CDE, the IRJI François-Rabelais (Tours) and the IDPS of Sorbonne University (Northern Paris), in partnership with the European Commission, will examine the relationship between the European Union and peace in its various dimensions, its commitments and the threats to it. The aim of this colloquium is to facilitate understanding and to stimulate reflection through contributions and debates led by specialists in legal and political disciplines as well as actors in the field.

PAXA EUROPA: Provisional Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
20 January 2023	Call for papers for the Paxa Europa colloquium
30 March 2023	Deadline for responses to the call for papers
15 April 2023	Announcement of papers/speakers selected for the colloquium
9 May 2023	Launch of the official communication of the "60 years of the CDEs" (by the European Commission itself, by the 20 French CDEs and by the CDE coordinator of each of the 26 Member States)
9 May 2023	Call for candidates to the Special "60 Years of the CDEs" PhD Prize awarded by the European Commission (for PhDs on the theme of Peace)
10 June 2023	Deadline for candidates to the Special "60 Years of the CDEs"
15 September 2023	Meeting of the PhD Prize Award Committee and selection of the winner and two runners-up (PhD Prize in Law, Political Science, Geography, Sociology, Geopolitics, Economics, etc.... and in the Humanities)
8 November 2023	Annual Congress of the CDE, "Teams Europe", "Maisons de l'Europe"
8 November 2023	Start of the "Studios on Peace" film week (an official opening is envisaged in the presence of the Franco-Lebanese Minister of Culture who fled Lebanon because of the war)
9 November 2023	<i>PAXA EUROPA</i> Colloquium
9 November 2023	Award of the Special "60th Anniversary CDE" PhD Prize by the European Commission (Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, has been invited to participate)
10 November 2023	<i>PAXA EUROPA</i> Colloquium
10 November 2023	Opening of the Book Fair for French-speaking publishers (France, Switzerland, Belgium) specialising in European law and for non-specialist, French-speaking publishers wishing to promote their publications on peace
14 November 2023	"Studios on Peace" film week comes to an end.

Conference themes

Theme 1: Peace in Europe: Situations

CFSP, CSDP, terrorism, Balkans, Russia, Africa, human rights, democracy, solidarity, migration crisis, history, political ideas...

Theme 2: Peace in Europe: European bodies

European Union bodies: High Representative of the European Union for the Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, European Council, Council of the European Union, European Parliament...
National bodies: Heads of State and Government, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, chanceries, defence...
Bodies of international organisations: Security Council, UN General Assembly, NATO bodies...

Theme 3: Peace in Europe: Treaties and Texts

Lisbon Treaty, international, national texts

Theme 4: Peace in Europe: Courses of action

CSDP operations, external operations, UN operations, NATO operations...

Information for all candidates submitting papers

At this stage, a final decision on the number of speakers has not been made. Depending on the number of papers submitted some of them will not be presented orally at the conference but will nevertheless be published.

Needless to say, speakers whose papers are selected for publication only will be able to attend the event free of charge.

Program information

Dates

The Pax Europa Conference: 9-10 November 2023
60 years of CDE: 8-10 November 2023

Location

Salle Thélème
3 Rue des Tanneurs - 37000 Tours
[link to the website of the Salle Thélème](#)

Scientific oversight

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Associated research laboratories

IRJI FRANCOIS-RABELAIS – UFR DROIT – UNIVERSITY OF TOURS



[link of the laboratory website](#)

IDPS – UFR DSPS – UNIVERSITY SORBONNE-PARIS NORD



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