"Us, Identity, and Memory." The World Celebrates the 60th Anniversary of the Treat

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Eleonora Magnanelli (March 23, 2017)

Celebrations all over the world and in Italy were held for the sixtieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome, which established the European Economic Community.

March 25, 1057 - March 25, 2017. Happy Birthday Europe! **The Treaties of Rome** [2] have just turned 60 years old. It's a bittersweet occasion on account of the recent international developments that have been made in the old continent such as Brexit and the constant emergence of new anti-European political parties and movements.

The current problems, however, did prevent the celebrations that took place in Italy, in Europe, and even in the United States where the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Angelino Alfano** [3], was also in attendance.

The Treaties of Rome

The Treaties of Rome were signed in the Italian capital on March 25, 1957 by six countries: Italy, France, West Germany, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg. With these treaties, the **European Economic Community (EEC)** [4] and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) were established. The six powers with this Treaties decided to join forces even more and share not only the coal and steel market (as they did in 1951 when they formed CECA), but atomic energy and their own economic policies as well.

That was the moment when "Little Europe" was born in Rome and along with it came a bigger project of a common market which united their customs and abolished tariffs between the countries of the Community and instituted a common agricultural policy. The ceremony was held at the Capitol building's **Hall of the Orazi and Curiazi** [5]in the Apartment of the Conservators. This Saturday, March 25th, the current heads of state of the signatory countries met there again.

The Celebrations in Rome

In preparation of this very special event, the President of the Italian Republic, **Sergio Mattarella** [6], spoke in the House Chamber in front of all the Italian deputies and senators on March 23rd. In his speech, the President highlighted the historic significance of the treaties, and emphasized that the men who signed them granted Europe six decades of peace.

"The fathers of Europe who gave rise to the treaties were not visionaries, but rather politicians who were aware of all the challenges and risks they were facing and had the ability to face them. They were men with the courage to turn the weaknesses and anxieties of their peoples into strengths. By combining the capabilities of each country they aimed at creating a large, open society in which freedom, democracy and cohesion were mutually guaranteed."

President Mattarella did not neglect the difficut time Europe is going through today: "The issues that the European Union is called to face—the financial crisis, the problem of migration, and the terrorist offensive—strongly suggest the need to relaunch the challenge for a reform of the Treatie," he said.

The Celebrations in Italy

Countless events celebrating the signing of the treaties took place in various locations in Italy. In Rome, at the Baths of Diocletian, an exhibition entitled "The Italy in Europe - The Europe in Italy" showcased videos and photographs as well as a special app that allows visitors to have a better understanding of the dates and the events that marked the process of European integration.
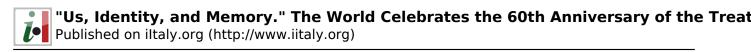
The most important event was definitely the one that took place in on Saturday, March 25th, when the heads of state and the European Union government gathered to celebrate the anniversary while reflecting on the current state of the European Union and the future of the integration process. After the meeting, a brand new shared "declaration" was signed in which a vision for the years to come for the Union is presented.

The Events in the United States

Representing Italy in the United States on occasion of the anniversary was the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Angelino Alfano.

The Minister—who arrived in New York to attend the "**Change the World Model United Nations 2017"** [7] event at the UN Headquarters—then moved to the American capital to take part in the great classical music concert organized by the Italian Embassy. The concert, entitled "In Dreams Awake" and directed by maestro **Gabriele Ciampi,** [8] included various original symphonies composed by Ciampi himself specifically for the anniversary. **"The Ode to Joy"** [9] from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the official anthem of the European Union, was not to be missed either.

During his speech, Minister Alfano commented on the meaning of this commemoration: "Now it's a difficult time for Europe. There are many misunderstandings and divisions about the economy and

how we should go about resolving the migration crisis for instance. But at the same time, I see that many people desire a united future."

"The words chosen to celebrate this day are 'us, identity, and memory'," Mr. Alfano recalled. "I think these words beautifully express the idea of unity through the memory of our past. We must not forget the difficult path that has been taken in order to create this Union. Only thus can we hope to have a Europe that respects diversity, supports democracy, and human rights in the future."

[For more on the celebrations in Washington, DC, see the report from Anna Lawton >>](#) **[10]**

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