

Foreword

by Jacques Delors et Christian Caujolle

Europe is a work in progress. Much remains to be built, and we are working to build it – in order for Europe to be a place of interchange, of things shared, of the future, of convictions and of critical loyalty to the continent's founding past.

Europe is less a physical space than a capacity to reinvent relationships – between Europeans and with the rest of the world. In reality Europe only fully exists because it is able to meet the challenges of history.

Europe is made of overlaid strata, constantly changing, intertwining and cohabiting, colliding and feeding off each other. This phenomenon goes back to the dawn of time, to the interactions between the violence and the contributions of the Romans, the Barbarians, the Turks and others who – as invaders and then builders – left their mark on architecture and culture and were able to give shape to space by taming the local lights and confronting them with their own models.

As Europeans, we have common interests – interests that we must learn to advance together. Beyond interests, we must be able to meet the challenges of memory and to build a common vision. To know our origins can better enable us to found this common vision. It is through the dialectic between ideal and necessity, between memory and reasoned discernment, between recognition of what was and the invention of what will be, that Europe is being built.

In this process, cities are vital. A place of memory, the city is also the place of contemporary choices and common issues – and therefore of progress towards the future. The European city has been and remains a site of exchanges and innovations. In a world of incessant movement, the city is the necessary, natural meeting point; the place where flows intersect and inscribe themselves. Cities are the crucible of adversity and change. They are also the crossroads which enable such change. Thus, each city - in its architecture, by the symbols it conserves or removes, or by the connections it encourages - also renews its own history. The city constantly calls upon our imagination, asks us to invent. It demands of us constant renewal.

In the last thirty years European cities have changed spectacularly. They have suffered the effects of industrial crisis, often rising to the challenge with success. The city is also a place of friction and questioning: a pointer, an indicator. The beauty and the imperfections of society are inscribed in it. Mixing, conflict, agreement, mutual enrichment: migrations are an omnipresent factor in the evolution of towns and populations. Men and women arriving from other continents see Europe home as a place of recovered dignity and potential happiness. As factories and businesses close or are relocated, new activities begin. All of this, in permanent mutation, sketches afresh the contours of cities; they create tensions, desires, tragedies and hopes. All this draws the outline for the new terms of our collective life.

To live together is the challenge for cities, just as it is for Europe. And cities, once locked behind walls, were obliged to open up - in order to grow, to breathe, to make contact with the outside world. The fundamental questions for cities are the same as those for Europe. It is in cities that these questions must be answered. Choosing cities as a starting point for a reflexion on Europe is therefore a form of realism, a way of avoiding empty nostalgia and of saying that what is important is just here, right next to us. The photographs of the six cities presented in this book, the words of the Europeans encountered on their streets – these are so many original ways of investigating the making of contemporary European identity. In each case, more questions are asked of Europe at the beginning of this 21st century than are definitively answered.

We are invited as never before to move inside a common European space. It is our duty, in our towns and cities, to live well together and to share visions which inspire and give hope.

Jacques Delors, Founding President of *Notre Europe*

Christian Caujolle, Founder and Artistic advisor of *Agence VU'*

Introduction

by Aziliz Gouez



BELGRADE, 2008 © MARTIN KOLLÁR/AGENCE VU'



We are living in a time of opening, of broadening horizons. Hundreds of thousands of Europeans have been able to uproot themselves from the familiar in order to go live, work, and study elsewhere. Pushed by necessity, but also driven by curiosity, they become acquainted with other ways of living and thinking. They renegotiate their given identities. They form and transform themselves. Nearly twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and four years after the enlargement of May 2004, these transformations have acquired dimensions the full extent of which we haven't yet been able to measure. It is by traipsing across six European cities that the researchers of *Notre Europe* and the photographers of *Agence VU'* have sought to capture what is at stake in these upheavals. The photographs and words that they returned with bring home to us how Europe is being made, day by day, at the scale of people's hopes and everyday lives.

Timișoara, Turin, Łódź, Dublin, Malmö and Belgrade are the six milestones of the European journey that this book takes us on. On the map we have also indicated all the other places mentioned by the men and women whom we met along the way. The result is a subjective geography of the continent, which draws a map of Europe different from that of the historic core of modern European construction. Why have we "stretched" Europe in this way¹? Firstly, because it is on these borderlands that the decompartmentalizing effects of European integration are most sharply felt. Effects of proximity, effects of scale - the construction of the bridge between Malmö and Copenhagen has crystallised the blossoming of the Øresund cross-border region. And for the people of the Banat² (a land split between Romania, Hungary and Serbia) or for the Irish (liberated from the stranglehold of an unequal relationship with Britain), the frames posed by the unification of Europe have allowed for the creation of novel links, the outlining of new spaces, experimentation with new senses of belonging. Secondly, because it is in these peripheral regions that European integration is a vital question. Are we inside or outside? This is where the meaning European belonging raises the most interrogations and passion. From Ireland to Central Europe, for populations who have experienced a historical frailty and who may have been at the mercy of a powerful neighbour, to "enter Europe" means the possibility of continuity and development within a structure of stable and law-grounded institutions.

1 An expression used by Jacques Delors during a discussion on the "European Works" project.

2 Province created by the Austrians after the 18th-century victories against the Turks. Timișoara is the historic capital.

Timișoara and Turin; Łódź and Dublin; Malmö and Belgrade - we designed this book as a triptych because, in overflow or in runoff, these cities contain one another: several tens of thousands of Poles live today in Dublin; Balkan wars refugees have joined the Yugoslavs employed by Malmö's shipyards in the 60s and 70s; and the Romanian presence in Turin mirrors that of the small Italian entrepreneurs in Timișoara. The structure of this book therefore threads its way - with the occasional overlap - from the interview extracts of Italians and Romanians, to those from Poland and Ireland, and finally to those gathered in Malmö and Belgrade. Thus, from one town to another, from East to West, North to South, connections emerge. Over the course of the pages come together fragments of a new European discourse: one made of analogies, contrasts, unexpected affinities - but also from discordances. Flanking these verbal accounts, the photographers' portfolios also bring to light the relationships between these urban pairs. From the pictures of a Treviso mill manufacturer's workshop newly installed in Timișoara, to those of the 'Sklep Polski' sign on the brown bricks of a Dublin wall, to the image of a meal at Malmö's Serbian Orthodox church, the photographs collected in this book weave a fabric of cross-stitching references between Romania and Italy, Poland and Ireland, Sweden and Serbia.



MALMÖ, 2008 © PIETER TEN HOOPEN/AGENCE VU'

But actually the links from one city to the other go beyond such pairing. Alongside Ireland and Great Britain, Sweden is one of the only countries to have fully opened its labour market to nationals of the states which entered the EU in 2004. Whether as engineers at *Sony Ericsson*, as domestic employees in the well-heeled Limhamn neighbourhood, or as construction workers, the Poles are very much present in Malmö. Further south, Belgrade is only a three-hour train journey from Timișoara, Romania's westernmost city. According to its residents, one of the reasons why the 1989 revolution began in Timișoara is because of the television signals picked up from nearby Yugoslavia, a socialist country decidedly more liberal than Ceaușescu's Romania. Elsewhere, we follow the fortunes of Italian chocolate, from Malmö's venerable *Mazetti* factory to the blue overall wearing patissier sisters who export to Poland the chocolates made in their small workshop in deepest Piedmont. For the attentive reader, the red thread which trails to the photographer in the Timișoara section thus follows a path which runs throughout the book - from one photograph to another, from one story to another, and from one story to an image.

Some of the connections brought about by European integration seem to defy the laws of History: the arrival of Poles in Dublin would have been unimaginable twenty-five years ago, when Irish people were still leaving in droves for America. Some other links seem to follow the furrows of more ancient networks - temporarily forgotten. Thus the end of the Cold War allowed a thaw in trade relations amongst the countries surrounding the Baltic Sea. Today, the cargo ships passing through the newly merged port of Malmö-Copenhagen are heading primarily for the Russian market. German, Polish and Baltic ports all partake in this commerce, charting a geography of trade which evokes the long-past Hanseatic League. Nicknamed 'Trevisoara', a contraction of Treviso and Timișoara, the transnational space created by the links between Italy's North-East and the Romanian Banat brings together two former Habsburg provinces whose relations were obscured after the two World Wars. Thus we see two 'pivotal regions' coming closer - one situated at the crossroads of the Latin, Germanic and Slav worlds; the other at the junction of the Balkans and Central Europe. A true laboratory of European integration, this new territory - criss-crossed by daily flights between Arad and Verona, Treviso and Timișoara - is also traversed by tensions and contradictions. The small businessmen of Veneto who relocate or subcontract production to the Banat are often the very same ones who adhere to the Northern League's stance vis-à-vis Italy's Romanian immigrants. Therefore the ability of North-East Italy's economic actors to move beyond borders and to envisage their interests as lying within a transnational context also comes with centrifugal tensions and a negative relationship to central institutions (what some have called an "invisible secession").



ANTONIO ROSSI MILL FACTORY, TIMIȘOARA, 2008 © RIP HOPKINS/AGENCE VU'

Not giving in to the spreading sense of a shuddering halt in the European institution building process, cities are putting all their energies into transforming themselves - not hesitating, if necessary, to emancipate themselves from their national frameworks. Pipe-laying in open trenches, the collateral effects of the redeployment of the structural funds, can make the exploration of Łódź resemble an obstacle course. The building of tunnels, motorways and bridges; the renovation of old canals; the opening of new air routes - cities are transforming their material environment in order to project themselves towards the outside world. But it's also by looking inwards, by drawing on their pasts, that they channel the development of tomorrow. The crisis of car-making in Turin, and of ship-building in Malmö, caused deep economic recession while also undermining the grand narratives of class struggle which fuelled both towns in the 20th century. But the end of mono-industry also meant the end of a "mono-identity"; with it came an opening up of the field of possibilities. And it opened up the way for a new relationship with the natural environment. Today Malmö is re-appropriating its seafront, building green housing and promenades on the former site of the shipyards. Turin became reacquainted with its mountains during the 2006 Winter Olympics, and as home of the "Slow Food" movement Piedmont is exporting the virtues of binding food products to their place of origin.



ŁÓDŹ, 2008 © CÉDRIC GERBEHAYE/AGENCE VU'



TURIN, 2008 © PAOLO VERZONE/AGENCE VU'

It is also through the words of their writers that European towns reveal themselves. Games with sounds from the Łódź poet Julian Tuwin; Italo Calvino's disillusioned account of Italian politics from a Turin polling station; the tribulations of the Issakovitch brothers, Vouk (the melancholic warrior, officer of the Slavonia-Danube regiment) and Archange (the optimistic and cunning merchant voyaging between Zemun and Belgrade); the experimentalism of Ingmar Bergman at the Malmö theatre; the homage of Yeats to the victims of the 1916 Easter Rising or the wanderings of Leopold Bloom through the streets of Dublin³ - the imaginings of towns blend into our European imagining. Our mental maps are informed by this written geography: a common geography, which each of us can appropriate. Thus, it was by following the words of J.M. Synge that a young theatre director born in Malmö to Yugoslavian parents could decide to eventually settle down on Ireland's Aran Islands.

Europe's cities live off their old stories and they create new ones. They self-fantasize. The morality of the tales told today in Łódź and Timișoara reconciles the two towns with their European vocation and connects local identity with European identity. The inhabitants of the Banat describe their land as an "eldorado of multiculturalism", where Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Serbs, Bulgarians, Slovaks, Croats, Roma and others all mingle, where everyone knows a few words of the other one's language. Łódź's residents rediscover that their town blossomed in the 19th century when the tariff barriers between the Eastern markets and Congress Poland (then a province of the Russian empire) were abolished and the city's people started transforming raw materials imported from Amsterdam or Antwerp into products exported to the East. The thawing of the communist glacier allowed Łódź, at last, to remember that in 1939 one-third of its citizens were Jewish and 10% were German and to commemorate - for the first time in 2004 - the liquidation of its ghetto. By erecting statues of its famous children, by renovating the former palaces and villas of its industrialists, by organising the annual "Festival of the four cultures", Łódź is reclaiming its multicultural and capitalist past and making it a fulcrum of its present and future identity.



GARDEN OF MARIUS STANCA, EVANGELIST PASTOR OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY, TIMIȘOARA, 2008 © RIP HOPKINS/AGENCE VU'

³ Italo Calvino, *The Watcher and Other Stories*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1971; Milos Tsernianski, *Migrations*, Harvill Press 1994; William Butler Yeats, *'Easter 1916' and other poems*, Dover Thrift Editions, 1997; James Joyce, *Ulysses*, Vintage International, New York, 1990.

The golden age on which the cities calibrate their current narrations cannot be resurrected for all that. Łódź's multicultural weave was washed away forever by the Second World War⁴. A few Czech and Bulgarian villages remain in the Banat, but the majority of the descendants of settlers from Bavaria, Hungary or Lorraine are gone for good. Robert Schuman himself, moved by the story of the latter, intervened to allow their repatriation to a depopulated village in Vaucluse, thus sparing them from the fate reserved by the communists for "Germans" - namely, deportation to Soviet camps or forced resettlement on the Bărăgan plain. Nevertheless the eulogy to multilingualism in Timișoara, or Łódź's celebration of the four cultures which built its fortune have a symbolic function and educational virtues which fix the cities' future under the sign of openness and tolerance.

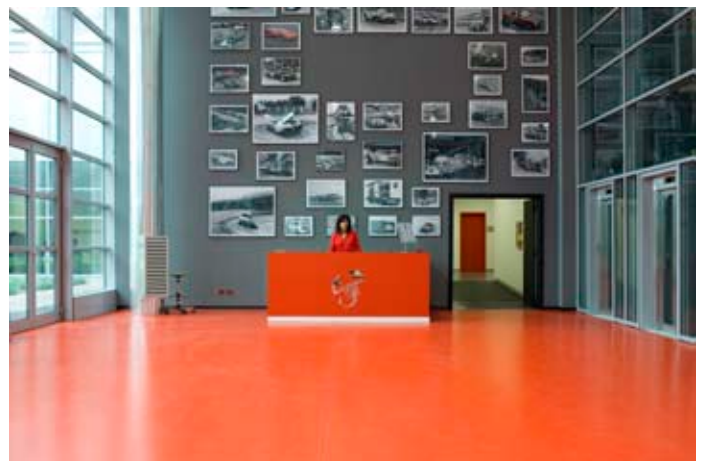


JAMES JOYCE'S STATUE, DUBLIN, 2008 © GILLES FAVIER / AGENCE VU'

There is a fine line between an updating of the past and petrification. On the pavement of Piotrkowska Street in Łódź, the bronze statue of Arthur Rubinstein tirelessly repeats the same little tune when one slips a coin into the slot of his piano. Repetition, duplication, a game of mirrors: the cities exhibit themselves before our gaze. Malmö's architectural landmark, the *Turning Torso*, was built not so much to house residents but rather to be recognised by those looking in from the outside. The black and white photos of the old Fiat models on the walls of *Mirafiori* turn an industrial saga into a myth. The contrast with the sludge and workers' overalls of Timișoara remind us that Europe is also a place of fractures, of temporal and spatial disjunctions. The Serbian city is thus offbeat against the synchronies orchestrated by European integration. The Belgrade photographer can allow himself a siesta on a bench of the Tito Museum, for here time seems to be suspended. A few freight trains sit rusting at a border-post with Romania. The industry of the Serbian Banat looks anemic next to its Romanian and Hungarian neighbours; much of it has been suffocated behind the embargo walls. And yet, like those two waiters, impeccable and unflappable as the walls are crumbling around them, the people of Belgrade do not give in to despair. They shake off their torpor and ward off misfortune with jokes. Discrepancies, ruptures, asymmetries, but also the race to "catch up", to adjust with the western neighbours: as the course of the Eastern Europeans' words flow into one another, a feeling arises that they haven't had enough time to find a full sense of their place in the Union. Here and there, come calls for Europe to slow down, to allow itself time for reflection.



TIMIȘOARA, 2008 © RIP HOPKINS/AGENCE VU'



TURIN, 2008 © PAOLO VERZONE/AGENCE VU'

⁴ In which the town lost some 400,000 inhabitants.

Politics, economics and culture are profoundly embedded in one another. The fate of Łódź – a town born of the first era of globalisation, a town of four cultures reduced to one by the Second World War – is a reminder that unbridled nationalism goes together with cultural collapse. It is against such processes of shrinkage that the foundations of European unification were laid down. The last half-century shows that this institutional frame is both supple and robust enough to have been able to take in Dublin, then Malmö, then Łódź, and finally Timișoara. But this structure will not withstand every centrifugal attack, every act of selfish withdrawal. It is up to us to take care of the institutions bequeathed to us, to ensure that our history continues to be one of expansion, development, opening and sharing. As Europeans, we are shaping our common destiny. It is a fragile construction. An uncompleted work. This is what the very last photograph of the book seems to suggest: a polished floor and red velvet for a wedding in one of the former Yugoslavia's outdated hotels; a Gypsy musician gives his hair one last flick of the comb before going on stage.

Aziliz Gouez, *Notre Europe*



BELGRADE, 2008 © MARTIN KOLLÁR/AGENCE VU'

★

The book ***European Works*** is available at
the Filgranes Editions or in the bookshops.



European Works benefited from the support of:



UE 2008.fr



COMPAGNIA
di San Paolo

 **european cultural foundation**

ef
european foundation

FONDATION

HIPPOCRÈNE