

**RAYMOND
GEORIS**
A QUIET
EUROPEAN
GARDENER

DAVID WATKISS
EDITOR DIANNA RIENSTRA

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Contents

Acknowledgements	7
About the author and editor	9
Preface	10
Chapter 1 Spring 2010	12
Chapter 2 Early years and influences	20
Chapter 3 Europe without borders	48
Chapter 4 The European Cultural Foundation years	68
Chapter 5 Building Europe – motivations, machinations and relationships	100
Chapter 6 'Leave before they want to kick you out'	116
Chapter 7 The godfather can't retire	126
Chapter 8 <i>Modus operandi</i> – how Raymond Georis gets things done	142
Epilogue	156
Index	177

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David Watkiss & Dianna Rienstra

I seize the occasion to pay a personal tribute to David and Dianna, the author and the editor of the book. With enduring patience, they listened to my endless recollections and built them into a coherent story, leaving aside pieces that would have damaged the harmony of the whole. They also took the time to contact many of my friends and colleagues, persuading them to add their own piece to a perfect biography of a very imperfect person.

I cannot refrain now from disclosing who are the guilty for this book: the colleagues at the European Foundation Centre, with the friendly support of their Chief Executive, Gerry Salole. I would like to especially, and most warmly, thank Sevdalina Rukanova who first had the idea of producing this book and made it happen with the appreciated help of Wendy Richardson. It would not have been possible, however, without the generous support of my colleagues and friends Luc Tayart de Borms (King Baudouin Foundation), Corinne Evens (Evens Foundation) and Katherine Watson (European Cultural Foundation).

Raymond Georis

About the author and editor

Dianna Rienstra, a Director of Phoenix Ink Communications, sprl, a Brussels-based public affairs and communications consultancy with a mix of high-profile public and private sector clients. She has extensive experience in writing and editing. This is the third book concerning the foundation sector that she has worked on. Prior to establishing Phoenix Ink in Brussels in 1996, Ms Rienstra was a communications consultant in Toronto, Canada.

David Watkiss, a Director of Phoenix Ink Communications, sprl, is a Brussels-based writer, editor and communications consultant. Prior to moving to Belgium in 2006, he practised law in the US for 30 years. Conversing with Raymond Georis, his wife Elizabeth, and many of Raymond's friends and colleagues about Europe, life, philanthropy, philosophy, politics and religion was one of the great experiences of his life.

Preface

The metaphor of the quiet gardener seems to us to be singularly appropriate. Raymond is literally a gardener but he also has, as this book makes abundantly clear, a metaphorical garden of many projects, issues, friends and connections to institutions that he has continuously and diligently been busy tending to throughout his life – a quiet chat here, a phone call there, a word with this one and then with that one. Things get taken care of unobtrusively.

This book is written in honour of an unsung hero of European institutions who is still playing an extraordinarily avuncular, advisory, mischievous, thoughtful and, above all, optimistic and constructive role in European philanthropy. His intuition-driven approach to all matters is remarkable, and we are honoured to have been involved in the writing of this story, because Raymond is a mentor and a friend we value highly. So while it may be often said that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, in this particular instance we don't think that the sum of the parts can be measured – it just feels right.

If this introduction seems a little irreverent and appears to lack the jargon and conventional trite generalities, it is because Raymond himself is humorous, always self-deprecating, and seems to be perpetually slightly amused at the challenges that organisations throw up on a daily basis. Raymond, with his successful construction of such organisations, illustrates two truisms about accomplishment. First is the old adage that it really is remarkable what you can achieve if you do not care who gets the credit, and the second, closely connected, is that successful collaborations require that social actors must build serious and deep reservoirs of trust. Raymond, Mr Georis, is just such a person.

When he is telling stories about the wrangling, horse-trading and shenanigans of building institutions, there is inevitably a mischievous glint

in his blue eyes. He relishes his brokerage role and is unabashedly proud of the fact that he has often been so subtle in his role that people afterwards don't always acknowledge the crucial role he has played in bringing people together, resolving problems or quietly helping bolster a sensible situation. Raymond reminds one of the mischievous Tom Sawyer, who impishly cajoles his friends into surrendering their carefree summertime. He uses his subtle persuasion skills to convince them into helping undertake the tedious work he has been assigned. In the end, Tom finds himself richly compensated: more and more of his friends start clamouring to do the work, as he has convinced them this is an opportunity not to be missed.

We hope that this pastiche of anecdotes, quotes, memories and historical moments gives the reader a sense of the incredible, quiet and unobtrusive genius and skill of Raymond Georis – and a glimpse into the mischievous joy of this amazing friend of European philanthropy.

Sevdalina Rukanova, Senior Officer

Gerry Salole, Chief Executive

European Foundation Centre

I do not know the person described in this book but I wish I could become his friend.

Raymond Georis



Chapter 1

Spring 2010

W

hen he visualises the phases of his life, Raymond Georis sees a series of gardens. When he thinks about his life's work, he considers himself as a quiet gardener of the European project. For Raymond, the garden is an example of how to build something. Gardening is a metaphor for his life and work.

At 80 years old, Raymond muses: 'The garden represents for me the image of life. It also represents the patience required when one works with the diverse peoples and cultures of Europe. You don't see results immediately. It takes a long time. You plant a seed, but don't know whether it will grow. If you brutalise a garden, you will destroy it. The garden is an example of how to build something. You cannot be extravagant. Sometimes the garden presents you with something you did not expect. Sometimes you are pleased with the surprise, sometimes not. You do not build a garden yourself. Nature makes a garden. A garden is an example of the adage



Butte du Lion

*"Aide-toi et le ciel t'aidera".*¹ When you work in the garden, you see results, but it is not you who has done it. The garden provides sustenance for the body, but also food for thoughts. It is a place for walks and conversations with friends. Philosophers like Epicurus and Erasmus often walked and conversed in their gardens.¹

On a sunny, warm day in mid-May 2010, Raymond is in his beloved garden at his long-time country home, *La Colinière*, in the village of Maransart, about 30 kilometres south of Brussels. From the hill at the back of the garden, through a stand of tall trees Raymond planted over 40 years before, one can see the *Butte du Lion*, the monument commemorating Wellington's victory over Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

The Waterloo monument provides a constant reminder of the plagues that ravaged Europe for centuries – war, death, destruction, deprivation, intolerance, discrimination and genocide.

This cruel and bloody history inspired and motivated Europeans like Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman in the second half of the 20th century, and their next-generation protégés, including Raymond, to envision and strive to build a peaceful, prosperous, tolerant, inclusive and democratic Europe through integration and cooperation. Many have pursued this vision of Europe through intergovernmental or supranational organisations, such as the Council of Europe and the European Union.

Raymond's chosen vehicles, for over 40 years, have been philanthropy, education and culture. He has spent his career building networks of foundations, think-tanks, academic institutions, civil society organisations

¹ God helps those who help themselves.



(L – R) Raymond Georis and Carlos Monjardino, Fundação Oriente at the 2nd European Foundation Centre Annual General Assembly and Conference (Arrabida, Portugal, 9 November 1991)

and policymakers – but most important of all, networks of like-minded people – in Europe and other parts of the world.

This occasion in May 2010 is Raymond's 80th birthday party. In attendance are Raymond's wife of 47 years, Elizabeth, the five survivors of his seven siblings, his four adult children and his five grandchildren. Throughout the day and the preceding weeks, Raymond received scores of calls and cards from his vast number of friends, and current and former colleagues, from throughout Europe, North America, the Middle East and beyond.

Two and a half weeks later, in early June 2010, Raymond is having lunch, as he has relished doing throughout his adult life, surrounded by friends and colleagues. This occasion is the concluding lunch at the first Foundation Week, organised by the European Foundation Centre (EFC), which Raymond conceived and was instrumental in founding 20 years before.

Raymond's love of good food and fine wine is legendary, as is his mastery of the art of conversation, negotiation, persuasion, brainstorming and network building over a fine meal.

One of Raymond's long time colleagues, John Richardson, who assisted Raymond in founding the EFC and served as its first Chief Executive, quipped: 'Few people are famous in their own lifetime. Raymond Georis is famous in his own lunchtime. His notion of soft power was extended over

the luncheon table most effectively. Raymond was a great international networker at governmental and nongovernmental level. When you look at second track diplomacy – now called soft power – networking with civil society, mixing civil society with traditional diplomacy, he used it brilliantly. He did this not just in Brussels, but also with American, Canadian and African players. With him, it was never about Fortress Europe or exclusion. It was about inclusion.’

Despite his humility and propensity to let others take credit for accomplishments, Raymond cannot completely mask a feeling of pride at the conclusion of the EFC’s Foundation Week, which showcased activities near and dear to Raymond’s heart.

During lunch on the last day of Foundation Week, the people sitting with and near Raymond represented a microcosm of his long and storied career. Among those were Gerry Salole, Chief Executive, EFC; Francis Charhon, Director General, Fondation de France; Emílio Rui Vilar, President of the Board of Trustees, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian and Luc Tayart de Borms, Managing Director, King Baudouin Foundation. Fondation de France and the King Baudouin Foundation were two of the seven original founding members of the EFC in 1989.²

During the closing plenary of Foundation Week, Vilar, current Chair of the EFC, referring to both the Centre and Foundation Week, observed: ‘None of this would be possible without Raymond.’

Also at Raymond’s table was Mo Ibrahim, founder of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, who earlier that day had been awarded the 2010 Raymond

² The other five being: Charities Aid Foundation, European Cultural Foundation, Fundação Oriente, Stichting Koningin Juliana Welzijn Fonds and Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft.

Georis Prize for Innovative Philanthropy in Europe for his foundation's innovative work to improve governance in Africa. The Network of European Foundations (NEF) Mercator Fund created the prize in 2004 to honour an outstanding and innovative philanthropic programme. It was named after Raymond Georis in recognition of his vision, intuition and reputation as the 'father' of the European foundation community. The prize celebrates his establishment of partnerships with the European Commission and among foundations as an embodiment of philanthropic innovation in Europe.

A few seats away was Katherine Watson, Executive Director of the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), a unique European institution very close to Raymond's heart. Raymond joined the ECF in 1967 as Director of the Education Project of ECF's Plan Europe 2000, a vast, multi-year research and forward-looking endeavour aimed at predicting social conditions and challenges in the year 2000. He became ECF's Secretary General in 1973, serving in that capacity until 1995. ECF provided Raymond the vehicle to, on the one hand, create and support a remarkable number of research centres and national committees as well as networks of institutes and foundations, and, on the other hand, to fund hundreds of projects throughout Europe.

Sitting at another nearby table was Hywel Jones, formerly a high-ranking official at the European Commission with responsibility for the European Union's education programmes. Jones and Raymond have been friends, colleagues and frequent collaborators in education and philanthropy since 1973. 'I think Raymond and I will be collaborating on philanthropic projects until we are dead,' Jones says.

Well into his seventies, Raymond became the Chairman of the Board of the Universal Education Foundation and assisted in the building of its initiatives in Palestine and Europe aimed at advancing the wellbeing of children and young people in all their learning environments. 'Raymond was extraordinarily helpful bringing the Universal Education Foundation into contact with other foundations as well as with UN agencies and in navigating through the intricacies of building partnerships. He helps you find opportunities and win-win solutions. He shows you how to cooperate rather than compete. He knows how to deal with egos and conflicting agendas,' says Daniel Kropf, Executive Vice-Chair, Universal Education Foundation (UEF). Marwan Awartani, Secretary General, UEF and Chair, Arab Foundations Forum, adds: 'Raymond Georis is the intersection of many roads. He has moral weight and can solve problems. He has a natural ability to deal with diversity and different people. He commands respect in Palestine, navigating through complex terrain.'

Although now 80, Raymond has energy, passion, intellectual curiosity, prowess and commitment to making the world a better place that would be the envy of persons less than half his age. He has a twinkle in his blue eyes and a smile on his cherubic face. His cheerful demeanour evidences a man who has lived – and is living – a happy, active and highly productive life.



(L – R) Nicolas Borsinger,
Pro Victimis Foundation,
and Raymond Georis at
the EFC Foundation Week
(Brussels, May 2010)



Chapter 2

Early years and influences

The village of Kuntich, Belgium, where Raymond was born on 18 May 1930, lies on an old Roman road in the Flemish Brabant Province. Throughout its history, Kuntich has straddled the porous border between Germanic and Latin Europe. Such areas are subject to linguistic, cultural, political and religious tensions between two worlds. A verse by the Belgian Francophone poet Maurice Carême captures a sense of the place for Raymond:

*Brabant profondément enfoncé dans ma chair,
Ainsi qu'un fer de bêche au milieu d'un jardin,
Brabant de coeur wallon, au visage latin,
Mais à l'âme tournée vers le Nord légendaire.*¹

¹ Brabant is deeply anchored in my flesh,/As a spade planted in the garden,
Brabant, of Wallon heart and Latin face,/But her soul turned toward the legendary North.

Kumtich has not been immune to the ravages of European wars. It was burned and pillaged by English troops under the Duke of Marlborough in 1705 during the wars with the French under Louis XIV. Raymond's ancestors experienced war. His great-great-great-grandfather, Jean-Gangulphe Georis, fought with Napoleon in the ill-fated 1812 Russian campaign. According to a Georis family legend, during the Grande Armée's cross-

“Very good, Georis,” said Napoleon. “Singing with such enthusiasm in the face of defeat.” Perhaps Raymond’s *joie de vivre* can be traced back to Jean-Gangulphe.

ing of the Berezina River² to escape the pursuing Russians, Jean-Gangulphe was singing loudly: *‘La Victoire, en chantant, nous ouvre la barrière...’* when the Emperor himself passed by. Napoleon asked another soldier: ‘Who is that soldier, who sings with such heartfelt passion?’

He was told: ‘Sire, that is Georis, from the Ardennes. He will sing at the drop of a hat!’ Once on the other side of the river, Napoleon approached, asking, ‘Which one of you is Georis?’ Jean-Gangulphe stepped forward saluting. ‘Very good, Georis,’ said Napoleon. ‘Singing with such enthusiasm in the face of defeat.’ Perhaps Raymond’s *joie de vivre* can be traced back to Jean-Gangulphe.

Raymond's father also saw combat, spending four muddy, miserable, bloody years in the trenches at Yser, during the First World War.

2 The Battle of Berezina occurred in November 1812 between the French and Russian armies. The French suffered heavy losses but managed to cross the river and avoid being trapped. Since then, ‘Berezina’ has been used in French as a synonym for ‘disaster’.

Raymond's family history

Raymond's family on his father's side came from the Ardennes region. The earliest known ancestor was Laurent Georis, born in the 18th century in Odeigne, a village with one of the highest elevations in the region. The harsh climate of the Ardennes highlands may have helped Laurent's son, Jean-Gangulphe, survive the Berezina disaster. Jean-Gangulphe's grandson, Emile, born in 1854, was the founder of Raymond's family line. Jules, Raymond's father, was the second son of Emile Georis and Julie Fontaine. After the end of the First World War, Jules remained in the Belgian army as an artillery officer. This position allowed him to pursue his interests in mathematics and science by studying civil engineering. In 1934, he became Technical Commissioner of the Aerial Protection League (*Ligue de Protection Aérienne*).

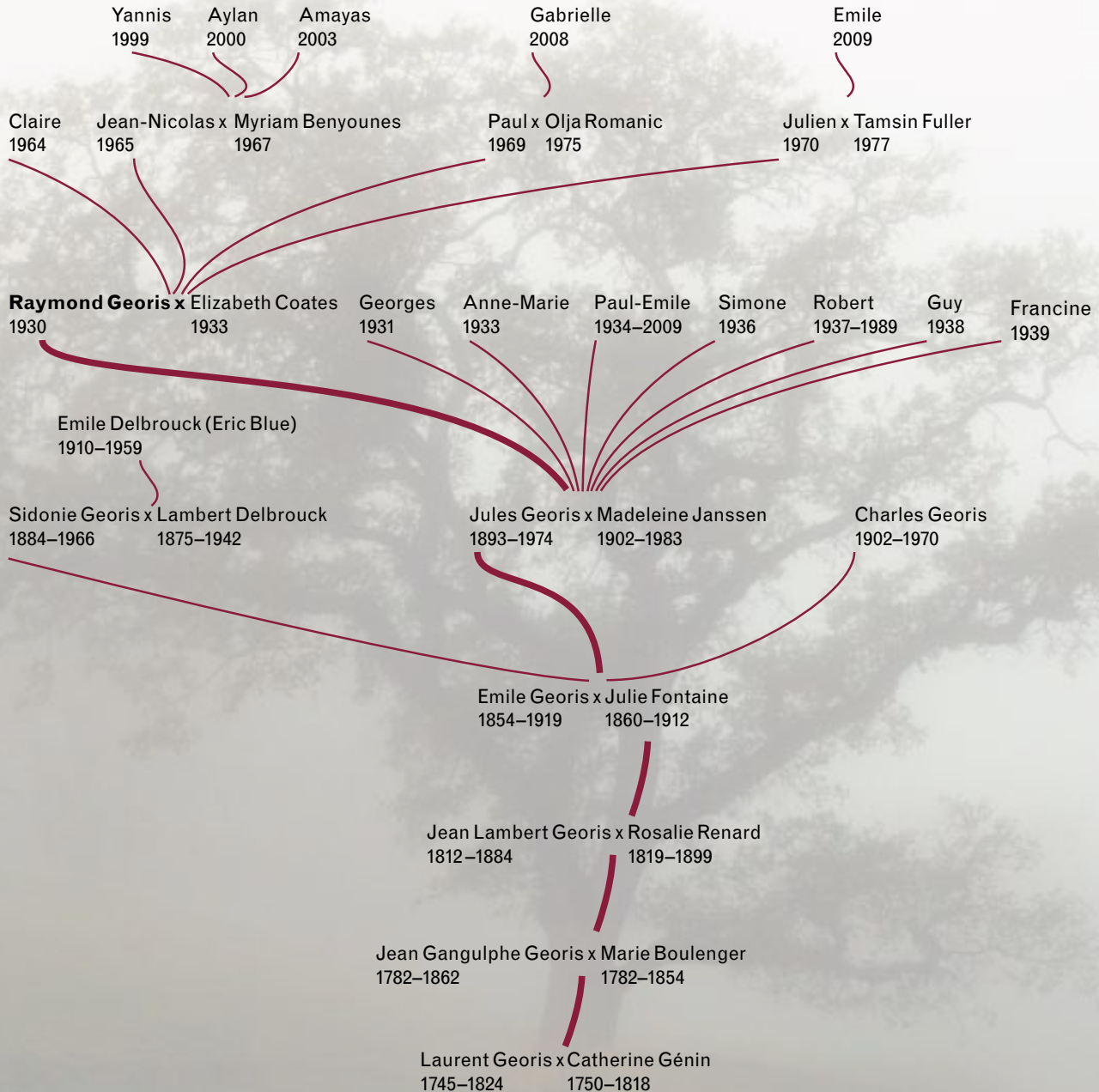
In 1929, Jules married Madeleine Janssen. They would have eight children, of which Raymond was the oldest. Like Jules, Madeleine also came from a large family of nine children. The Janssen family originally hailed from the village of Moulant, on the Belgian-Dutch border, near Maastricht. Male members of the family held public offices and judicial positions. One branch of the Janssen family married into the Solvay family (of the international industrial group); some became barons. One of Madeleine's cousins served as Minister of Finance in Belgium.

During his childhood, Raymond and his seven siblings – all born between 1930 and 1939 – were raised by their parents and two unmarried aunts. He has profound admiration for his uncle Charles, Jules' youngest brother, a teacher and a poet who was also Raymond's godfather. Charles introduced him to Latin and Greek and passed on to him his great love of the French language.



Jules Georis (circa 1929)

Georis family tree



Ker Simone – the Garden of Eden

The old gabled house where Raymond was born bore the Breton name *Ker Simone* (Villa Simone). Here he would spend his first three summers and, while Raymond has few memories of the house itself, the outdoor surrounding has made a profound and lasting impression.

Writing years later, Raymond poetically describes this environment: 'The house where I was born had its back to the village and overlooked the Roman road – a grand route – to the shimmering wheat fields beyond. Entrance to the vast and ancient garden lay through the four panels of a tall gate. To the left were the stable doors; to the right, after passing the side of the house, six stone steps led to a large, sunny terrace where I spent my first three summers. This terrace, separated from the garden and its mysterious footpaths by a wooden balustrade, retains in my mind the warm colours of an immense beach flooded with light. I soon came to know all its nooks and crannies. One fine day I slipped between the wooden bars to disappear into the undergrowth and thus set off on my discovery of the world!'

In a letter to one of his sisters, Raymond's father draws a poetic picture of the Ker Simone garden: 'In front of the terrace spreads a thick green lawn we pompously refer to as "the park". In the middle rises a giant linden tree, "whose brow, broad as Mount Caucasus itself, checks not only the rays of the sun, but also the striving of the storm," to quote La Fontaine.³ A path winds around the terrace, bordered on the outside with flowering pyrus trees, ferns, iris, and a thousand other plants whose names I strive in vain to remember . . . A series of fruit trees – apple, pear, cherry and

³ Jean de la Fontaine, French fabulist and poet, 17th century.



Ker Simone (Kuntich,
Belgium)

plum—runs down the other side of the path, their spring blossoms satisfying the most demanding eye. A little further along, the path passes a small pond, the playground to three Indian Runner ducks. And then back up under the deep shade of a copse of red and white hawthorn, the branches of an avuncular horse-chestnut reach to the ground, the better to shelter from the sun. A real chestnut tree leads to a huddle of wild splayed shrubs dominated by two maples forming a sort of oasis where we often take afternoon tea.'

Raymond has another lasting memory of these early years. His father would come home from work on his horse, lift young Raymond onto the horse and ride around the garden viewing the big trees, the ducks on the pond, and the family's large dog.

While still a small child at *Ker Simone*, Raymond had his first encounter with linguistic diversity. One day a Flemish-speaking man appeared at the door seeking assistance due to a bicycle accident. Raymond was amazed to hear his mother speak Flemish to the man. 'She seemed like a stranger to me. I had never heard any language other than French before, and this was my first realisation that I was living in a multilingual country,' Raymond recalls.

The gathering storm – a small urban garden

In 1933, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany's Third Reich. Jules, having remained in the Belgian army, was at that time commander of an artillery regiment in the nearby town of Tirlemont (now Tienen). By 1934, he had read Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, and foresaw a coming tragedy. That same year, the Belgian National Defence Ministry assigned Jules the responsibility of establishing the Aerial Protection League to ensure the protection of the civilian population in the event of war.

This new assignment required Jules to move his family to Brussels to a house in Woluwe-Saint Lambert with a very small urban garden. The courtyard was like a pit – one could only see the sky above. The garden was so small that the running feet of Raymond and his then three siblings wore out all the grass. As Raymond poignantly writes: '... and so we left Kuntich and my first garden for the big city of Brussels, its cobbled streets and dark, narrow courtyards. No more Garden of Eden. As Charles Péguy wrote in his poem *Ève*: "Beyond the first garden, I never again know such graceful climes... the pools, the lofty terrace or that first sunlight falling on the first morning".'

Apart from the births of his youngest four siblings, the next five childhood years were relatively uneventful for Raymond. In Brussels he began his primary education at the Collège Saint-Michel, under the tutelage of the Jesuit order. Here he first discovered *Les Fables* of Jean de la Fontaine, the works through which children in 19th- and 20th-century France and Belgium learned French. Raymond loved the Fables, with foxes speaking to chickens and cats chasing mice, and he still consults them for their humour and wisdom.



Raymond Georis (back row, third from right) with brothers, sisters and parents just before the invasion of Belgium (Kortenberg, Belgium, spring 1940)

In 1939, Jules moved his family to a large villa in Kortenberg, another village on the edge of two worlds, halfway between Brussels and Louvain. The villa, called *Les Buissonnets*, and its large garden became the family home for Raymond and his seven siblings under the benevolent authority of his mother and two maiden aunts. Life was good until the following May.

‘Get up children, we are at war!’

In May 1940, a few days before Raymond's tenth birthday, the German army invaded Belgium. Jules first unsuccessfully tried to join the National Defence Department. Then, fearing that fighting may break out near Kortenberg, which was on the Antwerp-Wavre defence line, he took his wife, two sisters-in-law and eight children, and fled in a small car to the Dordogne region of France.

Years later, Raymond began a memoir, called *La Guerre à dix ans*,⁴ of the first hectic days of the invasion, based on his diary, his father's notes, the memoir of his Aunt Hélène and an interview with his brother Georges. Raymond included some humorous fictitious entries attributed to Hitler, Mussolini, and German and French officials.

4 The War at Age Ten.

La Guerre à dix ans

Friday 10 May

Raymond: I was awakened at 5:00 by noises from the direction of Brussels. At my window I saw a great number of planes flying overhead. I called father, who told me they were German. Over breakfast, we heard on the radio that Germany had invaded Holland and Belgium.

There was much agitation. Around 10:00, some Belgian soldiers came to the house and asked to install a wireless station in the garden. The first British troops appeared in the evening. Father wanted to leave around 17:00, but Mother was against it, citing the great dangers of travelling in the dark. British soldiers filed past all through the night.

Georges: Father burst into the room where Raymond and I were sleeping. Dressed in his full Belgian army officer uniform, he said triumphantly: 'Get up children, we are at war!'

Jules: 5:00 – Germans bombarded Brussels and the aerodromes. At 10:00, I reported to the National Defence Department to claim my draft papers from the directorate of the civilian guard. The minister is absent. I remind an official that the civilian guard must remain operational in the event of a retreat by the government to

provide clear direction to local authorities and the managers of the passive defence. And yet the civilian guard is still without a leader! I am promised that the case will be put to the minister. However, there was to be no further sign of the minister, save his headlong flight down the roads of France.

Hitler: I did not sleep a wink the night of 9 May, worrying of not knowing what the next day's weather would bring. I was infuriated when dawn appeared 15 minutes earlier than I had been informed. At 7:00, the news came, Eben-Emael¹ has fallen silent and we have taken one of the bridges over the Meuse. It was wonderful. Everything was going according to plan. How beautiful the Felsenest was with the morning birds, the view over the columns of armoured vehicles climbing the road and the squadrons of planes overhead.

.....
1 A modern Belgian fortress guarding the Meuse and Albert Canal bridges.

Paul Reynaud² (to the French people): The French army has drawn swords. France is girding herself.

Aunt Hélène: Many disconsolate mothers, wives and sisters went to the convent gate for prayers and comfort. How many tears were shed in those dark days! And then the exodus began.

Saturday 11 May

Raymond: The next morning I woke early, dressed and went down to breakfast. The British troops were still filing past. I ate briskly, before running out to watch them. My brother Georges followed me out to tell me to return to the house. I did so and found father, mother, Anne-Marie, Simone and Francine dressed and ready to leave.

[Raymond's memoir then describes how his father made three arduous and circuitous trips

² As Minister of Finance (1938–1940) and Premier (1940), Paul Reynaud called on France to resist Nazi Germany. After the German invasion, Reynaud resigned rather than conclude an armistice; he was arrested and kept in captivity (1940–1945). He returned to the Chamber of Deputies (1946–1962) and helped draft the constitution of the Fifth Republic.

over three days from Kortenberg to Mouscron on the Belgian-French border, transporting his family, various relatives and some belongings in a small Renault Juva Quatre.]

Sunday 12 May

Military situation: The German infantry has crossed the Albert canal and the Belgians have fallen back to the Antwerp-Wavre line. By evening, the enemy lined the banks of the Meuse from Dinant to Sedan. All night long, columns of German troops, lights blazing, motored through the pine forests of the Ardennes towards the battlefield.

Monday 13 May

Jules: The mood was grim, with many leaving Brussels. The car was extremely heavily loaded, with five adults, three children and the luggage. There was even a mattress strapped to the roof.

Mussolini: Some months ago, I said that the Allies had let victory slip from their grasp. Today, I say they have lost the war. We have no more time to lose—let us quickly enter the arena, before it is all over!

Tuesday 14 May

Jules: Mouscron has been overrun by refugees. I decided to leave at first light tomorrow with Madeleine and our eight children.

Memo from German HQ: The German armoured divisions took control of the Meuse and its fortifications in one day – 14 May – in one incredibly audacious sweep. The enemy's defence was crushed, as were all counter-attacks, and a path was cut through to the Oise River. Thus, the enemy lines were breached.

French general: It is no exaggeration to say that we lost the war that day.

The press: The Brussels paper, *Le Soir*, carried a headline reading simply, '*Du calme, s.v.p.*' The Minister of National Defence was quoted as maintaining that Brussels was not in danger, contrary to rumours peddled by panic-mongers. The editorial was titled '*Nous avons fait un pas vers la victoire!*'³ At the same time, the Germans had reached Gembloux and Tirlemont.

³ We have taken a step towards victory.

The route taken by the Georis family, leaving Belgium for France in May 1940



In May 1940, when the Georis family approached the French border, the road was clogged with refugees. Traffic was backed up for some kilometres as the British army was evacuating to Dunkirk. Ten-year-old Raymond asked his father: 'Why are the British going west, when the Germans are behind them to the east?' Jules went to a French officer asking for help crossing the border. Apparently because Jules was a military man himself, the French officer agreed to assist. Raymond remembers with terror and amazement how the French officer stood on the running board of the overloaded Georis family car, revolver drawn, and escorted the family some five kilometres past a long line of other cars to the border crossing.

Once the Georis family crossed into France, the road was empty – suddenly there was peace and quiet. The family drove to Cassel, where the mayor let the family stay in the *Mairie* (city hall). They then proceeded to the convent of Les Sacrés-Coeurs de Picpus, on the rue des Maillets in Le Mans, France, where Raymond's aunt was a nun. But the Germans were still advancing through France so the Georis family drove south to Sarlat in the Périgord, where they stayed until September 1940.

In September 1940, Jules returned to Kortenberg by train to see if *Les Buissonnets*, the family home, was still there. He found the house occupied by German troops. One of the senior German officers in the house was, like Jules, a veteran of the trenches of the First World War. Both the Belgians and the Germans had the same decorations. Jules recognised the decorations worn by this German officer as indicating they both had seen action in the same theatres. Jules spoke German and soon he and the German officer had established a bond.

Raymond's father would later recall: 'The German officer was very kind. He let me sit in my own chair and listen to the radio for the news from London.'

The family lived through four harsh, dreary years in occupied Belgium until the country was liberated in September 1944.

The German officer arranged to relocate his troops so that the Georis family could return from France and move back into their house.

The Germans had not destroyed anything. The only thing missing was one bottle of Burgundy. The family lived through four harsh, dreary years in occupied Belgium until the country was liberated in September 1944.

With the German invasion of Belgium, the Belgian government fled to London. The occupying German forces established general secretaries to run the Belgian ministries. Jules was a civil servant. While he did not actively oppose or resist the German occupation, neither did he wish to collaborate. Thus, he refused to work for the government under the Germans and remained unemployed throughout the occupation. Madeleine also did not work outside the home, and Raymond still finds it a mystery how the large Georis family survived financially during the war years.

During the four-year Nazi occupation, the family suffered from cold and hunger. There was no coal; for heat they had to burn deadwood and other materials at hand. For food, there were some rations. Most importantly, the family had the garden, which provided fruit, vegetables and space to raise a few pigs, goats, chickens and ducks. Throughout the war, Raymond attended school regularly, travelling by train to Saint-Michel. Occasionally, the train was delayed due to bombings. Raymond and his schoolmates enjoyed the delays because they got time off from school. 'We did not fear the danger,' he recalls. The Germans, during the occupation, did not try to influence the Belgian education system, and even helped feed the Belgian children and distributed vitamin pills.

The German soldiers were not menacing to the Belgian children, Raymond remembers. On one occasion, Raymond, his younger brother, Georges, and a young friend were walking in the countryside, singing in French '*à la bouche une chanson . . .*' (from our mouths a song). A German soldier overheard the children and thought they were calling him a pig (*cochon*). The soldier came over to the children and said angrily: '*Vous avez dit cochon?*' ('You called me a pig?'). Frightened, the friend fell to his knees begging for mercy. The soldier simply laughed and walked away. On another occasion, Raymond mischievously convinced his younger brother that touching the revolver of a German soldier would bring good luck. His brother did so, without consequence.

In 1943, the Allied forces began bombing German positions in Belgium; a frequent target was a military airfield about six kilometres from the Georis' house. Raymond was not afraid, but recalls his father warning the family to be careful to avoid falling shrapnel. In May 1944, as the occupying German troops were preparing for the Allied invasion of Europe, the Germans expelled from their homes the Georis family and all others living on the main road to Louvain. German troops occupied the Georis home a second time until Belgium was liberated in September 1944. During this period, the family was forced to live in an abbey.

After the liberation of Belgium, German V1 and V2 rockets fell very close to the Georis' house. One landed 500 metres away and shattered windows in the home. One day, as they were going to school, Raymond and Georges saw the dead victims of German rockets being removed from the debris near a train station in Brussels. Raymond's family suffered great anxiety from the randomly falling V1 and V2 rockets.

In September 1944, on the day before Brussels was liberated and as the German troops were retreating from Belgium, Raymond and his father encountered a lone, young German soldier on the road near Les Buissonnets, which the Germans had just abandoned. Raymond's father spoke to the soldier. The soldier was obviously frightened, but did nothing to harm or menace the pair. Jules would later observe to his son that the young soldier, while frightened, was brave and that civilised people would not harm an unarmed father and teenaged son. For Raymond, this incident was a 'marvellous image of the war'.

Despite the misery of trench warfare during the First World War and the hardships of the occupation during the Second World War, Raymond's father never bore hatred of, or animosity towards, the Germans. He believed that Europeans shared certain basic values and that soldiers on both sides went through a common heroic saga and were comrades.

A Just and Lasting Peace

Jules had a profound influence on his oldest son. Elizabeth observes: 'Raymond had a privileged relationship with his father. He was very close to his father and his father's ideas.'

Unemployed during the occupation, Jules used some of his free time to write a curious and remarkable pamphlet, titled *La Paix Juste et Durable*.⁵ While he kept abreast of world affairs, he had no background in economics, politics or political science. Yet his 16-page printed pamphlet presented a detailed call for a new world order to ensure a just and lasting peace.

5 A Just and Lasting Peace.

War is caused by the unequal distribution of wealth. The only way to ensure a just and lasting peace, he argued, was to create world political and economic unity. To do so, the nation states of the world should surrender sovereignty to a supranational organisation with judicial, legislative and executive powers, including police and armed forces. This supranational organisation should be led by elites possessing moral and intellectual fundamentals, including knowledge of the laws of nature, languages, mathematics, geography and the humanities.

Jules enlisted his pre-teenage son, Raymond, to type mailing labels for his pamphlet. He planned to mail hundreds of copies, not to governments or politicians, but rather to universities around the world. Raymond recalls laboriously typing these labels for his father on a very old typewriter using two fingers. He is uncertain, but Raymond surmises that his father arranged to have the pamphlets transported out of occupied Belgium with the help of the Swiss embassy in Brussels. He was fascinated that, in spite of the occupation, his father received responses through the same channel from as far away as Calcutta.

At the time he was typing the mailing labels Raymond was only 12 years old and he did not know the pamphlet's content. In later years some of the ideas expressed in *La Paix Juste et Durable* would have a lasting influence on him. His father's lack of faith in nation states and his call for supranational government foreshadowed post-war institutions such as the United Nations and the European Union, which Raymond has strongly supported throughout his adult life. The fact that the pamphlet was sent to universities around the world, not to governments, perhaps sowed the seed for Raymond's own interest in promoting cross-border cooperation among universities as a means to advance the European project and peace.

How could educated human beings, listening to Beethoven and reading Goethe in the evening, murder children in the morning?

Jules had great, perhaps excessive, faith in the ability of intellectual elites and people of good moral character to avoid war. Raymond recalls his father telling him that education could eradicate violence. His father seemed to share Desiderius Erasmus' humanistic view that educated people would refrain from violence. Raymond notes that after the Second World War, many people would ask, 'How could educated human beings, listening to Beethoven and reading Goethe in the evening, murder children in the morning?'

Jules' faith in education is one reason why Raymond has always been fascinated by education and, as we will see, devoted much of his professional life to its advancement – by teaching education planning in Asia; by organising cooperation among academics for Plan Europe 2000; by assisting the European Commission with the EURYDICE network and the ERASMUS and TEMPUS academic mobility programmes; and by facilitating grants to numerous educational activities.

Jules believed that human nature is weak and thus institutions and safeguards are necessary. Even if he went to church every Sunday, he was not a pious man. However, he thought that religion was important to control human instincts. For him, religion was an aspect of law and order.

Madeleine and Jules Georis
(in their garden, circa 1973)



Raymond was raised Catholic but he considers tolerance more important than the fanaticism of one religion. In Elizabeth's view, his traditional Catholic education played an important role in his development.

'I hated school!'

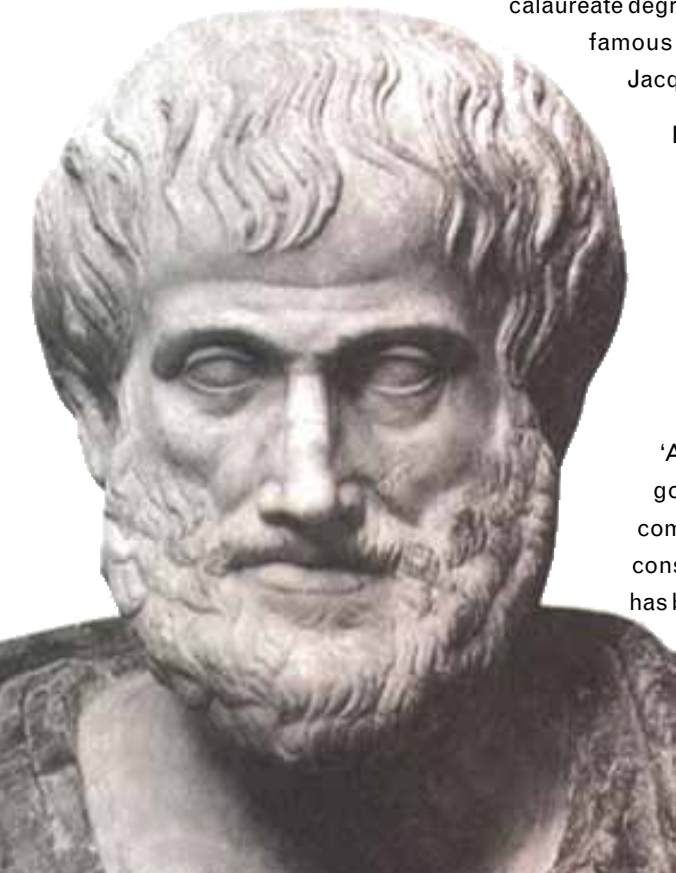
With peace restored, Raymond finished his studies in classical humanities in 1949 at the Petit Séminaire of Basse-Wavre under Abbot Henri de Raedt. Raymond's father sent him and two of his brothers to this boarding school for some discipline, though Raymond admits that he was not a good student: 'I hated school. It was a waste of time. I could learn more quickly at home. For me, the classroom was not the best way to learn.'

One exception to Raymond's general dislike of school was some instruction he received from Abbot de Raedt. By 1949, the Cold War had broken out. Raymond recalls listening in the classroom to speeches on the radio surrounding the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Abbot de Raedt introduced Raymond to the idea that the role of education is not simply to memorise the classics but rather to understand and be able to deal with contemporary life and problems. Instead of writing essays on Racine, in Abbot de Raedt's classes Raymond was writing essays on NATO and the dangers of communism.

Finishing secondary school, Raymond was ready for university, although he did not know what he wanted to do. His mother suggested that because many of his uncles were lawyers, he should study law, which he did. However, law was never interesting for Raymond. He particularly disliked rote memorisation of legal codes. He did not attend the lectures, preferring to study at home in his garden. When Raymond went for his commercial law examination, the professor did not recognise him, as he had never attended class. Ultimately, he did obtain his doctorate of law, but never considered actually practising law.

Aristotle – the lesson of happiness

Aristotle



While at the University of Louvain studying law, Raymond also studied philosophy in the evenings for two years. One of his cousins on his mother's side, Albert-Edouard Janssen, a Belgian Finance Minister, told young Raymond that philosophy was the most important of all disciplines. The University of Louvain had an institute devoted to Neo-Thomistic philosophy, the attempt to modernise the thinking of Saint Thomas Aquinas, and reconcile faith with reason and the Catholic Church with the 20th-century world. Raymond undertook a baccalaureate degree from this institute, where he heard lectures from famous French philosophers such as Étienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain.

For Raymond, these studies were 'an opening, a revelation, an illumination'. But the works of Saint Thomas Aquinas were only a bridge, a bridge to Aristotle – the greatest philosopher of all, in his mind. Raymond still consults the works of Aristotle, particularly the *Nichomachean Ethics*.

'Some people consider me a pessimist, but I am an optimist because of Aristotle,' reflects Raymond. 'Aristotle teaches that happiness is the supreme good. But what is happiness? Happiness does not come from complaint or passivity. Happiness requires constant, lasting action. You have to act every day. That has been the basis of my whole life. You must strive to get the best out of yourself and act towards excellence. The search for excellence must be achieved every day; it should become second nature.'

'Aristotle extols justice, strength, temperance and prudence. Prudence is a cardinal virtue. Prudence is the art of action. People ask me how I could resist temptation all those years away from home in Amsterdam. The answer is prudence. Prudence is the mother of safety!

'Charles de Gaulle insists on the fact that "*La véritable école de commandement est dans la culture générale. Au fond des victoires d'Alexandre, il y a toujours Aristote.*"⁶ Without Aristotle, there would not have been Alexander the Great. Aristotle was Alexander's teacher. This shows the importance in education of broad general knowledge. You don't succeed just by impetus or emotion; you have to plan in advance. I have been using the practical teachings of Aristotle all my adult life. Aristotle presents the tools for success and meaning in life.'

Aristotle presents the tools for success and meaning in life.

For Raymond, philosophy is not about how to succeed in life, but rather how to make one's life a success – how to make life worthwhile. Raised a Catholic, what was important for Raymond in his Neo-Thomistic philosophical studies was the triumph of reason and the Catholic Church's realisation that 'faith cannot go against reason.' He observes: 'When I think about the diverse religions in the world, the criterion I use is whether it is rational or not. When you see the irrationality in the world, you see that humans suffer due to the lack of reason.'

6 General knowledge is the only true training ground for leadership. Behind Alexander the Great's victories, one finds Aristotle.



Erasmus

'You should add stars to the sky'

While at university, Raymond also discovered the life and works of the Dutch Renaissance humanist Desiderius Erasmus. Reading *The Praise of Folly*, he greatly admired Erasmus' wit and irony. This led him to the French translation of the 1935 biography of Erasmus, *Triumph und Tragik des Erasmus von Rotterdam*, by the Austrian biographer and united Europe advocate Stefan Zweig. 'If you want to understand my character, read Zweig's book. When Zweig describes Erasmus' character, I think he is describing me,' says Raymond. 'All my life, I have found Erasmus. He was a man who was tolerant, a man who was a pacifist. Erasmus has not only been an example; he is the man I have most tried to emulate because he was happy, an optimist.'

Raymond admires Erasmus's aphorisms. Erasmus' admonition, 'You should add stars to the sky', became his motto as he was creating networks of institutes and foundations. Another one of Erasmus's sayings with which he closely identifies is 'I don't wish to depend on anyone. I want to be free.'

Raymond was fascinated by the fact that, in the dangerous times of the early 16th century, Erasmus travelled extensively. He lived, studied and wrote for extended periods in several places across Western Europe, including England, France, Italy, the Low Countries, Louvain, Basel and Freiburg. Raymond was inspired by the fact that Erasmus could live and work in these culturally and linguistically diverse places because of Europe's common Greek and Latin heritage. The life of Erasmus was an early and powerful example of Raymond's own vision of '*l'Europe sans rivages*' (Europe without borders).

It is no coincidence that the European Union's first academic mobility programme, which Raymond and the European Cultural Foundation helped Hywel Jones and his colleagues at the European Commission to launch, was named after Erasmus. Neither is it a coincidence that he chose the Erasmus House in Anderlecht, Belgium, as the site for the founding of the European Foundation Centre in 1989.

Raymond's love of gardens also has connections with Erasmus. The philosophical garden at the Erasmus House was modelled on Erasmus' *The Godly Feast*. Raymond likes to imagine himself walking and conversing with Erasmus in that garden.

From Tintin to Gracq

In addition to the Fables of Jean de la Fontaine, as a child Raymond 'devoured' all the 'funny, well-written' children's adventure novels by Sophie Rostopchine, the Comtesse de Ségur.

For Raymond, Tintin was 'the hero'. He is amused that his initials, RG, are the same as those used by the author of the *Adventures of Tintin* comic series, Georges Remi, to create his nom de plume 'Hergé' (the French pronunciation of RG). He recalls that he and his brothers would fight over the Tintin cartoons every Thursday when they appeared in *Le Petit Vingtième*.

As a child, Raymond also enjoyed the adventure stories of Jules Verne, particularly *Around the World in Eighty Days*. He loved the idea of adventure – going everywhere; like Tintin, trying to discover new worlds. The works of Comtesse de Ségur, Hergé and Jules Verne, with their adventure and exotic, unknown places, gave Raymond the desire to travel, to experiment. But, he adds, at the same time, 'I was happy to be reading about Indians from the safety of an armchair'.

As a teenager, Raymond discovered the works of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, who was his introduction to philosophy. 'Not just adventure for adventure's sake, he explores why people go on adventures. A man has a mission to go beyond himself. Not just adventure, but the reasons you risk your life,' he muses.

During his Jesuit education, he was taught never to touch Marcel Proust. Ignoring this admonition, at university Raymond enjoyed Proust's search of lost time. 'At Proust's side, I embarked on my own *Remembrance of Things Past*, dunking my madeleine into his Aunt Léonie's tea,' he says. 'On a summer evening, I would picture myself sitting beneath the large chestnut tree in Proust's Combray garden waiting impatiently for the

“shy, double tinkling of the little bell” announcing the arrival of Mr Swann, whose silhouette and conversation reminded me of my cousin, Eric Blue.’

Eric Blue was another writer who made a strong impression. Eric Blue was the *nom de plume* of Emile Delbrouck, one of Raymond’s older cousins. He published short stories in *Le Petit Vingtième*. An avid reader of humorists such as Mark Twain, P G Wodehouse, Stephen Leacock and others, most of Blue’s stories were very witty. In later years, Raymond collected Eric Blue’s stories under the title *Histoires en Tic et en Toc*. For him, Emile Delbrouck was a romantic figure, an adventurer. At the age of 20, Delbrouck got a job as third officer on the oil tanker Esso Belgium and sailed around the world, writing while at sea.

At university, Raymond explored another ‘lost time’ thanks to Marguerite Yourcenar’s *Mémoires d’Hadrien*. He would read all her books as they appeared. They introduced him to the beauty of the French language. He was pleased to meet her in Amsterdam in 1983 when she was awarded the *Praemium Erasmianum* (the Erasmus Prize) by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.

Crowning Raymond’s lifetime reading of French literature is ‘the unsurpassed’ surrealist, Julien Gracq. In his view: ‘Gracq was a solitary and secretive writer whose inspiration was drawn from his walks, his readings and meditations. He is an author from the old days, before the domination of media and the demise of style. I still often peruse his works with pleasure and satisfaction. His surrealism cannot be translated. Nothing is happening; life is about expectation and waiting.’



A writer and a poet

Raymond has enjoyed writing all his life. In 1942, at age 12 he wrote a 20-page novel, *The Story of a Papyrus Scroll through the Ages*, which he laboriously typed on his father's old typewriter with illustrations by his younger brother Georges. In 1947, with Georges' help, Raymond launched a family magazine they called *Pitou*, after the family's cat. Over the years, he has written many articles for *Pitou*, containing family news and history, childhood and wartime memories and short fictional narratives. *Pitou* has given many cousins and other relatives a taste for writing. Thanks to Georges' stubbornness and perseverance, as of 2011, *Pitou* is in its 64th year, with more than 120 issues.

On the occasion of the birth of his only granddaughter, Raymond wrote this little poem:

Gabrielle picking the first cherry from the tree her grandfather planted (*La Colinière*, Maransart, Spring 2009)

La Maison de Gabrielle

Lorsqu'elle débarquera,
Sans crier gare,
A Maransart
Gabrielle découvrira
La maison de son papa,
Qui, un jour, lui appartiendra.
Dans le soleil d'été,
Surgiront, passée la haie,
Une vieille demeure,
Un grand jardin en fleurs
Qu'elle embrassera
De ses petits bras.
Entre ses lèvres serrées
Elle gardera
Une fleur du cerisier
Que son grand-père planta
L'année
Où elle est née.
Que lui importe désormais l'avenir!
Gabrielle pourra sans crainte sourire
Dans les tendres bras
De sa maman, de son papa:
La fleur si belle,
Tous les ans, sera nouvelle.

Gabrielle's House

When she arrives
Without warning
At Maransart
Gabrielle will find
Her father's house
One day to be hers.
Under the summer sun
Beyond the hedge will rise
An old abode
A great flowering garden
Which she will embrace
In her child's arms.
Between her lips
She'll tightly hold
A blossom from the cherry tree
Her grandfather planted
The year
She was born.
She will not care what the future may hold
Gabrielle's smile will henceforth be bold
In the arms of her mother and father
A beautiful flower
Each year new.



Chapter 3

Europe without borders

R

aymond, born into a Francophone family in a Flemish village, speaks poetic French, proficient Dutch and English, some Italian, Spanish and German, and reads Latin and classical Greek.

Between 1949 and 1954, Raymond attended the Université Catholique de Louvain, from which he received a Doctorate of Law and a Baccalaureate in Philosophy. After finishing university, he did a short stint in a metal-works factory near Charleroi, which convinced Raymond that factory and clerical work was not his 'cup of tea'. He then obtained a position at the *Maison de l'Amérique latine* in Brussels in the publications department. Belgian companies seeking to do business in Latin America financed the Latin America House. There, Raymond learned some Spanish, as he was responsible for monitoring the Latin American press. At the Latin America House, he published three articles dealing with commerce between northern Europe and Latin America. This was his first multicultural experience—and he liked it.

The College of Europe

The College of Europe in Bruges was founded in 1949. While at the Latin America House, Raymond saw a notice in the press that the Belgian section of the European Movement was offering scholarships for one year of study at the College. Before enrolling at the College of Europe in 1956, Raymond had come to realise that he wanted to work to advance the European project. He did not wish simply to 'sit in Belgium'. Influenced by his father's pamphlet, he believed that Europe had an important role to play in advancing peace after the Second World War. In 1957, Raymond graduated from the College of Europe with a degree in Economics and Political Science.

The College of Europe has remained close to Raymond's heart throughout his life. He served on its governing bodies for more than 30 years. Over these years, he has looked to the College for smart young people to hire and has called on the College to assist in his projects; twice he has come to its rescue.

Influenced by his father's pamphlet, he believed that Europe had an important role to play in advancing peace after the Second World War.

At the College, Raymond met many people who would influence and share his vision of European cooperation and integration, and with whom he would collaborate in later years. Principal among these was the founding Rector, Hendrik Brugmans, a Dutch historian, an intellectual leader of the European Movement and first President of the Union of European Federalists.

Hendrik Brugmans – planting the seeds of a true European

In December 2006, Raymond gave a speech in the Brussels City Hall at a ceremony commemorating the 100th anniversary of Brugmans' birth. Characteristically, he turned to gardening for his imagery:

'Europe can boast of several founding fathers: Robert Schuman, P H Spaak, Alcide de Gasperi, Konrad Adenauer, not to mention Jean Monnet. But in its beginnings, there was only one real "founding foster-father", Rector Brugmans.

'In 1950, Hendrik Brugmans was already opening the first incubator for Europeans in Bruges—a nursery of sorts, to borrow the horticultural term. Each autumn for the next 22 years, the conscientious gardener would sow the precious seeds that would yield the first crops of European graduates. You should have seen the care he lavished on each sprouting sapling, setting up a tutor for one, watering another, finding supplements for a third. He watched over the growth of each little euro-plant with a tender if critical eye, until they would be transplanted the following spring.

'But his care for each and every one of his wards did not stop there. He never failed to help his students find the best growing conditions to make the most of themselves after graduation. Today, across the vast orchard of Europe, thousands of trees bear the fruits—and the younger ones, the stamp—of Rector Brugmans' graft. As for myself, more of an old European apple tree, bent under the weight of the passing years, I would like to take the opportunity this evening to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Rector Brugmans. Thanks to him, quite simply, I discovered my purpose in life.'

Brugmans served as Rector of the College of Europe between 1950 and 1972. After his retirement, he continued to live and work in Bruges, where

he died at the age of 90 in 1997. The year after his death the College of Europe honoured Brugmans by naming that academic year the 'Brugmans Promotion' and by creating, with the support of the 22 first promotions, the annual Brugmans Memorial Lecture.

On the day Raymond arrived in Bruges, Rector Brugmans met him and some other new students at the hotel that would serve as their dormitory. Brugmans lived with the students at the hotel. On that first day, Brugmans took the students to lunch. He provocatively started the conversation by asking each student: 'What is your opinion of the devil?' A lively debate ensued with some students denying the devil's existence, while others maintained that they had seen him. Raymond claims that, at the time, he had 'no opinion whatsoever about the devil'. Brugmans likely posed the question to gain insights into the thinking of his new students.

(L – R) Hendrik Brugmans, Rector of the College of Europe, and Elizabeth Georis at Brugmans' 87th birthday dinner, held at restaurant Comme Chez Soi (Brussels, 12 December 1993)



At the College, Raymond met influential Europeans, including Salvador de Madariaga, the Spanish diplomat and writer, who had been one of the College's founders. Raymond studied under several famous visiting professors, including economist Jan Tinbergen (who would later win the Nobel Prize in Economics), Oxford political scientist John Boyle, and Yugoslav political theorist Milorad Drachkovitch. Another person who would become close to Raymond in ensuing years was a brilliant young refugee from communist Czechoslovakia, Ladislav Cerych, who had graduated in the College's first class and was a tutor when Raymond was a student.

During the academic year, there were 36 students, from Belgium, France, Germany, Japan, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the UK and the US. Raymond studied economics, geography, history and political theory. Some of the professors had fled from countries behind the Iron Curtain. The predominant ideology at the College advocated a federal, anticommunist Europe. The students took a trip to Berlin and interviewed people fleeing from the East.

There were several lectures on the history and politics of Europe between the two 20th-century wars, where the students examined the Treaty of Versailles and mistakes made during the period leading to the Second World War. The students considered the problems of developing countries and discussed independence for the colonies of European nations. Unlike Raymond's earlier academic experiences with its nationalist focus, all of the subjects at the College were explored from multinational perspectives. Raymond relished the opportunity to discuss and debate the causes of the war with students from Germany and Japan.

Raymond and his fellow students experienced momentous events in the history of Europe during their 1956–1957 school year. With Rector Brugmans, they spent all of one night celebrating the Treaty of Rome. They watched with dismay the conclusion of the Hungarian uprising against the Soviet occupation. And they considered the ramifications of the Suez crisis. 'From Hungary and Suez, we realised that Europe was alone. Europe could not help the Hungarians and was not supported by the US during the Suez crisis,' Raymond recalls. 'But the Treaty of Rome was a landmark. With the Treaty, all avenues were open for young Europeans like me.'

Raymond's dissertation at the College of Europe was titled *L'aristocratie vue par deux aristocrates: Joseph de Maistre et Alexis de Tocqueville*.¹ He argued there that modern society needs an aristocracy of the mind. An egalitarian society is neither necessary nor desirable. We need to promote the best and brightest from all strata of the population. The son of a miner should be given the opportunity to get to the top. Tocqueville, however, simply worried that egalitarianism was coming. He did not provide an answer.

Raymond proposed that in an egalitarian society, the problem is 'How do you get the best?' Society, according to him, needs new ways to find and educate the best minds. In the conclusion of his dissertation, Raymond argued: 'Democracy risks sacrificing itself to the myth of the number – the majority. It is minorities of elites who have maintained the great human virtues. The crowd very soon forgets those values. Society needs elites not afraid to do their duty. Courage is one of the most necessary qualities needed in Europe today. Inherited aristocracy is passé. A new aristocracy based on courage and a sense of duty must be created.'

Reflecting on his 1957 dissertation in 2010, Raymond returned to the question of how to create the new elites: 'The College of Europe is one centre of excellence. Admission is not based on class or inheritance. It is a meritocracy. Today, the term "elite" is dangerous, suggesting segregation and exclusion. A meritocracy is open to everyone, but you have to prove yourself by your courage and sense of duty.'

Raymond thinks that education systems fail because they too often simply ask children to repeat. In his view, education systems should allow children to select a topic they are interested in, and give them a year to study

¹ *The Aristocracy Viewed by Two Aristocrats: Joseph de Maistre and Alexis de Tocqueville*.

that topic. 'You will discover hidden talents if you let children express themselves. The important thing is to let the rich and hidden talents come to the surface,' he says.

He recalls a story in Saint-Exupéry's book *Terre des hommes*, in which the author observes a refugee family on a train. The parents are poor and broken, but they have a beautiful child. Saint-Exupéry laments: '*Ce qui me tourmente, c'est un peu dans chacun de ces hommes, Mozart assassiné.*' Raymond sees Saint-Exupéry here as condemning society for murdering the little Mozart lurking in most people. For him, society's goal must be to cultivate in children 'the little Mozart inside'.

'You will discover hidden talents if you let children express themselves. The important thing is to let the rich and hidden talents come to the surface.'

After finishing at the College of Europe, Raymond, with Brugmans' help, got a short-term position at the Coordinating Secretariat of National Unions of Students (COSEC), in Leiden, the Netherlands. COSEC was an information hub and liaison centre for national student unions. Raymond was responsible for launching the French language version of COSEC's multilingual magazine, *L'Étudiant*. He enjoyed the multinational, multilingual teamwork he found at COSEC. At COSEC, he learned about translation and the publication process. While still at COSEC, he obtained a two-month training position in the public relations department of the European Coal and Steel Community, Europe's first supranational organisation, based in Luxembourg.

When his position at COSEC was coming to an end in 1957, Brugmans informed Raymond about a vacancy at the Western European Union (WEU) in London. Raymond seized the opportunity and joined the WEU in 1958 as assistant to the head of the Cultural Division. At the WEU,

Raymond's job principally involved taking minutes of meetings of civil servants from the seven Member States discussing issues of cultural cooperation. He was not enamoured with minute taking, but he liked the job because he began to appreciate the differences among people from various European nationalities and cultures.

One particularly interesting international aspect of this job for Raymond was the WEU's collaboration with the Council of Europe. Among its many cultural and educational activities, the Council of Europe was working with historians across Europe to rewrite history textbooks so as to avoid the mistakes of the inflammatory and hyper-nationalist textbooks used in the schools in Europe after the First World War. This was one of the earliest efforts to promote cooperation in education at the European level to advance understanding, tolerance and peace. Raymond would return to such efforts with vigour and passion later in his career.

The most significant event of Raymond's time in London with the WEU, however, was meeting a beautiful, auburn-haired, fluent French-speaking young British woman, Elizabeth Coates, who was also working in the Cultural Division of the WEU. Elizabeth's first impression of Raymond: 'He was slim, wiry, attractive, obviously someone full of vitality and enormous energy, very intelligent, charming and interesting'. Three years later, in New Delhi, Raymond and Elizabeth would marry.

In 1960, the non-military dossiers of the WEU were transferred to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. Raymond and Elizabeth followed their files to France. The Council of Europe was a much bigger organisation than the WEU, with many more Member States, and much more bureaucratic. Raymond was given the imposing title Administrator, General and Technical Education Division, Directorate of Educational, Cultural and Scientific Affairs. While at the Council of Europe, he was sent on

weekends to the Académie Diplomatique Internationale in Paris for civil service training. During this course, Raymond displayed his growing European awareness by writing a dissertation titled *Les raisons économiques de la création de la Communauté Economique Européenne et les obstacles que cette institution rencontre*.² In this piece, Raymond argued that economic integration in Europe was necessary, but would not succeed without political integration.

At the Council of Europe, Raymond began to specialise in education issues. On the request of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, he wrote a lengthy report dealing with the activities of intergovernmental organisations in the fields of general and technical education. He presented this report at a conference of the Council of Europe Member State education ministers in Rome in October 1962.

The roots of an international career

In 1962, Raymond was 32 years old. He had a secure, well-paying civil service job at the Council of Europe. He was bright and had good opportunities for advancement. He had a beautiful girlfriend, Elizabeth, who he was hoping to marry. Yet he was dissatisfied with the staid, bureaucratic, desk-bound and ineffectual environment at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. He recalls that the education ministers of the Member States in the Council of Europe talked endlessly about harmonisation of education qualifications, but they could never agree. Nationalism and national arrogance, Raymond was beginning to realise, were serious obstacles to European cooperation. He

² The economic reasons behind the creation of the European Economic Community and the obstacles it faces.

wanted to experience other cultures; he wanted adventure; he wanted a life of action, accomplishment and impact. His experience at the Académie Diplomatique Internationale made him want to study again in Paris. To the shock and amazement of his father, colleagues and friends, he resigned from the Council of Europe. 'They all thought I was crazy,' Raymond recalls.

“During that year, Raymond relished living the romantic life of an impoverished student in Paris, in a tiny attic apartment on rue de Bourgogne.”

In the fall of 1962, he enrolled in the Institut International de Recherche en vue du Développement (IRFED), a development research institute in Paris. During that academic year, Raymond obtained a diploma in the new discipline of education planning.

Education planning considered how developing countries should design and finance their educational systems for the future. The topics included development economics, demographics, statistics, national accounts and education planning techniques. The goal was to achieve universal education in developing countries. The challenges were and still are enormous.

At IRFED, Raymond studied under influential professors, including René Dumont, François Perroux and Abbot Le Bret. Perroux invented the phrase '*l'Europe sans rivages*', and introduced Raymond to a distinction between growth and development that Raymond still considers important. Growth is a purely quantitative, economic measure; development includes qualitative considerations such as human wellbeing and happiness.

During that year, Raymond relished living the romantic life of an impoverished student in Paris, in a tiny attic apartment on rue de Bourgogne. He re-established contact with his friend from the College of Europe, Ladislav Cerych, who then had a good job in Paris with the Atlantic Institute. Cerych

often bought Raymond lunch, and paid Raymond a little money for helping put the French version of his book, '*Aid to Education in Developing Countries*' (*Former les hommes*) into good French.

Elizabeth also left the Council of Europe and moved back to London before Raymond enrolled at IRFED. However, they kept their relationship alive. Thanks to cheap airfares, Raymond went to London many weekends and Elizabeth often came to Paris. During one of Raymond's visits, an event occurred that he feared might end the relationship. Elizabeth's father loaned his large new car to the young couple for a Sunday afternoon drive. Raymond was driving, although not accustomed to right-hand steering. The two got lost and were consulting a map while still moving. At a low speed, Raymond struck the car ahead, breaking both headlamps of the car. He feared Elizabeth's father's anger. Much to his relief, when Elizabeth and he returned to her parents' house and Raymond confessed his negligence, Elizabeth's father did not run out to examine the damage, but rather calmly suggested that they all adjourn for a cup of tea. For Raymond, this was a good example of '*le flegme britannique*'.³

His studies at IRFED provided him with a valuable toolkit for work in the development and education planning fields. However, he lacked practical experience. At the suggestion of Abbot Lebret, Raymond obtained a position as a trainee at the Associazione per sviluppo dell'industria nel Mezzogiorno (SVIMEZ) in Rome during the summer of 1963. He worked on Italian development projects and obtained some practical planning experience.

3 British stiff upper lip.

Raymond and Elizabeth
on their wedding day (New
Delhi, 16 September 1963)



Seeing Europe from the outside

By then, Raymond was 33 years old. He was beginning to have a sense of what he wanted to do with his life. He wanted an international career. His principal interest was Europe, but he wanted to spend some time in the developing world. Raymond thought that seeing Europe from the outside would help him better understand the continent.

He consulted his friend, Ladislav Cerych, who at the time was a consultant to the International Institute of Education Planning (IIEP) in Paris. From his work at the IIEP, Cerych had contacts with United Nations entities and suggested that Raymond apply to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to teach education planning somewhere in the developing world. Although Raymond only had a little more than one year of experience – his time at IRFED and SVIMEZ – in this new field, and no teaching experience whatsoever, he bravely followed Cerych's advice. Because the field of education planning was so new, Raymond could pass as an expert.

While he was in Rome during the summer of 1963, UNESCO offered Raymond a position to teach economics and education planning at the Asian Institute of Education Planning and Administration in New Delhi. He was told that he would need to report for work in a couple of weeks. Raymond was excited about this opportunity to live and work in the developing world, but there were two problems. The first was timing. Raymond and Elizabeth had already made plans to be married in the UK later in September 1963, after the date he was required to start in New Delhi. They cancelled their UK wedding plans and Raymond reported for work in New Delhi as requested. Elizabeth followed him to India shortly thereafter and the two were married in New Delhi on 16 September 1963. Reflecting on

these events years later, Raymond, with a self-deprecating laugh, says: 'I easily could have asked UNESCO to postpone my arrival date by a few weeks, but I lacked the self-confidence to do so.'

The second problem Raymond confronted when he arrived in New Delhi involved language. Although Elizabeth was an Anglophone, she was fluent in French. She and Raymond have always spoken French to each other.

“In fact, when he had arrived in London a couple of years earlier, his English was so bad that he ordered three varieties of potatoes in the Victoria Station cafeteria because he could not read the menu.”

Raymond's English in 1963 was poor. In fact, when he had arrived in London a couple of years earlier, his English was so bad that he ordered three varieties of potatoes in the Victoria Station cafeteria because he could not read the menu. Raymond's English had not improved much during his stay in London because he and

his colleagues at the WEU spoke to each other in French. Before he came to India, UNESCO officials told him that he could lecture in French and that there would be someone who would interpret his lectures into English. Much to his shock and terror, when he arrived in New Delhi, officials at the Asian Institute told him that there were not yet any French-to-English interpreters. He would have to deliver his lectures in English.

The day after he arrived, Raymond had to present his first lecture. The students at the Asian Institute were mid-level civil servants from the education or planning ministries of many Asian nations. They were all Raymond's age or older. For his first lecture, he had prepared 15 minutes of material. To his additional shock, he was informed that morning that he was expected to lecture for 90 minutes. As he entered the lecture hall, Raymond was in despair. He had no teaching experience, and he had to present his lecture in English. He feared that after his first brief lecture,

delivered in broken English, he would be fired, sent back to Belgium and his career would be over.

After stumbling through his prepared remarks, Raymond asked for questions from the students. There was an ominous silence. Finally, after several agonising seconds, the voice of a visiting scholar from the United States Agency for International Development, a Dr Leonard, came from the back of the lecture hall. Under the guise of asking a question, Leonard spoke for several minutes and prompted questions and comments from the students. The 90-minute lecture period came to an end. Leonard had thrown Raymond a lifeline for which Raymond still remains grateful.

Raymond was not fired. For the next three years, he remained in Asia teaching at the Asian Institute in New Delhi, and the United Nations Asian Institute for Economic Development and Planning in Bangkok. He also served as a consultant to the World Bank on an economic mission to Algeria. To compensate for his lack of teaching experience and language problems, Raymond prepared diligently for his lectures. His colleague, J A Y Miller, an older, more experienced British lecturer, often helped him with both the subject matter and the English presentation.

Raymond also found support from Dr A V Pai, the director of the Asian Institute. Dr Pai was 'one of the most charming Indians' Raymond met. Pai came from a Brahmin family, was a close friend of Nehru and the first Indian ambassador to the USSR. Pai was Oxbridge educated and combined the attributes of a British gentleman with Indian simplicity – like Gandhi, he slept on the floor. For Raymond, Pai demonstrated how two cultures could be combined, each enriching the other.

During his years in Asia, Raymond travelled extensively, attending conferences, conducting research and preparing reports on education

The teaching staff at the Asian Institute of Education
Planning and Administration surrounded by their students
(front row, beginning sixth from left, L–R): J A Y Miller, A V
Pai, Raymond Georis, Beulah Dutt (New Delhi, February 1965)



Raymond has mixed views about his time in India. He marvelled at the beautiful scenery, the colours and the splendid, exotic images. Yet the poverty and death disturbed him.

planning in Asia. He visited Manila, Hong Kong and Tehran. In one report, he argued that if developing countries devoted too many scarce resources toward the goal of universal primary education, they risk short-changing secondary and tertiary education, which, in Raymond's view, are critical to development.

By 1966, Raymond was a proficient teacher in a variety of subjects, including demographics, economics, statistics and education planning. He was well liked by his students and believes that his limited English language abilities turned out to be an advantage because he had to deliver his lectures in simple English. As most of his students were not native English speakers, his lectures were understandable for them. Raymond is proud of the fact that, after three years of teaching, Pai chose him to deliver a lecture attended by a visiting scholar, the Director of the London School of Economics.

While Raymond was working hard at the Asian Institute, Elizabeth was discovering New Delhi's environs with Miller's wife. The Georis' first child was born in New Delhi in 1964. After the birth, Elizabeth fell ill with puerperal fever. When she became pregnant again, she returned to the UK for the birth of their second child. Raymond has mixed views about his time in India. He marvelled at the beautiful scenery, the colours and the splendid, exotic images. Yet the poverty and death disturbed him.

In 1966, Raymond was sent to Algeria on the economic mission for the World Bank. It was soon after Algeria had obtained independence from France. In Algiers, he met some people with whom he had studied at IRFED who were now high-ranking officials in the Algerian government. He was impressed that Algeria gave young people such significant responsibility.

Returning to Europe

In late 1966, Raymond left the Asian Institute and returned to Europe, to Elizabeth and their family of then two children. The following autumn, the Georis family bought a house in the rural village of Maransart, in the Brabant Wallon, Belgium. They have lived there ever since. Quoting Jean de la Fontaine, Raymond says of the Maransart garden: *'Il allait faire à jamais le charme de ma vie.'*⁴

Raymond was now 37 years old. He was beginning to 'know thyself', as Socrates advised. 'I had learned to accept ambiguities, reject certainties, and find ways to circumnavigate obstacles or, if possible, avoid them altogether. Above all, don't get lost in unnecessary confrontations,' he says. He had spent ten years gaining professional and academic experience—a period he refers to as 'Europe without borders'—studying in Paris and working in the Netherlands, London, Strasbourg, Rome, New Delhi, Bangkok and Algiers.

At 37, he knew some basic principles on which he wished to ground his life: 'I will never fight for money or power. I need to work. I need space organised along clear and solid references. My professional life is guided by responsibility, dedication and diligence. Undertakings should be painstaking and aim at perfection. I wish to serve others, not my own vanity or personal gain. I am inclined to maintain a certain distance from others, to observe somewhat from afar, to keep a free spirit and to shun society's ostentations. In the words of the Turkish poet, Nazim Hikmet, my desire is, "to live alone and free as a tree, and in brotherhood as a forest".'

⁴ Forever more was to be the delight of my life.



Raymond Georis in his garden (*La Colinière*, Maransart, October 2010)



Chapter 4

The European Cultural Foundation years

Back in Europe, Raymond again contacted Rector Brugmans for advice as to what to do next. Brugmans suggested Raymond be in touch with George Sluizer, the Secretary General of the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), a small private foundation in Amsterdam. Brugmans had heard that Sluizer and the ECF were trying to launch a large research project in futurology.

Raymond was intrigued. He had experience in education planning. He had already met Sluizer once before in Strasbourg at a meeting of ministers at the Council of Europe. The ECF had a unique agreement with the Council of Europe for joint cooperation in projects to promote culture. Raymond was surprised and impressed that a small private Dutch foundation would have representation at meetings of ministers of the Council of Europe Member States.

(L – R) Raymond Georis and George Sluizer, European Cultural Foundation Secretary General from 1960 – 1972, when the leadership of the foundation was passed to Raymond Georis (Amsterdam, 30 December 1972)



Raymond went to see Sluizer in Amsterdam. Sluizer advised Raymond that he wanted to launch a multi-year four-part academic research programme, to be organised and administered by the ECF, that would attempt to envision and predict social, economic and political conditions in Europe in the year 2000. The programme, which came to be called Plan Europe 2000, involved four projects:

- Education for the 21st century
- People and industry tomorrow
- Urbanisation – creating an environment for Europeans
- The future of agriculture

Sluizer offered Raymond a position as the director of the education project, which he wanted to accept, but there was one problem: the ECF was in Amsterdam. Raymond, Elizabeth and their children were very happy with their home and garden in Maransart. He did not want to move to

Amsterdam, so he made Sluizer a proposal. He would commute to the Amsterdam office two days a week and spend the rest of the week either in Belgium or on the road, as the position would require extensive travel. The ECF would pay for airfare and a hotel. Raymond was surprised when Sluizer accepted his proposal. He started work at the ECF in 1967 as Director of the Plan Europe 2000 education project, a position he would hold until the end of 1972. In 1973, Raymond succeeded Sluizer as the Secretary General of the ECF.

Raymond would remain ECF Secretary General until 1995. Thus, in 1967, Raymond began a

While I was crisscrossing Europe and the world, Elizabeth devoted her time and energy to bringing up and educating our family.

peripatetic, frenetic and highly productive career at the ECF that would last for 28 years. Between his commute to Amsterdam and his other extensive travels to promote the initiatives of the ECF throughout Europe and much of the rest of the world, Raymond was rarely home during the working week between 1967 and 1995.

'Our life together did not turn out quite like I expected,' Elizabeth dryly observes. For years, she was left alone during the week to raise the Georis' four children in a small rural French speaking Belgian village without a car. Somewhat defensively, Raymond explains: 'I hate cars.' He continues: 'While I was crisscrossing Europe and the world, Elizabeth devoted her time and energy to bringing up and educating our family,' he says. To convey to Elizabeth his deep affection and gratitude, he offers these lines by English poet and diplomat Matthew Prior:

'So when I am wearied with wandering all day
To thee, my delight, in the evening I come
No matter what beauties I saw in my way
They were but visits, thou art my home.'



Raymond Georis visiting Japan for the tenth anniversary of the Toyota Foundation (Japan, 16 October 1984)



Raymond and Elizabeth
(Italy, circa 2000)

Plan Europe 2000 – a vision of the future

During his years as Director of the Plan Europe 2000 education project, Raymond assisted Sluizer in recruiting eminent scholars and intellectuals¹ across Europe to help define and conduct the research programmes. With their input, Raymond helped Sluizer transform his short and skeletal outline of his vision for Plan Europe 2000 into a 70-page booklet.² With this booklet, Sluizer and Raymond travelled extensively across Europe contacting and negotiating with governments, academic institutes, foundations and businesses to obtain funding and support. Raymond also had to mediate ideological disputes between the older, more traditional scholars and some Young Turks impassioned with the revolutionary fervour of 1968.

Raymond, as the ECF's new Secretary General, saw to it that Plan Europe 2000 was brought to a successful conclusion at the end of 1975 by appointing an integration committee headed by Peter Hall, then Chairman of the School of Planning at Reading University. This committee prepared a final synthesis of Plan Europe 2000. The work, titled *Europe 2000*, was published in both the UK and the US in 1977, for which Peter Hall was awarded the prestigious Adolphe Bentinck Prize in 1979.³

1 Among the leading scholars and intellectuals participating in Plan Europe 2000 were José-Luis Aranguren (Spain), Raymond Aron (France), Hendrik Brugmans (the Netherlands), Friedrich Edding (Germany), Bertrand de Jouvenel (France), Henri Janne (Belgium), Alexander King (UK), Max Kohnstamm (the Netherlands), Léo Moulin (Belgium), André Philip (France), Denis de Rougemont (Switzerland), Bertrand Schwartz (France), Torgny Segerstedt (Sweden), Jan Tinbergen (Netherlands), Aldo Visalberghi (Italy), and Michael Young (UK).

2 *Europe 2000: Four studies on the society of tomorrow*, European Cultural Foundation, Amsterdam (circa 1968).

3 *Europe 2000*, Peter Hall, editor, Gerald Duckworth & Co, Ltd (London 1977); *Europe 2000*, Peter Hall, editor, Columbia University Press (New York 1977).

When receiving the Bentinck prize, Peter Hall paid homage to the ECF and the scholars who contributed to Europe 2000:

'Europe 2000 was from first to last conceived and executed as a gigantic piece of cooperation—a cooperation that was to stretch across national frontiers, across academic disciplinary boundaries, across cultures. Here I would like to pay tribute to the work of George Sluizer, then Secretary General of the European Cultural Foundation, and of the distinguished governors of the foundation who supported his vision.

'As so often in human ventures, however, the original brilliance of the concept has to be backed by long periods of patient negotiation and diplomacy, at times when often the project seems in danger of floundering. Only those who worked on Plan Europe 2000 through those years will know of the disappointments, the hopes that rose and fell, the inevitable disagreements among scholars on matters of interpretation or ideology, that must characterise any enterprise as vast and ambitious as this one.

That the problems were resolved, that Europe 2000 came through to fruition, is due in no small measure to

the remarkable energy and unusual diplomatic capacities of the man who was Secretary General of the Foundation during the critical years, Raymond Georis.

'My main tribute tonight, though, must be to the scientific collaborators who made this result possible... Europe 2000 was a vast project in international cooperation, possibly the largest ever attempted. I do not think that anyone will ever succeed in counting the total number of people who, at one time or another in more than seven years of work, contributed to the end result...'

For Raymond, Plan Europe 2000 broke new ground in that it succeeded in getting academic institutions to cooperate at a time (1968–1975) when there was no programme for cooperation in education among the universities in Europe. For this vast programme the ECF succeeded in mobilising more than 200 researchers from all parts of Europe and in raising 7.5 million florins, or nearly 3 million dollars.⁴ Due to the quality of the work and the reputations of the scholars, the Plan found publishers throughout Europe for over 40 volumes of studies in seven languages. These reached

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⁴ 1975 Annual Report, European Cultural Foundation (Amsterdam 1976), p10.

policymakers, academics, the media and the general public. Raymond believes that the successful completion of the Plan demonstrated to the governments, foundations, corporations and academic institutions, which provided funding and support, that the money and effort had been worthwhile.

Furthermore, the Plan put the ECF on the map as a private institution that could conceive, launch, manage and complete large, important projects at the European level. Finally, the output would provide the basis for much of the work the ECF would undertake in the coming years, particularly its creation of a network of several institutes and centres focusing on various social problems and policy issues.

At the helm of the European Cultural Foundation

During Raymond's tenure as ECF's Secretary General he was fortunate to work with supportive, eminent and influential people. Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands served as President of the Foundation from 1955 to 1977.

Raymond Georis and Prince Bernhard (1974)

Former Dutch Minister of Justice and influential lawyer Ynso Scholten served as President between 1977 and 1983. Princess Margriet of the Netherlands became President in 1984 and held that position throughout the remainder of Raymond's career at the ECF. Raymond's close friend Robert Picht served as Chair of the Executive Committee.

Raymond's deputies were Jacques Chabert and later Odile Chenal. The Finance Directors were Alko Van Der Wiel and later John Ashton. 'Raymond Georis was excellent at attracting





(L – R) Rüdiger Stephan, Raymond Georis' successor at the European Cultural Foundation, Robert Picht, President of the European Cultural Foundation Executive Committee, and Raymond Georis (Stuttgart, November 1994)

prestigious people to his boards. He also had a talent for finding and hiring the right people with the right skills,' notes John Ashton, former Finance Director, ECF and Madariaga-College of Europe Foundation. The governing bodies of the ECF included a Board of Governors, comprised of eminent diplomats, politicians, academics, and business leaders from countries around Europe.

'Raymond was a master of managing his boards. Some board members had big egos and could be difficult. He dealt with them deftly and diplomatically. Humble and unassuming, he was an amazing leader and strong facilitator. He made compromises, but pushed through his agenda. He brought people together and got them to agree in a very deft way,' explains Jill Adler, Managing Director, East-West Parliamentary Practice Project, and former assistant to Raymond at the ECF.

Lise Mathol, Senior Communications Officer, ECF, concurs: 'Raymond Georis is a great diplomat. He knows when to move forward, when to step back. For example, during meetings of the partners in the Prix Europa programme,⁵ there would sometimes be animosity between the partners over the relative size of their financial contributions. Raymond steered clear of the issue in the meeting. Then he would deal with it quietly off the record over lunch. The animosity would melt like snow in the sun. He would bring peace and move forward.'

Princess Margriet awarding Denis de Rougemont, founder of the European Cultural Foundation in Geneva (left), and Hendrik Brugmans, Rector of the College of Europe (right), the title of honorary members of the European Cultural Foundation upon their retirement from the foundation's Board of Governors (May 1985)



⁵ Prix Europa was an annual European festival and competition selecting the best television, radio and emerging media productions of each year.

Building international networks for cooperation

During his tenure as Secretary General, one of Raymond's principal responsibilities was to create and develop a European network of national committees, institutes and centres. Between 1977 and 1995, the number of ECF national committees grew from 12 to 22.⁶ The

ECF's national committees played several important roles. They promoted the work of the foundation in their respective countries, participated in its projects, raised funds for the foundation's activities and organised their own events.

The committees served as contacts between the foundation and their governments and provided valuable information to the ECF about current political, social and cultural issues in their countries. The committees also proposed projects for grants and advised on grant applications. National committee directors met periodically to explore opportunities for cooperation with the foundation and its network of institutes and centres.⁷



Raymond Georis (far left) with George Vassiliou, President of Cyprus from 1988–1993 (second from left) and Piérides, Chair of the European Cultural Foundation Cyprus National Committee (far right) just prior to the submission of Cyprus's official bid to join the EU (17 September 1989)

.....
⁶ By 1995, ECF national committees were operating in Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Norway, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

⁷ *Building Bridges Across Europe: 35th Anniversary 1954–1989*, European Cultural Foundation (Amsterdam, 1989), p28.

The rationale behind the creation of a network of institutes and centres was explained in the ECF's 35th anniversary brochure: 'The experience acquired by the foundation in organising Plan Europe 2000, and the network of specialists that had been built up over the years, provided it with a wealth of research potential that could not be effectively utilised by any institution then in existence. The foundation hence saw the need to develop a new strategy to enable it to pursue the work already in hand. It decided to set up its own 'Institutes'.

'[The institutes] reflect the foundation's continuing attachment to the issues that stirred its founding fathers: education, the environment, human rights and democracy and international relations and particularly East-West relations.⁸ These institutes function as clearing houses in their fields, undertake comparative research from a European perspective, provide services on contract basis and distribute information bulletins.'⁹ They received financial and administrative support from the ECF, but they had full academic autonomy.

Alan Smith,¹⁰ former Director, Brussels office of the European Institute of Education and Social Policy, and former Director, ERASMUS Bureau, readily comments on Raymond's managerial style at the time. 'Raymond was not a controlling boss, but rather an open and creative partner. He was interested in promoting your ideas. It was his policy not to get under the feet of the people who were running the ECF's Institutes. He was there to help them realise their goals.'

8 Ibid, p10.

9 Ibid, p14.

10 Mr Smith's personal comments in this book do not necessarily reflect the position of his employer, the European Commission.

Institutes and Centres created by the ECF during Raymond's tenure include:

- **European Institute of Education and Social Policy**, an innovative international public-private partnership, was established in Paris in 1975 with cooperation from the Commission of the European Communities, the International Council for Education, New York, and the French Education Ministry. The founding Chair of its Governing Council was Lord Asa Briggs, and Ladislav Cerych served as its founding Director. Jean-Pierre Jallade served as Director from 1991 to 2002, and Jean Gordon has served as Director since 2003. For many years, the Institute has been responsible for editing the prestigious 'European Journal of Education.'
- **Institute for European Environment Policy** was established in Bonn in 1976 in cooperation with the Fonds für Umweltstudien. Offices were later opened in Paris, London, Brussels, Madrid and Arnhem. The founding Director was Konrad von Moltke.
- **Institute for International Cooperation** was established in 1977 in Madrid in cooperation with the Banco Urquijo and the College of Europe. Its Director was Miguel Martinez-Cuadrado.
- **European Cooperation Fund** was established in Brussels in 1977 as a private international association under Belgian law. Its primary purpose was to launch new ventures in cooperation with other bodies, both public and private. Former Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindemans served as its founding Chair; Raymond served as its Managing Director. The Fund was restructured and changed its name to the Association for Innovative Cooperation in Europe (AICE) in 1995. A few years later, this organisation again changed its name to the Network of European Foundations for Innovative Cooperation (NEF).
- **European Centre for Work and Society** was created in 1979 in Utrecht in cooperation with the Stichting Koningin Juliana Welzijn Fonds for the study and policy considerations of work in its socioeconomic and cultural dimensions. Its founding Director was Gabriel Fragnière who soon moved the centre to Maastricht.
- **European Institute for the Media** was created in 1983 in cooperation with the University of Manchester where it was originally based. It was later transferred to Düsseldorf. George Wedell was the founding Director.

Summarising the work carried out, Lord Asa Briggs, British social historian and first Chair of the European Institute of Education and Social Policy notes that 'Raymond facilitated communications between politicians and educators – this was an important contribution. He saw education strategy and policy in European terms.' Jean Gordon, Director, European Institute of Education and Social Policy, focuses on Raymond's unique contributions: 'Raymond provides enormous support to people in creating organisations. He is a builder – someone who lays foundations, helps people understand where they want to go, helps them work out how to get there and brings out the best of them in the process. The European Journal of Education is the flagship of the European Institute of Education and Social Policy. The support we received from the ECF and Raymond has been very important.'

Pioneering European education programmes

In 1980, EURYDICE, the Education Information Network in the European Community, was created by the European Commission to support the Community Education Action Programme and to build close relations between the Member States interested in European policy developments on the design and content of national education systems. All the Member State authorities set up national units and the Commission established the central European Unit of the EURYDICE network to coordinate and develop all the joint products and publications.¹¹ The ECF operated the EURYDICE European Unit under contract from the Commission from 1980 until 2001.

¹¹ Luce Pépin, *The history of European cooperation in education and training: Europe in the making – an example*, European Communities (2006), pp79–80.

EURYDICE European Unit Directors:**1980–1989:** John Richardson**1990–1991:** José-Antonio Fernandez**1992–2001:** Luce Pépin

Luce Pépin, former Director, EURYDICE European Unit comments that 'Raymond is a man of networks who understood very early the value and potential of partnerships and networking in Europe, in particular in fields like education and culture, which are deeply rooted in the subsidiarity principle. He was the right person, and the ECF the right organi-

sation, to help the Commission develop a structure for the European Unit of EURYDICE. I would not have felt so comfortable taking the job at EURYDICE with someone less European oriented. Raymond was sensitive to the broader dimension of culture. For him, culture and education were closely linked. Participation in the Commission's projects was a way for the ECF to promote this broader perspective.

'Raymond was ready to take risks. When he was asked to help build the EURYDICE European Unit and later the ERASMUS Bureau, he immediately said yes. Other people would have asked "Is this sustainable?" These programmes implied increasing staffing responsibilities for the ECF, as it became the employer of about 30 people for EURYDICE and about 70 for ERASMUS.'

In 1975, Raymond and Ladislav Cerych were able to convince the Commission of the European Communities to co-sponsor the establishment of the European Institute of Education and Social Policy. Commissioner Guido Brunner formally served on the Institute's Governing Council in the early years. Brunner assigned Hywel Jones to act as his official deputy on the Council and to work closely with Raymond, Cerych and

Luce Pépin at the launch of *The history of European cooperation in education and training: Europe in the making – an example*, surrounded by (L–R): Alan Smith, Hywel Jones, Angélique Verli, Ján Figel, Domenico Lenarduzzi, André Kirchberger, Lesley Wilson, Raymond Georis (Brussels, 2006)



the Institute to advance educational cooperation in Europe. In the late 1970s the ECF, working through the European Institute of Education and Social Policy and its Office of Cooperation in Education in Brussels, provided considerable assistance to the European Commission in the design and management of the Commission's pilot projects for inter-university cooperation and student mobility known as Joint Study Programmes and Short Study Visit schemes. These were the predecessors of ERASMUS.

'In the 1970s, there was an effort to build education into the acquis of the European Communities. Education and culture had been deliberately left out of the original treaties because these areas were considered too close to national sovereignty. There would have been uproar if young Germans or Englishmen were to be brought up as Europeans. However, a group of people, including Raymond and Hywel Jones, thought this was soundly remiss. No one wanted a monolithic education or cultural system, but exchanges in education and culture could do nothing but benefit the future of Europe. This idea was hatched out between Raymond and Hywel during the days when Raymond was Secretary General of the ECF,' explains John Richardson, first Director, EURYDICE European Bureau, and founding Chief Executive, European Foundation Centre.

In 1987, the Council of the European Communities adopted the ERASMUS Programme. ERASMUS was a pioneering initiative in European inter-university cooperation. It was designed to enhance student mobility and higher education cooperation in the European Community by providing financial support to universities, students and staff for organising exchanges and other forms of cooperation. For its first three years, ERASMUS had a large budget of 94 million ECU, 85 million of which came under the management of the ECF.

The rapid explosion in the scale of the programme, engaging almost all higher education institutions in Europe, required much more substantial underpinning and technical support. The Commission again turned to the ECF for its support to create an ERASMUS Bureau. Raymond enthusiastically supported this initiative, seeing it as an excellent way to further the ECF's mission to foster European cooperation. The ERASMUS Bureau, under the executive leadership of Alan Smith, played this key role from 1987 through 1995, employing about 70 staff in the Bureau through the ECF contract.

The main activities of the ERASMUS Bureau involved providing advice to universities to promote the twinning of institutions, processing grant applications, evaluating the results of the programme, and developing and negotiating a credit transfer system among European universities. Throughout these years, Raymond, Smith and the ERASMUS Bureau staff worked closely with Jones and Domenico Lenarduzzi, the senior educational officials at the Commission, reporting regularly to the Commission on developments. Lenarduzzi, former Director General of Education and Culture, European Commission, notes that 'Raymond is an exceptional man with rare intelligence and great public relations skills. He is diplomatic and knows human nature. He is dynamic, constantly thinking ahead.'

In 1990, following the collapse of communism, the European Commission created TEMPUS, the Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies, to respond to the need for reforms of higher education systems in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). With an initial budget much larger than ERASMUS, TEMPUS' aim was to launch higher education reforms in the CEE countries as quickly as possible.

On behalf of the Commission, Jones contacted Raymond to seek his advice on the most effective ways of organising the TEMPUS scheme. Drawing

Raymond gave young people responsibility. It would not matter if you were only 30 years old if you could do the job.

on the positive experience gained through the ERASMUS Programme, the Commission decided to establish a TEMPUS office through a contract with the ECF. The TEMPUS office, under

the overall supervision of Raymond and Leslie Wilson, its first Director, was to provide all the necessary technical and administrative assistance to the Commission to run this ambitious new scheme, which, like ERASMUS, quickly attracted great public interest. Wilson, now Secretary General, European University Association, former Director, TEMPUS Office, looks back and explains that 'Raymond gave young people responsibility. It would not matter if you were only 30 years old if you could do the job.'

In a 2010 interview, Jones, former Director-General for Social and Employment Policy, European Commission, gave a thoughtful and detailed description of the contribution of the ECF and Raymond to the Commission's education programmes: 'Throughout our friendship and professional relationship, Raymond has constantly supported the initiatives we were developing at the Commission. He gave me a real strength of conviction about the importance of the European dimension to policymaking and was a constant inspiration.

'The process of collaboration throughout these years when we developed the ERASMUS and TEMPUS programmes is important. In 1975, Raymond orchestrated the launch of the European Institute of Education and Social Policy. I was able to help launch the Institute as a joint venture with the Commission's backing. This was the first close relationship between the ECF and the Commission. Because of the skills and experience of Ladislav Cerych, we turned to the Institute for work on student mobility and on statistical information on the changing patterns of higher education development.

'In 1976, the Commission negotiated through the Council the first important text on educational cooperation. One action was to promote cooperation between higher education institutions through joint study programmes where students could move from one country to another and their qualifications would be recognised by both the sending and receiving institutions. We worked on that for about nine years as a pilot scheme, with the Institute providing technical assistance.

'In 1985–1986, the European Commission negotiated through the Council the launch of ERASMUS, building on the sound basis of previous experience. I turned to Raymond to see if the ECF would help us with technical assistance to the Commission for the programme. He enthusiastically accepted and negotiated his own Board's approval. It was a big venture for the ECF to take on.

'There was no option but for the Commission to use outside help. At that time, I had only one staff member dealing with higher education. The success of ERASMUS depended on grassroots-level local support by universities, and we needed to win the confidence of vice-chancellors, vice-presidents and deans of faculties. It was critical, therefore, to secure a staff well versed in university affairs, which had professional experience with higher education admissions policies and the recognition of qualifications and plans of study.

'I had come to appreciate that Raymond was not only a brilliant entrepreneur in launching initiatives and coming up with new ideas, but also that he understood the need for a flexible approach. It was a delicate operation because the Commission had to trust an outside organisation to work closely with it, as it was the Commission that chaired the ERASMUS Committee, involving all Member States, and had to rely on the Bureau

for high quality papers and reports to the Member States as well as to the Commission itself.

'There was a constant dialogue between us about the ECF's responsibility to recruit the right people. We were of course extremely fortunate to be able to draw on Alan Smith, appointed as the Bureau's Director, who had made a huge contribution to the original pilot scheme. With Raymond, we were able to handle recruitment and never had a problem. Raymond oversaw the process of building the team and he gave them full support. He never sat on top of them – he gave them space. This was crucial.

'With the ERASMUS programme we are talking about a very large budget. The Commission had to expect regular reporting to it in terms of accounting and evaluation. Raymond was present at the key meetings. He was well prepared and highly professional. He organised the teams that made the presentations to the Commission, and was extremely adept at anticipating problems and finding solutions. Never once during the period I was responsible for ERASMUS did I hear a voice of criticism.

'When the Berlin Wall came down, the floodgates opened for the democratisation of other countries in Europe. Jacques Delors, then President of the European Commission, called me into his office and gave me 48 hours to propose two new schemes – one focusing on universities (TEMPUS) and one on vocational training (the European Training Foundation). These two proposals were approved in record time through the Council and the European Parliament. Unprecedented, but it was a historical moment in Europe. The issue then was: how will we run it? I called Raymond and we negotiated a new agreement.

'He helped swiftly and superbly to create the TEMPUS office. Those two schemes – now ERASMUS MUNDUS and TEMPUS – are still running

“ [Raymond] is so good at seeing an opportunity, seizing it and persuading authorities to back him. He had the capacity to anticipate, look forward and make things happen. ”

today. Thanks to Raymond's leadership, the ECF can look back with great pride for assisting the European Commission to put in place those schemes. As of this year, for example, ERASMUS will have moved over 2 million students.

'Another achievement the Commission managed with Raymond's support, of which I am proud, is the creation of EURYDICE, the European network of education policy units in the Member States of the EU. The comparative understanding of the different educational systems and policies was crucial to the Commission in the presentation of its proposals. It was also a vital factor in helping cement cooperation between the Member States.

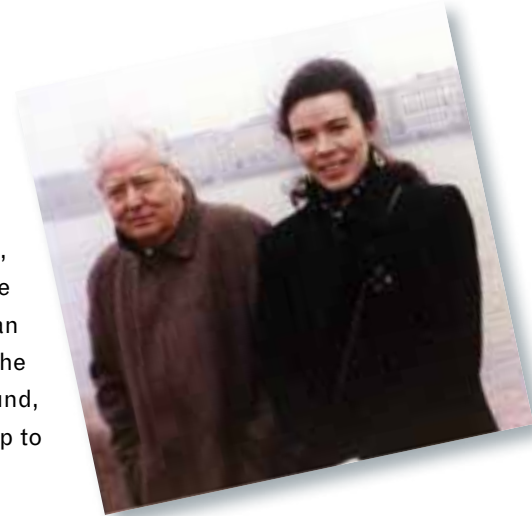
'These programmes gave the Commission credibility, not just with national governments and education ministers, but also in the wider world of education. ERASMUS, especially, caught the popular imagination. Without the visibility of ERASMUS, we might not have been able to negotiate the inclusion of educational cooperation in the Treaty, and thus provide a legal basis for the programmes.

'Raymond and Alan Smith were brilliant in collaboration with vice chancellors and university presidents. To push these schemes, you needed the authority of the university institutions. You had to have guarantees that the institutions would give academic credit for the joint programmes and for the financing arrangements.

'Raymond is very quick. He can always see ways to solve problems. You did not hear him talk about problems, but always about opportunities. He is so good at seeing an opportunity, seizing it and persuading authorities to back him. He had the capacity to anticipate, look forward and make things happen.'

Building bridges – East-West cooperation

Since the early 1970s, the ECF had been seeking to build bridges to, and cooperation with, CEE. Some of the scholars recruited for Plan Europe 2000 came from CEE countries. In the mid-1980s, the ECF on its own, or through the European Cooperation Fund, launched several initiatives under Raymond's leadership to foster East-West relations, as outlined in the box below.



Raymond Georis and Leona Francombe, Concorde East-West Orchestra (Leningrad, March 1988)

– **Central and East European Publishing Project**, based in Oxford, was launched in 1986 with financial support from a partnership of US and European foundations.¹² Its aim was to promote publishing and disseminating Eastern European literature, academic works and periodicals, both in their original languages and in translation. The

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¹² Partner donors included the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Fund, the Rockefeller Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian and ECF.

Directors were Sally Laird and, later, Elizabeth Winter. The Chair was Sir Ralf Dahrendorf.

– **Concorde East-West Orchestra**, launched in 1987, was a music project bringing together musicians from Western and Eastern European countries, under the leadership of a young American pianist of Czech ancestry, Leona Francombe.

– **APEX Fund**, launched by the ECF in 1991, aimed to facilitate mobility,

exchange and dialogue between artists and arts managers in CEE.

– **East-West Parliamentary Practice Project**, founded in 1990, in Vienna, as a joint initiative of the ECF and the Ford Foundation. It operates out of Amsterdam and seeks to strengthen parliamentary democracy in Eastern Europe and Eurasia by supporting parliaments and encouraging the development of an enduring democratic culture. Raymond has served on the EWPPP board since its creation.

Promoting cooperation among foundations

The Hague Club

When Raymond first became ECF Secretary General in 1973, he knew very little about the foundation sector. In that year, he was invited to become a member of the Hague Club. Founded in 1971 by Gotthard Gambke of the VolkswagenStiftung, Ubaldo Scassellati of Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, Willem Welling of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, and Peter Williams of the Wellcome Trust, the Hague Club is a by invitation-only organisation of leaders of major European foundations. Modelled as a traditional gentlemen's club, it meets once a year for formal black tie dinners, private discussions and audiences with royalty and heads of state. The Hague Club conducts no formal business.

Participants at the annual Hague Club meeting during Raymond Georis' chairmanship (Berlin, September 1985)





Albert II of Belgium (far left) with Raymond Georis on the occasion of a Hague Club meeting (Brussels, September 1995)

Membership in the Hague Club was Raymond's 'training ground for foundation management'. He met, became friends with, and learned from older, more experienced foundation leaders. He learned what other European foundations were doing, what problems they faced and about the diverse cultures of various foundations from different countries. Raymond served as Chairman of the Hague Club for two years, from 1983 to 1985.

The Hague Club was the first attempt to bring foundations in Europe together. However, for Raymond, there was something lacking. The Hague Club did not do any real work and it did not promote real cooperation among foundations.



Former Hague Club Chairmen and their wives, (Chairmen L – R) Hans Hillenius, Raymond Georis, Jan Herman Meerdink, Peter Williams (Edam, Netherlands, April 1995)

The European Foundation Centre

In part due to his involvement in the Hague Club, Raymond became exposed to three organisations in the United States that he found intriguing and that had no counterparts at the time in Europe. First, the Council on Foundations, headquartered in Washington, DC, was and is a trade association of US foundations, promoting best practices, professionalism and the interests of the sector. Second, the Foundation Center, headquartered in New York, uses technology to compile and publicise reliable data about US philanthropy for grantmakers, grantseekers, policymakers, the media and the general public. Third, Alan Pifer, Raymond's friend and then President of the Carnegie Corporation, introduced Raymond to an informal organisation, known as the US Foundation Executive Group. The Executive Group was comprised of the heads of major US foundations, who came together to discuss concrete projects on which their foundations could cooperate.

In the 1980s, Raymond came to believe that the philanthropic sector in Europe was less professional, less organised and less known to the public and policymakers than US philanthropy. He also came to believe that the European foundation sector could benefit from organisations like those he found in the US. During the 1980s, national associations of foundations in Europe were beginning to form. However, there was no Europe-wide organisation of foundations.

In October 1989, at a meeting of foundations organised by the Centro Español de Fundaciones in Santiago de Compostela, Raymond proposed the creation of the EFC. The idea was met with little enthusiasm and although the meeting had been successful in producing a joint Declaration of Santiago de Compostela on the Role of Foundations in Building the New Europe, Raymond's aim of officially launching the EFC



Antonio Saenz de Miera, Centro Español de Fundaciones (left) and Raymond Georis making the announcement which led, a month later, to the creation of the EFC (Santiago de Compostela, 9 October 1989)

had been dashed. He headed back to his hotel room after the meeting, feeling disappointed. He stopped at the reception desk to collect his key and found a note from Carlos Monjardino, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Fundação Oriente simply saying 'I'm with you – Carlos'.

This short note gave the EFC its first member and set the ball rolling.

Over the next month, Raymond convinced five other colleagues – Michael Brophy, Charities Aid Foundation (UK); Horst Niemeyer, Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft (Germany); Michel Didisheim, King Baudouin Foundation (Belgium); Sylvie Tsyboula, Fondation de France and Hans Hillenius, Stichting Koningin Juliana Welzijn Fonds (Netherlands) – as well as the Board of Governors of the ECF, to support the idea financially. On 9 November 1989, Raymond and this group met at the Erasmus House in the Brussels suburb of Anderlecht to launch the EFC formally.

Dinner held on the occasion of the founding of the European Foundation Centre (Brussels, 9 November 1989)



Raymond Georis
addressing EFC staff on the
eve of the organisation's
move from 51 Rue de la
Concorde – a location
Georis had selected in 1989
(Brussels, 30 April 2009)



Michel Didisheim, former Managing Director, King Baudouin Foundation, explains that Raymond was so persuasive about the EFC because 'Raymond was a good ambassador for foundations. He helped publicise their work.'

John Richardson attended the meeting as Raymond had recruited him to serve as the Centre's first Chief Executive. At the time, Richardson had worked with Raymond for ten years as Director of the EURYDICE European Unit. The EFC was to be headquartered in Brussels. Raymond would serve as its founding Chair from 1989 through 1991, and John Richardson would serve as founding Chief Executive from 1989 to July 2005.

Some of the founding members were reluctant to accept foundations from CEE or the US. Raymond, however, insisted on following the tradition of the ECF of accepting partners regardless of geographical location. This concept, described by Raymond using one of his favourite phrases, *l'Europe sans rivages* (Europe without borders), became one of the EFC's guiding principles.¹³

13 The origins and history of the European Foundation Centre are described in detail in *Laying the Foundations: 20 years of the EFC* © 2010 EFC.



Raymond Georis and European Foundation Centre staff displaying the organisation's first logo (circa 1990)

Raymond's vision for the EFC was to provide reliable and detailed information about the European philanthropic sector, much like the Foundation Center in the US; act as a trade association to enhance the professionalism and competence of foundation management; advocate and advance the interests of the foundation sector; and encourage and foster cooperation among foundations, governments, business and civil society organisations on European and international levels.

Raymond believed that a peaceful and prosperous future for Europe depended on unification of the continent. His aim was to build networks of foundations across the continent that would partner in projects important to the process of European unification. He wanted to encourage partnerships with foundations in the US and the Mediterranean region and to foster an international, rather than a national, vision. Recalling a story by Saint-Exupéry, Raymond believed, 'If animals are made to work together, they will not fight'. Raymond's vision was more political than philanthropic. 'Europe has had its wars, now it is time for joint programmes – working together. Working together will encourage peace. Foundations are well placed because they are at the crossroads of culture and social development,' he says. Looking back over Raymond's career, Jean Gordon, Director, European Institute of Education and Social Policy explains that 'European construction is not something Raymond did just because it was his job. He is deeply, ideologically, philosophically and historically motivated to construct something lasting that will bring people together.'

When Raymond returned home on the night of 9 November 1989, Elizabeth asked him: 'Do you know what happened today?' Raymond replied: 'Of course, we launched a network of European foundations called the European Foundation Centre.' Elizabeth then told him that the Berlin Wall had fallen. This transformative event would influence the activities and priorities of the EFC for at least a decade, as the Centre developed pro-

grammes to build civil society and democracy in CEE. 'Without the fall of the Berlin Wall we would not have found the way to bring together foundations from all over the continent,' Raymond says.¹⁴

Raymond mentored and illuminated a path forward for foundations with humility, grace and generosity. This was the indelible European-wide stamp he put on the EFC.

'I got to know Raymond when he was the EFC's first board chair. What struck me early on was that he truly took a Europe-wide perspective. He consistently used his leadership position with great skill and diplomacy to help bring other foundations in Europe to a similar, European view. Raymond mentored and illuminated a path forward for foundations with humility, grace and generosity. This was the indelible European-wide stamp he put on the EFC,' notes William S White, Chairman, President and CEO, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

¹⁴ Ibid, pp 21–34.

Fostering Cross-Mediterranean cooperation

In the early 1990s, the ECF was heavily engaged in programmes in CEE. However, in 1992 with the encouragement of the ECF Spanish Governors and National Committee, Raymond and Odile Chenal, proposed to launch initiatives toward the Mediterranean (the Middle East and North

African countries) and the Arab-speaking world. Raymond first obtained the support of Princess Margriet. He and Chenal then arranged for the famous Spanish writer and politician Jorge Semprún to make an impassioned presentation to the Board of Governors on the important links between Europe and its neighbours in the Middle East and North Africa. Raymond thus succeeded in convincing some sceptical Governors from Northern European countries.

Chenal was given the responsibility to develop several Mediterranean-focused programmes and, reflecting on working with Raymond, suggests that 'Raymond is not a man of writing or making plans – he is a man of vision and political intuition. He finds someone he trusts and gives him or her carte blanche. He gives people a frightening amount of responsibility and space, but he is there to provide inspiration and advice. He is very informal and non-hierarchical. He does not write memos, plans or agendas, but he is a critical reader and editor.'

She recalls that, a few years later, when the European Union adopted its Barcelona Process for a Euro-Mediterranean partnership in 1995, all the ECF Governors were proud that the foundation had been 'avant garde and visionary'. In a 1992 interview with *Le Monde*, Raymond noted: 'The idea now is to breathe new life into euro-Mediterranean cooperation. Our

Europe is wider and more flexible, and progresses more quickly than that of Brussels.¹⁵

In his final report as ECF Secretary General in 1994, Raymond described the foundation's Mediterranean initiatives: 'The Mediterranean region is one of great importance not only to Europe's past but also to its present and future. This importance was recognised in the decision to give the promotion of cultural cooperation throughout this region priority in the work of the foundation. Programme development has concentrated on literary and intellectual activities.

'With this priority, the Spanish National Committee and the University of Castilla-La Mancha, together with the ECF, organised a meeting of translators and specialists in translation in November 1994. The aim was twofold: to assess the current situation of translation in the region and to examine a proposal for the *Escuela de Traductores*. This School of Translators will be established in the spirit of the old scholarly tradition of Toledo as a meeting point of cultures and will provide not only support to translation between European and non-European languages of the region, but will also provide a place for consideration on the effect and impact of translations.

'The ECF, in cooperation with the Fondation Seydoux in Paris, held a meeting in Casablanca in May 1994, as a first step toward establishing a network of booksellers to promote books on Mediterranean issues. Another ECF project, *Mémoires de la Méditerranée*, brings together six publishing houses in Western Europe, which will select between one and three books for translation and publication every year. The selected texts will be translated into several languages. The selected autobiographical texts will offer insights into the current situation in the Mediterranean region. The

15 'Nouveau départ pour la Fondation européenne de la culture', *Le Monde*, 28 April 1992.

distribution of the books will be encouraged not only by the publishers, but also by the network of Mediterranean booksellers.

'The ECF organised, in cooperation with Poetry International in Rotterdam, the first in a series of debates entitled "Diagnoses". The intention was to invite two leading intellectuals to discuss the role of intellectuals in the Trans-Mediterranean region with their peers. It is hoped that this initial encounter will encourage this dialogue between Arab and European intellectual worlds, which is at times strained.'

Grantmaking at the ECF

The ECF began making grants in 1960. During Raymond's tenure as Secretary General, its grantmaking activities continued and grew significantly, due to substantial increases in funding to the ECF from the Dutch lotteries and football pools. Grants were made and re-evaluated annually in light of changing priorities established by the Board of Governors.

Much of the grant money was given to the ECF's network of Institutes and Centres and to projects proposed by the National Committees. The ECF viewed its remit very broadly – the only areas excluded were medicine and the exact sciences. Grants were given in areas including architecture, archaeology, cultural cooperation, education, employment, the environment, fine arts, history, human rights, international relations, languages, literature, the media, music and the problems faced by youth.

Unlike many foundations at the time, the ECF, although a Dutch foundation, did not have to limit its grants to projects in the Netherlands. The Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds existed to underwrite projects in the Netherlands. The projects funded by the ECF emphasised multilateral cooperation

The ECF punched very much above its weight in terms of the funds it had because it played the roles of interlinking other organisations, providing ideas and seed money and bringing in other more powerful organisations.

across borders. By 1989, the ECF was giving the equivalent of about €1.25 million a year. Also by 1989, around 500 institutions, museums, academic institutions, festivals and other projects in 20 countries had received grants.¹⁶

The amount of individual grants given by the ECF to projects outside the network was generally fairly small and always on the basis that the recipient find matching funds from other sources. Because of its emphasis on cooperation and partnership with other foundations and donors, the ECF was able to leverage limited resources to have much greater impact. 'Raymond really believed in Europe and the ECF. He saw the foundation's role as a catalyst. The ECF punched very much above its weight in terms of the funds it had because it played the roles of interlinking other organisations, providing ideas and seed money and bringing in other more powerful organisations,' observes Alan Smith, former Director, ERASMUS Bureau.

¹⁶ *Building Bridges Across Europe: 35th Anniversary 1954–1989*, European Cultural Foundation (Amsterdam 1989), p12.



Chapter 5

Building Europe – motivations, machinations and relationships

In his last Annual Report as Secretary General of the ECF, Raymond summarised his feelings about his tenure at the foundation and what he believed had been accomplished: 'The past twenty-five years have been very challenging – at times frustrating but mainly exciting – working for this unique institution, the European Cultural Foundation. The inspiration of the founders is still with us, and the work they began continues. I have been very fortunate to have worked with three inspiring presidents – Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, Ynso Scholten and Princess Margriet of the Netherlands – and to have benefited from the confidence of all my Dutch colleagues.

'It has been very heartening to note the growth of a European consciousness not only in individuals, but also in large national and international organisations. This awareness of a common cultural heritage, the seeking of ways and means of cooperating, the willingness to work together on

all levels is our safeguard against a future of war, petty nationalism and collapse into chaos that has threatened our continent from time to time. I am proud to have been part of an organisation that has played a decisive role in this process.’¹

During Raymond’s career at the ECF, the foundation was, indeed, a unique European institution. It had a broad, expressly international and

“We need to educate people with the impatience of youth combined with the experience and perseverance of age.”

European mission with the patronage of the Dutch royal family. While it had no permanent endowment, it could rely on adequate annual financial support from the Netherlands. It had a special relationship for cooperation with the

intergovernmental Council of Europe. The ECF’s Board of Governors was comprised of eminent and influential people from nations across the continent. It had a Belgian Secretary General and a multinational staff. The ECF was a truly European foundation.

Thinking about his time at ECF, Raymond recognises the visionary role of his predecessor George Sluizer, ECF Secretary General from 1961 to 1972. ‘George Sluizer was a man of vision, courage and action. He conceived the idea of Europe 2000. He imagined its structure and prepared the ground. I followed in his steps.’ Raymond vividly recalls Sluizer’s words: ‘We need to educate people with the impatience of youth combined with the experience and perseverance of age.’

¹ European Cultural Foundation 1994 Annual Report (Amsterdam 1995), pp11–12.

Turning challenges into opportunities

In the mid-1970s as Raymond was just settling into his role as Secretary General, the ECF confronted and averted two potential crises that could have threatened its unique position in Europe.

In 1976, the ECF's long-time President and royal patron, Prince Bernhard, became embroiled in the highly publicised Lockheed bribery scandal. Understandably, the Dutch members of the Foundation's Board of Governors initially came to the Prince's defence. Several Governors from other countries, however, told Raymond they would resign from the Board en masse if the Prince did not step down as President. Raymond spoke to the Dutch Governors, apprising them of the gravity of the situation. A group of them, led by Ynso Scholten, former Dutch Justice Minister and then Vice-President of the Foundation, convinced the Prince to resign. The matter was resolved quietly, without harm to the foundation and without bitterness. The Prince was given the title of Honorary Member of the foundation. Scholten became ECF President.

In 1976, another event created a challenge that Raymond and his colleagues at the ECF turned into an opportunity. In that year, in a famous report on European unification, Belgian Prime Minister Leo Tindemans proposed that the Member States of the European Communities create by separate treaty an intergovernmental European Foundation. The mission of this proposed Foundation would have been to promote cooperation in culture and education at the European level. The French immediately embraced this idea and French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing set up an office for the proposed European Foundation in Paris.

Under the 1957 Treaty of Rome, the European Commission was not given explicit authority over education or culture. For some Member States, education and culture were areas of passionately guarded national sovereignty. It was not until 1992 that the long-debated Maastricht Treaty explicitly included education and culture as European responsibilities. Tindemans' proposal in 1976 was one attempt to provide a legal basis for cooperation in education and culture among the Member States.

In Amsterdam, at the ECF, the initiative was seen as a potential competitor and threat. As Raymond would later explain: 'The Amsterdam-based European Cultural Foundation saw itself to be the premier European foundation that genuinely acted across the whole of Europe, and individuals associated with the ECF were against the idea of an institution being established in Paris that could jeopardise this position.'²

Raymond also had some philosophical concerns about Tindemans' proposal for a European Foundation whose members would include national governments. Based on his frustrations while working at the Council of Europe, he feared that national arrogance, short-term vision, politics and bureaucracy could hamstring such an intergovernmental organisation. He believed that private foundations could act more quickly, flexibly and effectively.

Despite these concerns, Raymond and his ECF colleagues decided to try to turn the challenge posed by the proposed European Foundation into an opportunity. Raymond urged Scholten to support establishing an ECF subsidiary in Brussels. Scholten was initially sceptical, thinking that Raymond was merely trying to move the ECF to Brussels to avoid his weekly commute to Amsterdam. Then Raymond reminded Scholten of the

² Quoted in *Laying the Foundations; 20 years of the EFC* (Brussels 2010), p13.



European Cultural
Foundation Board of
Governors (1985)

proposed European Foundation. If the ECF had a presence in Brussels, in the capital of Europe near the European Institutions, there was a much better chance that the ECF would be chosen to run the proposed European Foundation. As an Amsterdam-based foundation under Dutch law, the ECF could not legally hire employees in Belgium. Raymond argued that the ECF needed a presence in Brussels to be able to work with the European Commission and defend its interests at the European level.

Raymond's arguments convinced Scholten and the ECF Board of Governors. In 1977, the ECF established the European Cooperation Fund in Brussels under Belgian law. Raymond became its Managing Director. He persuaded Leo Tindemans, author of the proposal for the European Foundation, to become the European Cooperation Fund's first Chairman – lending his prestige to the new organisation. This further increased the

chances that if the proposed foundation were to be created, it would land in Brussels, not Paris.

It was not a coincidence that the name Raymond chose for the Belgian entity, European Cooperation Fund, had the same acronym, ECF, as the European Cultural Foundation. These identical acronyms allowed Raymond flexibility by creating intentional ambiguity as to which of the two entities was taking action. Raymond could sign documents with the initials ECF on behalf of both.

By 1982, the governments of all of the Member States of the European Communities had approved the treaty establishing the European Foundation. The treaty would not enter into force, however, until ratified by all Member State parliaments. Raymond concluded: 'If you can't beat them, join them.' Thus, he allowed his name to be floated as a candidate to head the new European Foundation, thinking that as head he could also better protect the interests of the ECF. A number of European newspapers described Raymond as the front-runner for this position.³ By 1986, the parliaments of most Member States had ratified the European Foundation Treaty. However, with lobbying against the treaty by the Dutch Governors of the ECF, the Dutch Senate voted it down. The proposed European Foundation was dead.

The threat to the ECF posed by the proposed European Foundation had passed. But the steps Raymond and the ECF had taken in response proved fortuitous. With the creation of the European Cooperation Fund in Brussels, Raymond and the ECF had a Brussels-based vehicle through which they could perform contract work for the European Commission

³ *L'Europe cherche un patron*, *L'Express*, 9 August 1985, p51; *Rome nomme ses deux représentants à la Fondation Européenne*, *Le Monde*, 28 February 1986.

on its education programmes. They also had an entity that could receive grants from other foundations for collaborative projects. During conversations in 2010, Raymond maintains that he wasn't really worried about the proposed European Foundation. However, his friend and colleague Hywel Jones remembers these years a little differently.

'You should have been at the lunches where I was with him. You could see the angst and tension. Raymond was fiercely proud of the unique character of the ECF. He felt it had a good track record and great potential. It had linkages to most European countries. He felt it had earned a lot of respect and had special knowledge of Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore, it was positioned to play a bigger role,' Jones recalls. 'So he was concerned that the proposed European Foundation could do harm to the ECF. There is no doubt he played a very active role in the discussions. I was also heavily involved in the whole damn thing. It was part of what I was doing at the Commission.'

Raymond and his colleagues at the ECF were not the only people to oppose the proposed European Foundation out of concerns for protecting turf. As Domenico Lenarduzzi, Jones' former lieutenant at the European Commission, remembers: 'Tindemans wanted to build Europe through education and culture. But the European Commission did not really support his idea for a European Foundation. Hywel Jones did not support the idea because if the proposed European Foundation had been created, that Foundation, rather than the Commission, would have been given authority over education at European level. The European Commission wanted education at the European Communities level. The Commission saw the proposed European Foundation as a threat. It did not see the ECF as a threat.'

European Cultural Foundation Board of Governors meeting. Those present included (far L – R): Alko van der Wiel, Frans Alting von Geusau, Henri Janne, Princess Margriet, and Raymond Georis (1985)



'Europa – European princess'

Princess Margriet of the Netherlands succeeded Ynso Scholten as President of the ECF in 1984. She would work closely with Raymond until his retirement at the end of 1994. In 2006,

Raymond paid tribute to Princess Margriet on the occasion of her leaving the ECF presidency in an essay, 'Europa, European Princess':

'At the College of Europe, Rector Brugmans told the mythical story of our continent's founding. Before Europe was a continent, Europa was a goddess "fine of ankle and eye", of "that race of women gazing out to sea gave life to men's youth", in the poet Hesiod's words. As a Phoenician princess, she was swept up in adventure when Zeus, disguised as a bull, ravished her away across the sea and set her down on the Cretan shore – the first European land.

'Brugmans quoted François Mauriac: "The lives of most men are barren paths, leading nowhere. Others, however, know from childhood they are bound for unknown seas. They are already awakened to the tang of the wind and the taste of salt on their lips." Brugmans urged: "My friends, don't hesitate to follow Europa's example. Set forth on the seas. Fear not the depths and swirling currents. Heed the powerful call of the unknown seas."

'In autumn 1984, I was reminded of Brugmans' admonition when we learned that Princess Margriet had accepted the presidency of the ECF. Like Europa, the Princess was born in a far-off land and first crossed the ocean to alight on European soil in August 1945. She bore a fateful name, Margriet, reminiscent of the daisies ("margrieten" in Dutch) that were a symbol of Dutch resistance during the occupation.

'Heartened by these coincidences, I presented myself to our new President in November 1984 at her villa, *Het Loo*, with two of the ECF's

Dutch governors. We were pleasantly surprised to see that she had carefully annotated the files we had sent to her. Her precise, relevant questions showed a keen interest in our activities. She offered her personal assistance to help us achieve our objectives. She encouraged us to press forward and fulfil our ambitions.

‘Our new President became actively involved in strategic decisions and evaluation and implementation of the foundation’s projects. The Princess regularly visited the foundation’s headquarters. She chaired Executive Committee meetings and actively participated in the debates of the small team in charge of steering the foundation.

‘Important areas of work were opening up for the Foundation to the east, west and south of the European continent, presenting many challenges for our new President and her team.

‘In May 1991, our President invited the governors to rediscover their Mediterranean origins. The loop had come full circle. Europa had reached the shores of her origins. Princess Margriet could take the foundation onto the next discovery across the “unknown seas”.’

In a 2010 interview, Princess Margriet had warm and teasing recollections of her years working with Raymond: ‘One of Mr Georis’ many qualities is that he has the capability to translate conceptual ideas into practical actions. His contributions to the projects of the ECF proved invaluable to our foundation. Mr Georis had, and still has, a large number and variety



European Cultural Foundation staff and Princess Margriet (middle) preparing for an Executive Committee meeting (Amsterdam, 31 October 1994)

of contacts in Europe. I must admit, by the way, that we often teased him about his extensive network.

'Our closest contacts were when we prepared our meetings at *Het Loo*. We drew up the agendas for the ECF meetings. Our sessions in Amsterdam could develop into heated discussions as Mr Georis holds strong positions on several issues. These meetings sharpened our brains and were

beneficial to the ECF as they proved to be fruitful exchanges of ideas between Mr Georis and his chairman and vice-chairmen, resulting in sound decisions.

“Another thing the *bon vivant* Mr Georis seriously detested was the Dutch sandwich lunches. Changing that good old Dutch tradition proved to be beyond the range of his powers.”

'During our meetings Mr Georis always insisted on speaking English or, if need be, French. He definitely refused to speak Dutch, while we couldn't help reminding him of this "language deficiency". We offered him the chance to practise with us. You may understand who would win the discussions then!

'Another thing the *bon vivant* Mr Georis seriously detested was the Dutch sandwich lunches. Changing that good old Dutch tradition proved to be beyond the range of his powers.'

‘This is heaven’

“**He is always there for advice. If things are going well he encourages from a distance. If things are going badly, he steps in and can be quite a tough guy.**”

Despite Raymond's reluctance to speak Dutch to the Princess, Annemie Degryse, ECF Finance Manager, gratefully recalls that Raymond “made the effort to speak Dutch to the Dutch-speaking staff”.

In his dealing with his staff, Raymond always tried to give people the opportunity to show their hidden talents. In 1982, he discovered that a newly recruited shorthand typist, Pascale Couve, had substantial administrative skills and spoke fluent Dutch, English and French. He soon promoted her to his Executive Secretary and Administrative Assistant. In this role, she

found meaning and purpose during the last 10 years of her life. She placed a sign over her office door at the ECF that read: ‘This is heaven’. She referred to Raymond as *mon ange* (my angel). When she became terminally ill with lung cancer, he frequently visited her.

Raymond's interaction with Couve is just one example of his commitment to mentoring. Throughout his professional life he has tried to help people be happy by finding their talents and realising their dreams. ‘Raymond creates opportunities for others. He was never the kind of manager that sits on top of his staff giving explicit instructions. He is always there for advice. If things are going well he encourages from a distance. If things are going badly, he steps in and can be quite a tough guy,’ notes John Richardson.

The Miami affair

Raymond maintained a professional and appropriately distant relationship with his staff. But the relationships were filled with humour and affection. In the early 1990s, he took a business trip to Kingston, Jamaica. On the way back to Brussels, due to some missed flights, Raymond was rerouted through Miami. On arrival in Miami, he was arrested by US Immigration authorities and charged with illegal entry. On this trip, he carried a new passport that lacked his permanent US entry visa contained in his older passport. After spending a night in jail in Miami without food or water, he was flown the next morning to New York in handcuffs. He spent the day there, unshaven, hungry and feeling guilty. That evening, after the intervention of some American friends, he was put on a plane for Belgium. A large black female immigration officer escorted Raymond onto the plane. She told him: 'I hate America. I want to escape this country.' Apparently, mistaking Raymond's French accent for a German accent, the officer said: 'I want to marry a German—they are rich and faithful. Will you marry me?'

When Raymond finally got back to Europe, to the relief of his family and the ECF staff, he relished recounting this adventure. Jill Adler elaborated on it in a satirical one-act play which reflected Raymond's frenetic travel schedule and the ECF's multilingual warmth, intelligence and good humour. The play involved dialogues in a hodgepodge of Dutch, English and French amongst Pascale Couve, Peter from Wagon-Lits (Raymond's travel agent) and Raymond. Britje is Couve's dachshund, which she always brought to the office.

Pascale and Wagons-Lits: The Miami Affair (a one-act play)

[Telephone rings]

Met Pascale. Geef hem door.

Dag Peter, m'n schat, hoe gaat het? Met mij comme ci comme ça. The foundation will collapse without Mr Georis. En my poor Britje has a cough and the doctor doesn't know what's causing it. No, of course it's not from my smoking.

Enfin, m'n lieve schat, wat betreft Mr Georis' travel arrangements:

He has to go from Brussels to Paris tomorrow. Poor man, he gets back from Jamaica today. Some silly meeting of that exclusive men-only Hague Club. Perfectly ridiculous! He will be exhausted, poor man, but of course he follows his special anti-jetlag diet.

Wat zeg je? Air France is on strike? He has to go to Paris via Pisa? Oh mijn hemel. Ensuite, after tomorrow he has to go straight to Tenerife and the following day he has to be in . . . Cambodia? Or is it Cambridge? I can't read his writing. Good idea. Make two bookings.

And after that . . . Wacht even, Peter, I'm being beeped.

Dag Esther. Meneer Georis? Collect call uit Miami? Of course we should accept the charges. Geef hem door.

Hello Monsieur Georis. Ça va? What are you doing in Miami? What? You're in the Miami airport jail? What? No valid visa? Suspected of drug smuggling? But how? . . . What? Three hundred pounds? . . . A machine gun? Oh my god! Hold on Monsieur Georis. I'll ask Peter what to do. Don't move.

Peter, mijn hemel. You have to help me. Meneer Georis is in jail in Miami and a 300-pound black policewoman is holding a gun to his head. She says she'll shoot if he doesn't marry her and take her to live in Europe. Can you help him, schat? Does Wagons-Lits have an office in the Miami airport? No, of course, I understand you don't have offices in every city, but . . . Where is Mr Winkel? Can he take the next Concorde to Miami with a new visa? What? Of course the

ECF will pay for his trip. Yes, of course I will clear it with John Ashton.

Schat, I'll call you right back. I have to call Jill.

[Pascale calls Jill Adler, an ECF employee, a US citizen with influential parents].

Thank god you're here, ma poulette. There is a big crisis. Mr Georis is about to be executed in Miami for drug smuggling. He is being held hostage by a 600-pound black woman. Please contact your parents, the FBI, the CIA, Interpol, the UN and the White House if you have to. Keep me posted.

[Pascale goes back to the call with Georis]

Monsieur Georis, everything will be okay. Mr Winkel is coming to bail you out. Jill is calling President Clinton. Just sit tight. You can't even sit down? You're handcuffed to the telephone? What is that screaming? What?

They're throwing Haitian refugees out the window? I can't hear you – the connection is bad. What's the number? I'll call you right back.

[Pascale calls back]

Hello, met Miami airport? I want to speak to the Secretary General of the European Cultural Foundation, Monsieur Raymond Georis, immediately. EUROPEAN: E-U-R-O-P-E-A-N. CULTURE: C-U-L-T-U-R-E. No, he's not my secretary. I'm his secretary. No, he's not a general. I demand to know what you are doing with him. I want proof that he is alive.

[Georis takes the phone]

Thank God, Monsieur Georis. You're still alive. It's not too late. What? No need for Mr Winkel to come? You've what? But you're already married. A coup de foudre? Well, of course, it can happen, but... at your age? With

a 600-pound black policewoman? I understand she's pointing a gun at your head. Of course, it's a matter of life and death. She likes to travel? Well, maybe you two are well suited.

What? You want to go to Acapulco together? Yes, of course, I'll call Peter to arrange for your tickets. Oh mijn hemel. Yes, of course, I'll call Mrs Georis. I'll think of something to say. You'll call Princess Margriet and Koopman from Acapulco? Don't worry, I won't tell a soul. Your secret is safe with me. Very well, Mr Georis. Don't forget to give me your phone and fax number in Acapulco. Bon courage.

[Pascale calls Peter at Wagons-Lits]

Peter, mijn lieve schat. Cancel Mr Winkel's trip to Miami. Cancel Cambodia. Book two apex tickets for Mr Georis and a companion from Miami to Acapulco, and return to Brussels. The name of his

companion? I forgot to ask. Just book it under Madame Black. Dag schat.

[Pascale on the inter-office Intercom]

Chenal, Poppy, Annette, Lise, Michiel, Esther, come quick. You won't believe what happened.

[Pascale rings Madame Georis in Belgium]

Madame Georis? Met Pascale Couve. Mr Georis asked me to tell you that he's been detained in the Caribbean somewhere and won't be home until Christmas. And by the way, I think you should set an extra place at the table. He's bringing company.

[Pascale looks at her dog]

Ah, Britje, c'est la vie!



Pascale Couve in the garden of Alko van der Wiel, Financial Director, European Cultural Foundation (Bilthoven, Netherlands, 1984)



Chapter 6

'Leave before they want to kick you out'

By the early 1990s, the ECF, under Raymond's leadership, had accomplished much. Networks had been created and nurtured, bringing together organisations and people sharing a vision of a better world. The network of National Committees had been strengthened and expanded. A network of about 20 Institutes, Centres and other European programmes had been launched. Raymond encouraged these entities to collaborate and cooperate across borders with each other and with other partners. By the time of his retirement, those initiatives that had survived had all become independent of the ECF, according to Raymond's plan.

The ECF, through the European Institute of Education and Social Policy and the European Cooperation Fund, had played a critical role in the European Commission's celebrated educational programmes: ERASMUS, TEMPUS and the European Unit of EURYDICE. These programmes continue to strengthen European integration, cooperation and



Raymond Georis (centre) and Simone Veil, second President of the European Parliament (right) (Brussels, 1983)

solidarity by facilitating faculty and student mobility, the learning of other languages and understanding of, and tolerance for, other cultures.

Speaking to this, Alan Smith notes that 'when Europeans are polled about the best things the EU has given Europe, ERASMUS routinely ranks in the top ten. It has made an enormous contribution to improving the capacity of young people to work in a European context and helps citizens understand

how Europe is important to them. It gives them a European dimension to their lives and work.' Echoing these sentiments is Michael Tracy, former Director, European Union Council Secretariat. In his book *A European Life from War to Peace* he says that 'I have always attached great importance to education, so I see the ERASMUS programme, enabling thousands of young people to study outside their countries of origin, as one of the most useful EU initiatives'.¹

Professionalism in, and cooperation among, foundations in Western Europe, North America and CEE were advanced through the work of the EFC. Initiatives with CEE countries had been launched to strengthen democratic institutions, civil society, philanthropy, culture and tolerance

in these newly free regions. Initiatives had also been launched to build bridges between Europe and the Middle East and North Africa.

The ECF celebrated its 40th anniversary in 1994. Raymond was approaching the ECF's retirement age of 65. It was time to move on.



(L-R) Raymond Georis – together with five other EFC founders – received a medal from Carlos Monjardino to mark the Centre's tenth anniversary (Berlin, 8 November 1999)

¹ Michael Tracy, *A European Life from War to Peace*, Hermitage (2010), p114.

Europe, our adventure – L'Europe, notre aventure

To pay homage to Raymond on his retirement from the ECF, the foundation assembled a *Liber Amicorum* (a book of friends) of over 140 pages of reminiscences and tributes written by 30 colleagues.

The *Liber Amicorum*: some representative passages

'During his more than 20 years as Secretary General, Raymond Georis instigated the setting up of the foundation's Network of Institutes and Centres around Europe, and his diplomatic skills have brought together many European partners in the cultural field to work on important projects. His overriding belief in the European cause led him to be the driving force behind the ERASMUS student exchange programme.

He is a man of vision and intuition. In 1986, the European Cultural Foundation had already given priority to East-West cultural relations. This was followed by the launch of the European Foundation Centre in 1989, which has among its aims to help the new democracies in Eastern and Central Europe to enhance their civil



Raymond Georis (third from left) and staff at the European Cultural Foundation office (Amsterdam, circa 1984)

societies; and in 1992 the foundation also made the Mediterranean region a priority area.'

ECF staff, in the introduction



(L – R) John Richardson,
Founding European Foundation
Centre Chief Executive,
Raymond Georis and Michael
Brophy, former Chief Executive,
Charities Aid Foundation, at an
early EFC meeting

'[This book is a suitable gift for] a true European like you, with a wide circle of friends inside – and outside – Europe, a network of your own . . . You deserve being so honoured after all these years of giving yourself to cultural cooperation in Europe and your passion in your commitment to “la grande aventure de l'Europe”.'

Princess Margriet of the Netherlands

'The essential role of the European Cultural Foundation is, quite simply, to make life more interesting for all of Europe's citizens.'

John Richardson quoting Raymond from an interview with The Guardian

'As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence; the next best, the people know and praise, the next best the people fear, and the worst the people hate. But, when the best leader's work is done, the people will say, “we did it ourselves”. Like so many others, I was enabled *to do* by having the privilege of working with Raymond Georis at the European Cultural Foundation. Raymond, I know, will be proud that we think we did it ourselves.'

Richardson evoking a Chinese proverb to comment on Raymond's leadership style

'During the period when Raymond Georis was its Secretary General, the European Cultural Foundation has been not without success in the field of European culture: through its grants policy; by launching several European Institutes, now independent from the foundation, in such fields as education, the media, publications and the environment; and by launching special programmes such as the East-West Parliamentary Practice Project and the *Mémoires de la Méditerranée*. The ERASMUS and TEMPUS programmes

are also very good examples of where the ECF has played an important role.' *Gottfried Leibbrandt, a member of the Board of Governors and Chair of the Dutch National Committee of the ECF*

'Throughout his long and capable leadership of the European Cultural Foundation, I never saw him once touched by pessimism. His confidence in the future was unshakable . . .

[Raymond once told me]: “My basic strategy consists of making the most out of opportunities that present themselves.” . . . To live by these words, one must be ready for these opportunities, design the frameworks to welcome them, overcome reservations, conquer hesitations and find kindred spirits, all the while without alienating the more conservative or envious ones. In this area, our friend Raymond has always displayed endless skill and imagination. His ability to cobble together daring yet effective structures has left me speechless on more than one occasion.

'He could have built himself an empire there in Amsterdam. Instead, he opted

to create a decentralised network of institutions, encouraging initiatives and projects on cultural cooperation, delegating most of their implementation and managing the interactions between individuals.

'Raymond Georis could bring together people and organisations that had little in common to work effectively. He is a typical Belgian – the need to find solutions even where there are irreconcilable divisions.'

Jean-Pierre Jallade, former director, European Institute of Education and Social Policy

One of Raymond's many colleagues from the North American foundation sector described successful collaborations – and Raymond's talents for doing business over a good meal: 'Partnerships with other donors are a valued objective of Ford Foundation grantmaking, and few partnerships have been as fruitful, rewarding or pleasurable as those undertaken with Raymond Georis and the ECF.

'Raymond possesses extraordinary talents both as a master philanthropic and a gourmet. I still recall with pleasure two occasions when lunch with him led to major initiatives in our Russia and East Europe Program.

'The result of our first encounter was the Central and East European Publishing Project, [which, over a decade] has aggregated several millions of dollars from US and European donors to support a large number of publications throughout Eastern Europe, translating many into Western European languages and establishing important linkages between European and US publishing houses.

'[The result of the second lunch was the] East-West Parliamentary Practice Project, an exchange of members of parliaments from Eastern Europe with their counterparts from Western Europe and the United States.'

Shepard Forman, former Director, Ford Foundation

'Through Raymond I saw someone like Jean Monnet. In small personal ways he acts in similar ways: how often have I seen Raymond at a conference not engaged on the platform but talking seriously to one or two people in some corner of the room. How often have I been telephoned, cajoled and persuaded by Raymond in ways that I have read were Monnet's? More importantly, like Monnet, Raymond is tireless in his pursuit of Europe; like Monnet, year by year he will pursue his quarry, giving ground here and there if necessary, seizing the moment to push tactically to realise a strategy worked on for a decade past.

'Within his vision is a world of association rather than control, of release not obedience, and diversity not conformity. The likes of Raymond have been dreaming these dreams over more than two decades, but it is their genius to be both dreamers and realists, to be ready to strike when the time is right with plans worked out in their dreams.



Raymond Georis reading
the *Liber Amicorum*

'Like Monnet, he will no doubt continue into his eighties with ideas to create a European tide of influence for the good of people not only in Europe, but everywhere.'

Michael Brophy, former Executive Director, Charities Aid Foundation, UK

'Raymond's interpretation of "*la grande aventure de l'Europe*" included a strong practical sense of reality about what was possible at any given time and of the necessity of making progress step by step, with the centre in Amsterdam and the National Committees working harmoniously together.'

Sir Frank Roberts, member of the Board, European Institute for the Media

Raymond passionately believed that without the active engagement of the different education and cultural systems in underpinning its development, the European Economic Community, as it was then called, could not succeed in the long term. A "common market" would simply not be enough to capture the hearts and minds of European citizens and

bind them together in the wish of building a European Community in the fullest sense.

'The imagination and entrepreneurial talents so ably displayed by Raymond Georis over the years point the right way forward ...'

Hywel Jones describing how his long-time collaboration with Raymond began at a conference on the future of higher education at the College of Europe in Bruges in 1973

'[The ERASMUS programme provides] a good example of one important dimension of how a foundation can work effectively for Europe, namely by being an independent and impartial provider of operational services in the education field.'

'Through a strategic partnership between the private not-for-profit sector and the public sector, the ECF was able to be associated with a highly regarded European initiative at the very centre of the concerns addressed in its own

mission statement. To have recognised this opportunity, and others like it, at the very right moment was very much the contribution of Raymond Georis. To have pursued it with such energy was typical of his commitment to enhancing the ECF's capacity and profile in the educational field and to developing the operational side of its activities.

'Operations management was not, however, the only way in which the ECF sought to play a role in furthering European cooperation during Mr Georis' [tenure at the ECF]. Two others are particularly worthy of mention. The first has been its catalytic function in helping to develop and, subsequently, to network European-level education organisations through both grants and providing joint secretariat facilities.

'[The second] was that of contributing to the process of enhancing the knowledge base, improving methodological approaches and raising the level of awareness of the issues involved in the process of European cooperation in the education field ... The ECF, under the guidance of Raymond Georis and



(L – R) Annette van Tongeren, European Cultural Foundation Programme Officer, Raymond Georis, and Princess Margriet at Raymond Georis' European Cultural Foundation retirement party (9 June 1995)

Berlin Wall came down. The European Cultural Foundation was immediately willing to support the European Commission in getting this new and ambitious programme off the ground.

'Raymond Georis rose to the occasion, aware of the importance of TEMPUS in ensuring the integration of Central and East European universities and convinced of the role he believed the [ECF] could play... Thus, under Raymond's leadership, the [ECF] embarked on the often complicated but very rewarding process of managing the TEMPUS Programme for the Commission in its exciting initial phase from 1991 to the end of 1994. It was their responsibility to set up the structures for cooperation and support the developmental first phase of the programme, forging new links between students and academics in over 30 European countries.'

Lesley Wilson, former director, TEMPUS

colleagues such as Ladislav Cerych, has played a significant role in establishing the importance of this field of study.'

Alan Smith, former director, ERASMUS Bureau

'Raymond Georis was quick to realise the potential of TEMPUS in making a major contribution to furthering European understanding when the

'When I accepted the European Cultural Foundation's offer to participate in the management of EURYDICE's European Unit in 1991, I was fully aware of the

wonderful opportunity to continue to apply my European commitment in the service of this European network of education information set up by the European Commission.

'My contact with the ECF, and with Raymond Georis in particular, had left me confident that my enthusiasm for the job would find kindred spirits and support within the organisation.

'My regular discussions with Raymond Georis gave me the opportunity to spend time with a man who is able to stay true to his principles while being open to change.

'Raymond's personal commitment to the development of EURYDICE and its future has been unfailing. His even temper and active support have played a significant role in confronting and surviving the more difficult moments, and EURYDICE has him, among others, to thank for its promising future.'

Luce Pépin, former director, EURYDICE European Unit

‘In New Delhi in 1965, a wise old Indian woman awarded you the title of “Mastermind”. This sage recognised not only your expertise in the field of education planning, but also your qualities as a person of great wisdom in general.

‘You always acted with considerable patience and a certain degree of detachment, but without fatalism . . . showing persistence in resolving crises and overcoming obstacles . . . and rescuing your friends from difficult situations.

‘You have always known how to wait for the right moment to launch an initiative, or to wait for things to evolve, or when to take a step back, the better to jump. On the whole, your approach has been effective, and when it was not, you have been able to regain the initiative from a new angle.

‘Above all, you have been loyal. Loyal, of course, to your commitment to the European ideal and the values it entails, but also to the agents and vehicles of that commitment—your loyalty to those individuals was as strong when their stars were fading as it was in

their moments of glory. You have been especially loyal to your friends in their failures as well as in their successes.’
Ladislav Cerych, founding director, European Institute of Education and Social Policy

‘One of my abiding memories of [Raymond] is of his searching for exactly the right word in an impressive variety of languages. Another memory is of trying to work out drafts with him. This is an ancient diplomatic art, and Raymond understands it perfectly.

‘[But], it is by his deeds that he moves into history. He was responsible for giving the European Cultural Foundation the leading place among European foundations. He initiated new Foundation enterprises, including Centres and Institutes that came to have a life of their own, including, most appropriately, one for studying the world of foundations. He was drawn, inevitably and effectively, into many of the activities of the European Commission in Brussels, knowing more about its procedures and problems than anyone else outside it. He appreciated the need for creating an efficient and self-sustaining European infrastructure,

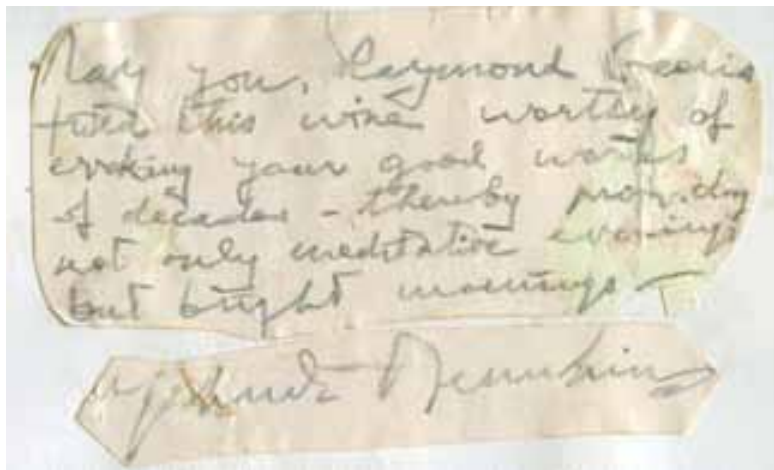
non-bureaucratic in outlook, but committed to Europe without question. And he has also been fully aware of the importance of education in the process of European creation and development . . . To be able to find the right means for reaching the right goals is another ancient art. Raymond gives it twentieth-century expression.

‘He can keep his own counsel, but he welcomes the counsel of others. The friends that he has made, and there are many, find contact with Raymond the most important and decisive European contact of all.

‘Through the Institute of Education and Social Policy in Paris, which was one of his ideas, Lada [Ladislav] Cerych and I were able to feel that we were at the very heart of a Europe in the making. And since Raymond drew so many other people into the activity, it developed its own momentum. Europe is a better continent because of it.’

Lord Asa Briggs, British historian and founding Chair, European Institute of Education and Social Policy

Message on a wine bottle, presented to Raymond Georis upon his retirement from the European Cultural Foundation, given by violinist Yehudi Menuhin (June 1995): 'May you, Raymond Georis, find this wine worthy of evoking your good work of decades, thereby providing not only meditative evenings but bright mornings.'



In addition to the *Liber Amicorum*, the ECF staff had another fitting present to honour Raymond on his departure from the foundation. They had mailed to about 500 of Raymond's friends, colleagues and acquaintances blank wine bottle labels with the request that people write a little note of congratulation or well-wishing on the label and return it. More than 300 people did so. The staff affixed the inscribed labels to good bottles of wine, which were presented to Raymond at his going away party.

At his going away party, Princess Margriet bestowed on Raymond the decoration of Commander of the Order of Orange-Nassau (the Netherlands) in recognition of his service during his years at the ECF. Raymond also received decorations from Belgium (Commander of the Order of the Crown), Finland (Officer of the Order of the White Rose), and Hungary (Officer of the Order of the Cross of the Republic).



(Foreground L – R) Raymond Georis, Princess Margriet and Odile Chenal at Raymond Georis' award ceremony for receiving the Commander of the Order of Orange Nassau (Netherlands) and Commander of the Order of the Crown (Belgium)



Raymond Georis receiving the Commander of the Order of Orange Nassau (the Netherlands)



Chapter 7

The godfather can't retire

Although Raymond left his position at the ECF at age 65, he had no intention of actually retiring. Prior to his departure, Raymond negotiated an innovative arrangement with Princess Margriet and the ECF Executive Committee. He would remain Managing Director of the European Cooperation Fund in Brussels, but it would change its name to the Association for Innovative Cooperation in Europe (AICE). The ECF would provide substantial annual financial support to AICE for three years, after which AICE would need to become self-supporting.

Georis is the godfather of European philanthropy. His role is coalition builder and facilitator. He is a dealmaker behind the scenes.

Luc Tayart de Borms, Managing Director,
King Baudouin Foundation

Promoting and creating partnerships

Raymond envisioned AICE as a vehicle for promoting and creating partnerships among foundations on European projects of mutual interest. Its core functions – convening and coordination – would be supported through annual contributions by the participating foundations. Foundations joining AICE had to sign up to the goal of working in partnership with other foundations. Raymond had no trouble finding willing members.

AICE members would meet twice a year, coming with projects they wished to support and share with at least one other foundation. If at least two of the members agreed to support a project, the project would become an AICE project. The supporting members had to commit sufficient funding for the project amongst them or find other funding partners. Raymond, as Managing Director, could propose projects to the members. He would act both as a facilitator and as initiator of themes.

The European Cooperation Fund already had six or seven members that agreed to stay on, including the Charities Aid Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Fondation de France, Fundação Oriente, ECF and the King Baudouin Foundation. All of the AICE members had also been founding or early supporters of the EFC. These foundations were accustomed to working together and trusted each other.

Colombe Warin, formerly Raymond's assistant at AICE (later NEF), reflects on his way of getting things done: 'He can put people with different expectations and views around the table and get them to agree. He does not impose his views. He listens. At the end of the meeting, he got what he wanted, but pretended that the others made it happen. After the meeting, I would ask him: "Why did you let another claim that it was his idea when



it was yours?" He would say: "Colombe, you have much to learn. It is not important whether it is my idea. What is important is that the idea becomes reality." Raymond Georis likes to launch ideas, but after the launch, he is not interested in managing the project. So he delegates. He trusts people, even if they are only 25 years old, and gives them lots of responsibility.' Alexandre Kirchberger, former NEF Project Coordinator, concurs: 'In Europe, young people face a "Catch-22": no job offer without experience, no experience without a job. Raymond broke this circle by giving young inexperienced people a chance.'

(L–R) Colombe Warin, Project Coordinator AICE/NEF, Francis Charhon, Chief Executive Officer, Fondation de France and Raymond Georis at a NEF meeting at Fundação Oriente (Lisbon, June 2003)

In 2002, AICE's members decided that the name really did not convey the organisation's nature and 'was not very sexy'. They decided to change it to the Network of European Foundations for Innovative Cooperation (NEF).



(L–R) David O'Sullivan, Raymond Georis, Pádraig Flynn, Luc Tayart de Borms, Rüdiger Stephan and Hywel Jones at an AICE meeting (Scheveningen, Netherlands, June 1997)

Raymond served as Managing Director of AICE/NEF from 1996 to 2004, when his long-time colleague Hywel Jones replaced him. AICE, then NEF, members launched numerous collaborative projects during Raymond's tenure – testing new ways of working together at the European level and around critical European themes, such as youth empowerment, undocumented migrants' rights, European drug policies, free movement of people and promoting creativity. Negotiating a partnership to support Alliance magazine was one of the last initiatives Raymond worked on before retiring from NEF. Today, NEF has 12 major foundation members,¹ and maintains a close working relationship with the EFC.

The Youth Empowerment Partnership Programme

The Youth Empowerment Partnership Programme is a 10-year collaboration of European and US foundations, Freie Universität Berlin and the OECD, operating under the auspices of NEF. It seeks to address social challenges and improve the lives of children and young

people at risk in defined areas of social disadvantage throughout Europe – by promoting coordinated efforts and strategic alliances of the public, private and independent sectors. Angelika Krüger is the Project Director.

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1 ERSTE Stiftung (Austria), King Baudouin Foundation (Belgium), Fondation de France (France), Fondation Gabriel (France), Robert Bosch Stiftung (Germany), Compagnia de San Paolo (Italy), Institusjonen Fritt Ord (Norway), Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian (Portugal), European Cultural Foundation (the Netherlands), Bernard van Leer Foundation (the Netherlands), Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (UK), and Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (US).

The Raymond Georis Prize – raising the bar

In 2004, the NEF Mercator Fund established the Raymond Georis Prize for Innovative Philanthropy in Europe. NEF Mercator Fund President Norine MacDonald described the two reasons for creating the Prize: 'Firstly, to reward an individual, foundation or project that has conceived and implemented an outstanding, innovative and high-impact philanthropic programme in Europe, and secondly to pay tribute to the remarkable contribution that Raymond Georis has made to the foundation sector in Europe.'

Reflecting on some of Raymond's significant achievements prior to the awarding of the first prize, MacDonald observed: 'As a man of vision and intuition, Mr Georis is widely and justifiably recognised as the "father" of the European foundation community. His career has evolved around two basic principles: his strong belief in the importance of Europe and European values and his love of humanity; and commitment to helping others in their development. He was an early believer in Europe as a unified economic, cultural and political force, when the EU as we know it today was still in the early stages of creation.

'On the eve of Mr Georis' departure from NEF, it is our role and our responsibility, as the generation who have inherited his and other's pioneering achievements, to build on the solid base he has laid to tackle the new challenges Europe faces, both internally and externally. We must strive to do our best, in our roles in the philanthropic sector, to continue in Raymond's

Awarding of the 2009 Raymond Georis Prize for Innovative Philanthropy in Europe to Guler Sabanci (standing, L – R): Gerry Salole, European Foundation Centre, Emílio Rui Vilar, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Raymond Georis, Norine MacDonald, Mercator Fund, and (sitting, L – R): Filiz Bikmen Bugay and Zerrin Koyunsagan, both of the Sabanci Foundation (Rome, May 2009)





Raymond Georis and Avila Kilmurray, Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, and first winner of the Raymond Georis Prize for Innovative Philanthropy in Europe (Athens, May 2004)

footsteps, towards the vision of European and global peace and security.

'By creating a prize in his name, we hope that we have at least gone a little way towards giving Mr Georis the recognition he richly deserves and giving all an annual reminder of what we might aspire to in our work.'

In a letter to Raymond soon after the presentation of the first Prize, Christopher Harris, formerly of the Ford Foundation, wrote: 'It seems the Raymond Georis Prize has served to "raise the bar" of expectations about what foundations should be doing and their social engagement and responsibility.'

The selection committee for the Raymond Georis Prize has been chaired by Javier Solana, former Secretary General, Council of the European Union and President, Madariaga – College of Europe Foundation, and has included representatives of NEF member foundations. Raymond is a member of the selection committee and has presented the prize each year from its inception at the EFC's Annual General Assembly and Conference.

The recipients of the prize over the years are representative of the nature and international scope of the kinds of causes Raymond and his colleagues seek to champion.

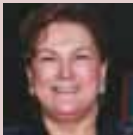
Awarding of the 2010 Raymond Georis Prize for Innovative Philanthropy in Europe to Mo Ibrahim (L – R): Norine MacDonald, Mercator Fund, Raymond Georis, Mo Ibrahim, Mo Ibrahim Foundation (Brussels, June 2010)



Winners of the Raymond Georis Prize for Innovative Philanthropy in Europe



2010 – Mo Ibrahim, Founder, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, London – for bridging European and African philanthropy and for his groundbreaking work towards advancing good governance in Africa.



2009 – Güler Sabanci, President, Sabanci Foundation, Istanbul – for her extensive contributions to philanthropic work in the areas of education, the accessibility of culture and the arts, and the empowerment and engagement of women in the Turkish economy.



2008 – Diego Hidalgo Schnur, Founder, Fundación para las Relaciones internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), Madrid – for his lifelong commitment to bettering the future of the most marginalised and improving humanitarian and development actions and in recognition of the impact the initiatives and institutions he has created or provides support to are having in Europe and internationally.



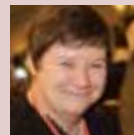
2007 – Ray Murphy, Senior Advisor, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (posthumously), Cork – for a career devoted to social justice and the development of civil society and philanthropy in Ireland, Europe and throughout the world.



2006 – Kristina Persson, Founder, Swedish Stiftelsen Frejas Fund, Stockholm – for the project Global Challenge, which brings together people who would normally never have the opportunity to communicate with one another and, more importantly, to understand each other.



2005 – Aly Mawji, Resident Representative in Afghanistan, Aga Khan Development Network, Kabul – for his groundbreaking philanthropic work aimed at contributing to the long-term development of Afghanistan and the strengthening of its communities.



2004 – Avila Kilmurray, Director, Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, Belfast – for her bold philanthropic work towards peace and social solidarity, both in her own country, Northern Ireland, and in the Balkans, through the YouthBank project.

At his alma mater's service

(L – R) Hendrik Brugmans, Rector of the College of Europe, and Raymond Georis at Raymond Georis' farewell party (9 June 1995)



(L – R) Raymond Georis and Jacques Delors, eighth President, European Commission and President, College of Europe, together with Otto von der Gablentz, Rector, College of Europe (Bruges, June 1997)

When asked at age 80 to name the proudest accomplishments of his career, Raymond is hesitant to answer. His deeply ingrained humility deters him. When pressed a second and third time, he reluctantly responds with three accomplishments, given, he stresses, in order of chronology, not necessarily priority.

The first is his years teaching in India. He had to learn quickly how to teach new and complicated subjects, with which he had only limited experience, and this in English, which was not his mother tongue and which he spoke poorly when he arrived. 'I still can't understand how I did that!' he exclaims. The second accomplishment is the assistance he and his colleagues at ECF and the European Institute of Education and Social Policy rendered to the European Commission in operating the early programmes for European cooperation in education. The third is the service he has

rendered to the College of Europe. To Raymond, the nine months he spent as a student at the College in 1956–1957 were among the most important periods in his life. His studies and interactions with the faculty and student body planted the seeds of his European and international vision. Thereafter, Raymond has retained a deep appreciation of, affection for, and loyalty to, the College.

Raymond served as President of the Alumni Association of the College in the early 1970s. He was a member of the College's governing board, the Administrative Council, from 1971 until 2001, and again from 2005 until 2007, and served on its



Gabriel Fragnière, founding Director, European Centre for Work and Society, and later Rector, College of Europe from 1993–1995

Executive Committee from 1982 until 1987, and again from 1993 until 2001.

In 1995, Raymond was called upon to rescue the College during a period of crisis. At that time, his old friend Gabriel Fragnière was Rector and was facing mounting criticism from members of the College's Administrative Council over his handling of administrative affairs. On vacation in Italy with his sons in early 1995, Raymond was summoned to an emergency meeting in Bruges two days hence. He interrupted his vacation and returned to Belgium.

At the meeting, Raymond was asked to become Chair of the College's Executive Committee.

In December 1995, at the request of the Administrative Council, Fragnière resigned his position as Rector. Raymond was asked to come in as a crisis manager – to assume responsibility for the daily administration and financial management of the College until a new Rector could be found. Although Raymond could not understand why he was being asked to assume this role, his loyalty to the College led him to accept the assignment immediately. 'It was my duty to help the College,' Raymond recalls. '[But] I have never had such a complicated mission in my life!'

For the next six months, Raymond ran the College of Europe. Among the challenges he faced were finance and budgetary problems and the need to make the College more competitive in the academic market place. He needed to find additional funding sources. He needed to manage the local media and negotiate with the College faculty, trade unions, the Flemish government and other stakeholders. He needed to deal with daily crises,



both in Bruges and also some at the College of Europe's second campus in Natolin, Poland.

Raymond needed to help find a new Rector and a new Chair of the Administrative Council. In all of these activities, he had to speak Dutch, a language he knows but is not comfortable with. Fortunately, during those difficult days, Raymond could rely on the support of Olivier Vanneste, former Governor of West Flanders and Treasurer of the College.

By May 1996, when the new Rector, Otto von der Gabletz, assumed his position, these tasks had been accomplished. The College had installed a new Rector without undue delay and new sources of financial support had been found, including the Flemish government. Raymond had convinced Jacques Delors, who was just leaving the Presidency of the European Commission, to take the Chair of the Administrative Council of the College. Delors gave Raymond one of his books with an inscription thanking Raymond for all the good work he had accomplished.

Raymond was to come to the rescue of the College again a few years later, this time in dealing with the relationship between the College and the Madariaga European Foundation. The Madariaga European Foundation was created in 1998 by the alumni of the College of Europe at the instigation of Michel Bourguès-Maunoury, who became its first Managing Director. It

Visit of Prince Philippe of Belgium (far right) to the College of Europe, with Otto von der Gabletz, Rector, College of Europe (far left), during Raymond Georis' term as Chair of the College's Executive Committee (Bruges, March 1997)



is named after the founder of the College of Europe, Spanish writer, historian, diplomat and philosopher Salvador de Madariaga. A think-tank focusing on the role of European Union in an era of global change, it has a threefold mission of challenging the citizens, empowering Europe, and preventing conflict. The foundation was intended to work in close cooperation with the College. Javier Solana, Madariaga's nephew, has presided over the foundation since December 2000.

Raymond served as Treasurer of the foundation from July 2001 until July 2004. By that point in time, the relationship between the College and the foundation had seriously deteriorated. Where there should have been cooperation, there was 'stupid competition' between these sister organisations, Raymond recalls. He was asked to help reconcile the College and the foundation, replacing Bourghès-Maunoury as Managing Director, a position he held, somewhat reluctantly, from July 2004 through March 2008.

Former Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene was Chair of the College and Vice-President of the foundation. He and Raymond set about to reconcile the College and the foundation. They assured the Rector and the faculty that the foundation existed to serve the College and also found additional funding for the foundation. To emphasise the newly re-established close relationship between the College and the foundation, the latter changed its name to Madariaga–College of Europe Foundation.

Jean-Luc Dehaene worked with and observed Raymond in action, both during Raymond's crisis management at the College in 1995–1996, and his tenure as Managing Director, Madariaga European Foundation, 2004–2008. Reflecting on these events in 2010, he commented: 'Mr Georis came into leadership in both institutions at moments when they were in deep

(L–R) Raymond Georis, Javier Solana, President, Madariaga–College of Europe Foundation, and Nicolas Pascual de la Parte at a Madariaga–College of Europe Foundation Board of Directors meeting (Brussels, November 2005)

(L – R) Paul Demaret, Rector of the College of Europe, Raymond Georis, Jean-Luc Dehaene, Ferenc Madl, President of Hungary and his wife at the Hendrik Brugmans Memorial Lecture organised by the Madariaga – College of Europe Foundation (Brussels, 2 December 2004)



crisis. Both times, there was an absence of authority. He filled the gap. He stayed calm in times of difficulty and focused on solutions.

'When the College dismissed its Rector, Mr Georis took responsibility for day-to-day management. He succeeded in keeping the boat on track. When I took over, we had an institution on a good track.

'He did the same thing at Madariaga, which was also on the wrong track. It was supposed to be helping the College, but it had become independent. The College had no impact anymore and Madariaga had no clear mission.

'Mr Georis came in and worked with me to re-establish the link with the College. Because of his connections, he succeeded in making bridges to other foundations, enhancing the stature of Madariaga. He put the finances of the foundation in better order by selling its headquarters building at an important gain, and put the foundation on a solid basis.

'Mr Georis filled a vacuum at both institutions, kept the ships afloat and brought them safely to port. He did these things in his own gentle way without confrontation. He accepted these challenges because he thought these institutions were important for his European ideas. He came in at moments when these institutions could have collapsed due to the absence of necessary finance and management.'

Marie Vincent (far left),
Magali Auquier (second from
left), both of the Madariaga
– College of Europe
Foundation, with Raymond
Georis at the Hendrik
Brugmans Memorial Lecture
(Brussels, 2 December 2004)



In 2006, Raymond and Solana oversaw the Madariaga– College of Europe Foundation’s work on a feasibility study exploring the possibility of setting up, in Europe, an international Centre for the Prevention of Genocide and Crime against Humanity. Marie Vincent authored the study which was conducted in partnership with the Carter Center in Atlanta, established by former US President Jimmy Carter, the Folke Bernadotte Academy, and chaired by Dr David Hamburg, President Emeritus, Carnegie Corporation of New York.

‘Raymond takes risks on people,’ reflects Marie Vincent, Project Manager, Madariaga – College of Europe Foundation. ‘He hires young people without experience. He sees his role as giving young people a chance. He has great generosity sharing his time and experience.’



(L–R) Raymond Georis,
Jimmy Carter, former US
President, and Professor
David Hamburg (Atlanta,
September 2005)

‘Homo universalis’

In 2007, at a ceremony attended by Prince Philippe of Belgium and Hans Gert Pöttering, then President of the European Parliament, Raymond was awarded the title of Honorary Member of the Brussels EU Chapter of the Club of Rome. In his *Laudatio*, Mark Dubrulle, Representative of the Brussels Chapter, said of Raymond: ‘Modesty is one of your many qualities. Your lifelong, outstanding work to improve cultural cooperation and education, particularly in Europe, is unknown by the public at large. Your action was – and still is – behind the spotlights of the public scene. It was not less effective. Quite the contrary. You are one of those visionaries who patiently, relentlessly, day after day, year after year, steadily give shape to the ideals they stand for.

‘You are a kind and gentle person, *une force tranquille* [tranquil strength], radiating a positive force. You act much through personal persuasion, one to one, as a bricklayer rather than a building contractor. As a matter of fact, you describe yourself as a worker. “I am,” you wrote somewhere, “a *homo faber europeanus*” [European builder]. With emphasis on *faber* [builder], I should think. It seems to me that being a true *homo europeanus*, you are also a true *homo universalis*.’

While he was Secretary General of the ECF and Managing Director of the European Cooperation Fund, Raymond was an ex-officio member of the governing bodies of the many Centres and Institutes created by those two organisations. He had resigned from most of those boards by the time he left the ECF in 1995, with the exception of two organisations very close to his heart. Raymond remained an officer of the European Institute of Education and Social Policy from 1996 to 2004 and, at the request of his protégé and colleague, Jill Adler, he is still on the board of the East-West Parliamentary Practice Project.

Serving not-for-profits

Throughout his career, Raymond has given freely of his time, experience, support and advice by serving as an officer and member of the governing bodies of many not-for-profit organisations. These include:

- Member, Eurocentres Foundation (Switzerland), 1983–2002
- Chair, Centre d'étude de formation et de ressources pour l'art et la culture (Paris), 1995–1996
- Member and Treasurer, International Association for Volunteer Effort (US), 1998–2002
- Member, American European Community Association – Belgium (Brussels), 1997–2004
- Member, United Nations University/CRIS initiative steering committee (Bruges), 2000–2001
- Member, European Citizen Action Service (Brussels), 2004–2007, Vice Chair 2006–2007
- Chair, European Foundation for Alcohol Research (Brussels), 2003–2009
- Member, Universal Education Foundation (France, Palestine, US), 2004–2010, Chair 2006–2010.

Raymond Georis has provided great guidance to the Universal Education Foundation. He identifies the right priorities, urges the founders to use best practices, and pushes them to be clear about what they want. He gives them courage and shows them the right direction forward.

Corinne Evens, Co-founder and Honorary President, Evens Foundation



Chapter 8

Modus operandi – how Raymond Georis gets things done

Discussing the motivation for the EFC to underwrite this book, Gerry Salole, the EFC's Chief Executive said: 'We want to understand how Raymond Georis got things done in Europe. What lessons can the foundation sector learn from his life?'

'Clone him!'

When that question was put to John Richardson, without a pause, he responded: 'Clone Raymond! He is an original. I've never met anyone quite like him.' Raymond is, undoubtedly, a unique individual. But there are some lessons lesser mortals can take from his life. Hopefully, the preceding pages – principally in his own words and the words of many people who have worked with him – suggest some answers to Salole's questions. Among other ways, Raymond got things done by:

- Having a vision of a peaceful, prosperous, tolerant Europe and world, and pursuing that vision passionately, tenaciously and energetically.
- Using old boy – and girl – networks and creating new networks of institutions and people to work together cooperatively and in partnership, particularly partnerships among foundations and with public institutions.
- Launching initiatives, then turning them over to smart, capable, often young people and moving on.
- Using formidable powers of persuasion and diplomacy to bring people together and obtain agreement.
- Looking forward with an instinct for timing and the ability to create new, innovative structures to address problems and challenges.

During his long tenure at the ECF, Raymond was rarely in the Amsterdam office more than one or two days a week. His absence gave his staff space and freedom to do their work. His extensive travels gave him the opportunities to find and promote new initiatives and create and cement relationships. 'I would not have been as successful if I had spent all my time in the office,' he observes.

An article appearing in *Holland Horizon* described a week in Raymond's life in the early 1990s: 'Raymond Georis shuns publicity, but although he will not tell a soul, he knows everybody who is anybody. Heads of state and party big-shots, industrialist and royalty alike. Not so long ago, he had an audience

with the Pope, who asked him if he could not do something for a Moscow Youth Orchestra. Only a couple of days earlier, the President of Iceland was there when he presented the *Prix Europa des Télévisions* in Reykjavik. And then via Lisbon, where he consulted with Mario Soares, he was off to the Kremlin.

A busy schedule that week. But this Belgian is used to it: he rarely spends more than one night in the same place.¹

.....
1 Mark Blaisse, 'Raymond Georis' Shadow Europe', *Holland Horizon*, December 1992, p29.

Luck and psychology

When asked why he believes he has been successful, Raymond first acknowledges that he has been very lucky. He has been in the right places at many opportune times coming into contact with many remarkable, supportive people, including Prince Bernhard, Princess Margriet, Hendrik Brugmans, George Sluizer, Henri Janne, Hywel Jones, and his ever-patient wife, Elizabeth, to name only a few. Coming of age in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Raymond embraced a fledgling Europe ready for innovation, cooperation and development. The collapse of communism presented him and his colleagues with the unexpected opportunities in CEE.

'I have no ego'

When pressed for other reasons for his success, Raymond says quizzically 'perhaps because I have no ego'. Freudians may be dubious of this self-diagnosis. Raymond, however, clearly has much less ego than most people. One ramification of this psychological condition is that he does not care about the limelight and receiving thanks or credit for accomplishments. John Richardson's invocation of the Chinese proverb – 'When the best leader's work is done, the people will say "we did it ourselves"' – is one way of expressing it.

For Luc Tayart de Borms, Managing Director, King Baudouin Foundation, this quality in Raymond is summed up by a saying attributed to former US president Harry Truman: 'It's amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.' Tayart de Borms adds: 'Raymond never has a personal agenda. He is not someone who jumps on the podium and convinces the audience with fantastic rhetoric. He works in the back of the

room, in the bar, on a train, over lunch with wine – like a good Belgian. He is a deal maker, working quietly behind the scenes. He has a way of chairing meetings that can irritate some people. He is never very clear in meetings. It's a certain style, after all, he's a very Latin person.'

Having 'no ego', Raymond is unconcerned if people do not thank him when he assists them. One of his favourite sayings is: 'People will amaze you with their ingratitude.' Raymond is self-deprecating about the decorations he has received. Princess Margriet wanted to make him a Commander of the Order of Orange-Nassau in the Netherlands, but the Dutch initially balked because Raymond had not been decorated by Belgium, his home country. Princess Margriet thus arranged for the Belgians to make him a Commander of the Order of the Crown. 'My father fought for four years in the trenches during the First World War, but was not made a Commander!' Raymond comments.

He says he received the Finnish decoration, Officer of the White Rose, because he was able to convince Princess Margriet to agree to bring the entire Board of Governors and ECF staff to Finland for a board meeting and reception above the Arctic Circle on midsummer night.

Raymond attributes his award of Hungarian Officer of the Order of the Cross of the Republic to the TEMPUS programme. According to Raymond, an official at the University of Budapest came up with the name TEMPUS (Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies) for the Commission's proposed mobility programme for CEE. Raymond sold the Commission on using the name. 'The guy in Budapest came up with the name, and I got an award,' he says ironically.



European Cultural Foundation governor's meeting with the backdrop of the midnight sun – the meeting was the first of its kind held outside of the Netherlands (Arctic Circle in Finland, May 1994)

Failure – a condition for success

Having 'no ego' also meant that Raymond did not fear failure. During his frenetic years at ECF, he compared himself to a juggler with too many plates in the air. 'If one of the plates fell on the ground and broke, I would not care. When a project failed, I moved on. If the prospects for an initiative were bad, we let it go. When someone approached me with the proposal for a research institute, for example, I would say "prepare your plan and we will discuss it". Then I would say we could help with a launching grant, but remember the foundation will not cover one hundred per cent of the costs. If you cannot find matching funding, we will stop. The risk of failure was built into the contracts with our beneficiaries and they knew that from the outset. One of my jobs was to be strong enough to stop a project or initiative when I considered it was going to collapse. That was my job, sometimes – to kill with a smile.'

The risk of failure, says Raymond, 'is a condition for success'. Taking risks is necessary for innovation. He convinced the ECF Board of Governors to take the risks of operating the ERASMUS and TEMPUS Programmes for the European Commission, even though this meant that the foundation had to hire scores of employees and administer vast sums of money. 'To be an entrepreneur, one must take risks. One cannot fear failure,' he says.

This entrepreneurial, risk-taking spirit is reflected in a tribute Raymond paid to his friend and colleague, former vice president of the European Commission, Étienne ('Stevy') Davignon, on the occasion of Davignon's 75th birthday in 2007: 'I would like to contribute my own humble gratitude to the celebrations. It is a gratitude expressed on behalf of the European community of universities, as they are forever in Stevy's debt for his speech to the Board of Governors of the European Cultural Foundation in 1987.'

'Barely 20 years ago, the foundation was faced with a major decision: whether to accept a request by the European Commission. At that time, the European institutions did not have authority over education matters. The Commission was seeking an external partner to launch a wide-ranging initiative on European student mobility. It lit upon the Amsterdam-based foundation, whose Brussels office had already been administering exchange programmes between European universities for several years. But the 1987 project had another scope altogether – its impact on the foundation's human and financial resources promised to be considerable, even perilous. This should give an indication of how lively and passionate the Governors' debate was that year.

'At one point, the project's opponents seemed to be carrying the day. Stevy then asked for the floor. In his grave, measured tones he invited the foundation's governors to demonstrate their faith in the future by building a Europe of knowledge to meet the expectations of the continent's youth, as the universities of the 20th century were still slumbering in the national corrals. Somewhat mischievously, he pointed out that the 85 million ECU allocated to the foundation by the European Institutions for the management of the programme during the first three years represented only a little more than two days of agricultural expenses!

'This lively plea for a truly enlightened Europe swept aside the assembled scepticism and won the unanimous support of his colleagues. Thus, the ERASMUS programme saw the light of day on the banks of the Amstel and drew its first breath in the homeland of its namesake.'

Helping people be happy

Raymond spent much of his professional life in the fields of education and culture. But he claims 'I was not really interested in the technical aspects. I simply want to help people be as happy as I am in my garden. Ultimately, my motivation has been to help other people to realise their dreams – to help them be happy.' Raymond approached this task by helping people launch their projects, getting them running, encouraging them to become independent, then cutting them loose. 'My interest was to innovate. Like children, initiatives have to learn to go their own way. As soon as I helped to create something, I was immediately thinking "when will it be strong enough to make its own way?" I had no sense of ownership and never wanted gratitude,' he says.

Serendipity – East meets West

One example of Raymond's efforts to make people happy and how those efforts led to unforeseen but serendipitous results centres around a young American woman, Leona Francombe, a pianist of Czech ancestry. She first met him briefly in Banff, Alberta, Canada, then arranged a meeting with him a few months later in 1986 in New York. She told Raymond she wanted to work in Europe and that her dream was to establish an orchestra comprised of young musicians from Eastern and Western Europe

Raymond wanted to help her realise her dream. He gave her a job at the ECF. She had some Eastern European contacts and spoke fluent Russian. With his encouragement, she wrote to the Cultural Foundation of the USSR, an organisation supported by then Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and his wife Raisa, to ask whether the Cultural Foundation of the USSR would partner with the ECF in launching the orchestra. The Cultural



Foundation of the USSR was interested in developing contacts with the West. Raymond and Francombe were invited to Moscow. The Concorde East-West Orchestra was launched.

These initial contacts prompted the ECF and the Cultural Foundation of the USSR to try to organise a conference in Leningrad in September 1989. Raymond and ECF Executive Committee Chairman, Robert Picht, went to Leningrad. During their visit, Cold War tensions had escalated due to US plans to deploy Pershing missiles in Europe. One of the Soviet negotiators said to Raymond that he did not wish to negotiate with warmongers. Raymond put a box of Belgian chocolates on the table and said: 'These are Belgian missiles.' The Leningrad conference went forward.

In Leningrad, about 50 people, representing many Hague Club member foundations and the Soviet foundation, came together to discuss cooperation between foundations East and West. Robert Picht and Raymond, with help from Francombe, came up with the idea for the conference. It was a great success. Raymond's friends from the Hague Club were amazed that the ECF could organise such an event, which occurred weeks before the fall of the Berlin Wall. German foundations agreed to cooperate with institutions in the Soviet Union. Raymond successfully proposed to the Cultural Foundation of the USSR a jointly financed book on Peter

Raymond Georis with a member of the Russian Orthodox Church at a meeting of the Cultural Foundation of the USSR (Leningrad, September 1989)



Raymond Georis meeting with Pope John Paul II at a Papal Audience for the Cultural Foundation of the USSR (Vatican City, 31 October 1991)

the Great's trip to the Netherlands, where he learned shipbuilding, and to other Western European countries.¹

After the Leningrad conference, Raymond was invited several times to Moscow to meet with foundations. By this time, the Berlin Wall had fallen and the Soviet Union was melting. One woman he had met from the Cultural Foundation of the USSR arranged to present a Russian Orthodox icon to Pope John-Paul II. To his amusement and surprise, Raymond was invited to attend a big party at the Soviet Embassy in Rome and then the audience with the Pope at the Vatican. Believing that Raymond was part of the Soviet delegation, the Pope spoke to him

in Russian: Raymond did not understand a word.

The September 1989 Leningrad conference would yield yet more unexpected fruit. When the Berlin Wall fell in November 1989, Raymond and Shepard Forman, his colleague at the Ford Foundation in the US, immediately perceived the need and opportunity for US and western European foundations to promote parliamentary democracy and civil society in the newly free countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Raymond chose Jill Adler, a young American woman with a law degree working for the ECF in Amsterdam, to follow up on the Leningrad conference and the contacts

¹ "In het Spoor van Peter de Grote", Alexander Basmanov and Jozien Driessen, published in Dutch by Cantecleer bv, De Bilt and in Russian by Sovjetski Fond Kultury, Moscow (1991).

with the Ford Foundation. She first did a feasibility study to determine if any existing organisations could run this project and concluded there were none.

With Raymond's support, she then shifted into high gear to organise a conference in April 1990 in Vienna. 'It was an amazing meeting,' she recalls. Raymond used his contacts to secure the participation of several major US and European foundations. Many members of newly elected parliaments from across Europe and the Soviet Union also attended.

At the meeting that took place in an enormous conference room, the participants agreed to set up an innovative programme to support the newly emerging parliamentary democracies in CEE and the former Soviet Union. The East-West Parliamentary Practice Project (EWPPP) was born. At the Vienna conference, participants came up with a three-year work plan. The EWPPP would be housed in the European Cooperation Fund and run by Jill Adler, under Raymond's supervision. The ECF would contribute her salary and office; other foundations would pay for the costs of the programmes, conferences and workshops. 'He was a magnet bringing together other partners to provide funding. If Raymond was involved, other funders wanted to be part of the initiative,' she says. The EWPPP became a highly successful, overtly political exercise in democracy building. It also created an innovative transatlantic partnership between US and European foundations.

This progress in East-West cooperation began with Raymond's chance meeting in Banff, Canada, with a young American musician of Czech ancestry, who wanted to work in Europe and had a dream.

“
He was a magnet bringing together other partners to provide funding. If Raymond was involved, other funders wanted to be part of the initiative.”

Bricks and *bricolage*

According to Elizabeth, Raymond has a 'brick in his belly', a Belgian expression for someone always building or renovating something. For her, this posed a problem because he was frequently away on business trips, leaving her alone to deal with workmen without her knowing French technical construction terms.

Gerry Salole proposes that the French terms *bricoleur* and *bricolage* give insight into Raymond's ways of working. A *bricoleur* is a handyman, a person who creates *bricolages*, also implying someone who invents his own strategies for comprehending reality. One definition of *bricolage* advanced by Claude Lévi-Strauss is: 'A shamanic spontaneous creativity accompanied by a willingness to make do with whatever is at hand.'² The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as 'construction or creation from whatever is immediately available for use; something constructed or created in this way, an assemblage of haphazard or incongruous elements.'³ Raymond's building of partnerships among foundations and with the European Institutions might be viewed as *bricolage*, as may be his creation of the EFC with elements he borrowed from US institutions.

2 <http://thebookman.wordpress.com?2008/03/01postmodern-terms-absence-to-curtain-wall/>

3 *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol 1, pp281–282 (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993).

Never a sleepless night

In 1991, Raymond told an interviewer from *The Guardian*: 'It is essential to be ironical about oneself. I have never had a sleepless night worrying about the office. My life is divided in two and one is not more important than the other. I am sociable in public and then withdraw into my garden, my books and my family.'⁴ Raymond continues: 'I have always maintained distance from my job. Stress is not for me. I have never worked on the weekend. I don't ring people during evenings or vacations. Nothing has been urgent enough to disturb the peace of others and my peace as well. I don't need money, power or status to be happy. I have not had a sleepless night. It's still true today. This is the only way to survive.'

Raymond is my mentor. He taught me what I know about management of an NGO: facilitate, don't micromanage; give your staff responsibility and support; be aware of the politics of the situation; watch funding trends; watch issue and theme trends; be innovative, ahead of the curve and flexible; and always move forward.

Jill Adler, Managing Director, East-West Parliamentary Practice Project



Raymond Georis, 2010

⁴ Theodore Zeldin, 'Invisible Bonds Man', *The Guardian*, 18 October 1991.



Epilogue

In July 2010, Raymond shared some thoughts on the past, present and future of the foundation sector, his career in the sector, the European project and life.

What can we learn from the history of foundations?

Foundations go back to the beginnings of civilisation. In ancient Egypt, the Pharaohs established foundations to maintain their tombs. Foundation-like entities existed during Greek and Latin antiquity. In the Eastern Roman Empire, foundations were governed by the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, the Code of Justinian, issued in the early 6th century.

From this early history, it might be said that foundations are inherent in the nature of human beings. Foundations reflect the social and altruistic

nature of human beings. They make a link with the future and are vehicles for people to transmit their dreams and visions to the future.

When a foundation is established, someone provides a sum of money for a public benefit purpose. Two legal systems have developed in Europe for governing foundations. The first is based on Roman law found in the civil law countries, including most of continental Europe. The foundation is a legal person and the governors represent the foundation. In the common law countries – Ireland, the UK and the US – there is the trust model. The trustees own the foundation and are accountable. I prefer the trust model because there you trust the persons to use the money according to your wishes following the ‘prudent man’ standard – like the Aristotelian idea of prudence.

I understand that the origin of the trust in England was the Crusades. A knight going off to the Holy Lands entrusted the safety and well being of his wife and property to a friend to look after them until the knight returned. This may have been somewhat risky.

If you look at foundations in the US and the UK operating under the trust model, they have been much more successful than foundations operating under the civil law model. This may be because the trust model is based on relationships, trust and altruism – this seems to me to be more normal as it corresponds better to the values of human society. I have been told that if you give \$1 to a foundation in continental Europe, you give \$10 in the UK and \$100 in the US. The trust model may explain, at least in part, this difference in giving.

Recently, Bill Gates and Warren Buffett proposed to the 400 billionaires in the US that they give at least half of their fortunes to philanthropy. I have seen estimates that those 400 billionaires possess \$1,200 billion – an

amount about the same as the GNP of India. Can you image the impact that could have?

Today, in Europe, we have both common law and civil law foundations working together and becoming partners within the EFC, NEF and other structures.

In your view, what is the future of foundations?

Foundations have important characteristics. First, they can be complementary to public authorities. Second, they can take risks; they can try innovative processes. Third, foundations can be efficient because they can react more quickly than public bureaucracies. Foundations are in the hands of a few people who decide how to dispose of money. Take Bill Gates, for example. There is no one to interfere if his foundation decides to spend his fortune in Africa as opposed to the US. These characteristics—innovation, complementarity, flexibility and efficiency—suggest that foundations have an increasingly greater role to play in an increasingly more globalised world.

Should foundations focus on the international, national or local level?

If you look at the US, the most important results foundations have achieved are at the local level. There are only a few foundations with a national or international focus. Most US foundations focus on the local level. The five biggest foundations in Pittsburgh I met with to try to find partners for projects in Europe told me they were not interested because they were spending their money only in Pittsburgh.

Foundations in Europe still have a long way to go to 'act locally'. Acting locally is the great achievement of the community foundation idea, which was born in the US. A banker in Cleveland conceived the community foundation idea in 1914. It's similar to the idea of the Grameen Bank and microcredit. Even people with limited means would make financial donations to their local communities, and if you pool those donations they become significant.

These foundations should be managed by local citizens to represent the community's interests. The foundation board of private citizens would be chosen both to represent the various interests of the community and for their knowledge of the community.

Recent research about leadership in flocks of birds may be relevant to leadership for community foundations. In flocks of birds, there is not one leader; nor is it a pure democracy. Birds follow other birds that have a better knowledge of where to fly. This could be called a 'democratic hierarchy' – everybody has a say, but not at the same level of influence.

The idea of community foundations was first introduced in Europe 20 years ago. It is an important model for Europe to develop foundations. The growth of regionalism in European countries, such as Spain and Belgium, is a significant phenomenon. Europe is providing an umbrella enabling the nation state to slowly lose its supremacy and eventually to disappear. The big danger is that regionalism and localism could go to the extreme of rejecting the 'other', the minorities, the aliens, the outsiders. Foundations – especially community foundations – should help foster and preserve tolerance and multiculturalism in Europe.

Across Europe, for example, more and more we will have migrants. The Schengen area permits free movement of people. Increasingly, people

will be coming to new countries with their own cultures and differences. Foundations can work to facilitate the local integration and toleration of migrants. Thus, acting locally is at the same time increasingly acting European.

What should foundations do to reach European citizens?

In the European Union, during financial crises, we see each nation state trying to defend its own interests. But the interest of the European citizen is not taken into account. The big deficit in Europe is that citizens don't care about Europe. Citizens don't realise that Europe brought them peace and prosperity. But the citizens have not been part of the process.

And yet, representative democracy was born in the West: a freely elected parliament should translate the voice of the people into law after reasoned debate and hold governments accountable while at the same time involving the citizens in the decision-making process. How can we preserve this model? What can be the role of foundations? Foundations have many stakeholders – donors, managers and users. Today, the donors or the managers decide. The users are not involved. It is not a process of co-decision.

I think the boards of foundations should be enlarged, as they are in community foundations. Citizens should be asked to join the boards of foundations so they can learn about the decisionmaking process and be part of it, particularly about local issues such as schools, health and environment. The donors and the managers should listen to what the citizens have to say at the local, national and increasingly at the European level.

Remember John Dewey, the American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer? He said something along these lines: 'Complete

democracy is to be obtained not just by extending voting rights. Rather, we must also ensure that there exists fully formed public opinion accomplished by effective communication among citizens, experts and politicians, with politicians being accountable for the policies they adopt.' Along with schools, Dewey considered that 'civil society' was a major issue needing attention and reconstruction. This is a big challenge for European foundations.

Foundations have a responsibility to become more democratic, to find out what the people want, not only by having citizen representation on their boards, but also by polling and information gathering. However, we are in an era of immediate information; too much information. The way to kill information is to give too much. With too much information, people are lost. Foundations should act to give people clear, objective and good information – 'not a single option, but alternative and competing answers'.¹

A related problem is that there is too much emphasis on the short term in our society. Politicians focus on getting re-elected; business people focus on quarterly results. Foundations can provide a forum where citizens can discuss longer-term policy and the real issues. Foundations should be clearinghouses for information, but also debating forums. Foundations should not only be grantgiving; they should also be think-tanks and they should foster research.

1 Pierre Defraigne, 'From "more EU" toward "which EU"', *Effect* magazine, Vol 4, Issue 1 (Spring 2010), p7; http://www.efc.be/NewsKnowledge/Documents/Effect/effect_spring2010.pdf

For 22 years, you headed an organisation called the European Cultural Foundation. Do you believe there is a 'European culture'?

Europeans share some common cultural elements, particularly our common classical heritage. But, essentially, I do not believe there is a common European culture or identity. During my years at the ECF, we commissioned and published a study exploring whether there is a common European identity and values. The study concluded that there are not common European values; there are only common global, human values.

The ECF has always tried to protect the diversity of culture and language in Europe. Unfortunately, many European countries have tried to kill minority languages. They have tried to impose one language to build the nation state. This led to excessive nationalism, which is the European 'mortal sin'.

To build a tolerant, culturally rich Europe, we need to promote education and among other important things, we need to teach languages, including minority languages. Europe is being destroyed by people's refusal to accept diversity of languages and to learn other people's languages. Belgium is an example. The European institutions are becoming more distant from the European citizens by using English as a *lingua franca*. As learning languages allows people to learn and appreciate other cultures, foundations should play an important role in promoting multilingualism.

Where is the European foundation movement today?

In the past, foundations often considered themselves as an exclusive caste. Even during the Annual General Assembly (AGA) and Conference of the EFC, the foundations were reluctant to admit other interested parties, particularly the users. Today, under the leadership of Gerry Salole, during the EFC's AGA and Conference, there is a new initiative,

Foundation Week, which opened its doors to other stakeholders. It is a forum where recipients of foundation funding can meet and discuss their projects with foundations. This is a great achievement. This is going in the right direction. Initiatives such as Foundation Week will help foundations become more democratic.

During your career, have there been any negative aspects in the European foundation movement?

Two negative aspects come to mind.

In the past, in countries in continental Europe, some governments tried to interfere with the appointment of foundation staff or in the grantmaking process. This suggested that foundations were not as independent as we liked to pretend.

The second negative aspect was the lack of transparency as to the sources and uses of money for some foundations. In the earlier years, some foundations did not publish accounts. Donors wanted to maintain secrecy. One of the reasons I created the EFC was to attack this wall of silence. On former Chief Executive John Richardson's initiative, at the 1995 AGA and Conference in Prague, the EFC got its members to adopt a Code of Practice.² The code represents a benchmark commitment to self-regulation by foundations, calling for transparency and compliance with the rule of law. The code requires public disclosure of sources of income and expenditures.

² European Foundation Centre, *Principles of Good Practice* (2007); *Illustrative Practice Options for Foundations – Implementing the European Foundation Centre Principles of Good Practice* (2007).

In your opinion, what have been the most significant roles and contributions of European foundations?

In my experience, the most important aspect has been the ECF's partnership with the EU in connection with its education programmes. It showed other foundations what could be achieved by a partnership with a supra-national institution.

In general, during the 'golden sixties', foundations followed the movement of economic growth towards an affluent society by helping the poor and the left-behind. Over the last 40 years, foundations have been progressively developing strategies not only for helping the left behind, but also strategies for determining what kind of society we want. The theme of the Universal Education Foundation, on whose board I sit, is 'wellbeing'. The EU is introducing wellbeing among its other measurements. Foundations have helped to supplement the purely quantitative way of measuring the riches of a country with qualitative measures. This may be the most significant development over my career.

From your comments, it sounds like you believe that the role of foundations has an overtly political dimension.

That's true.

If foundations adopt a political stance, isn't there a risk that governments will see them as critics and be less tolerant of their work?

On the contrary, I think governments will increasingly work with foundations. Since the last economic crisis, one notices that as governments are getting poorer, many individuals are getting richer. More and more

they are giving away their money to charitable causes, sometimes by endowing their own foundations. Due to limited budgets, governments are increasingly leaving problems to the private sector. Foundations are entering fields from which governments are withdrawing. So as not to lose complete control, governments are amenable to partnerships with foundations.

There are a lot of contacts between foundations and governments. The King Baudouin Foundation, for example, has representatives of the various political and philosophical factions in Belgium on its board. As a result, the foundation is more like an image of society now.

I am not aware of an example of governments being afraid of criticism coming from foundations. Criticism of governments coming from foundations will be very mild compared to criticism coming from the media. I don't see why governments should consider foundations in a cautious way.

Have European foundations lived up to their full potential? If not, what should they do to change or improve?

The big handicap of European foundations – and I was an example – was a lack of professionalism, as compared to the American foundations. The programme officers at US foundations were much more professional than their European counterparts, and some still are. During the last 50 years, this lack of professionalism in Europe has been a handicap for foundations in reaching their full potential. Thanks to the EFC, there are now training courses for European foundation personnel.

Foundations also need managers and staff with what we call in French *culture générale* – a broad general knowledge. When I was young, I did not learn modern languages. But one of my big advantages was my training in

Greek and Latin. If you do not have a *culture générale* background, you often remain parochial. I believe you need a broad cultural perspective to be a leader of a foundation, especially if you want to play and achieve political and democratic roles.

Have European foundations missed opportunities to improve their effectiveness and, if so, what opportunities have been missed?

Today, the people of Europe are facing very complex issues. European society is becoming increasingly multicultural. We face religious and ethnic issues. We have changing values. Society is becoming more individualistic and less altruistic. During this era of dramatic change, foundations have remained in a kind of ivory tower for too long. They were not listening to the users. The EFC's Foundation Week is a step in the right direction, but it is not enough. We need to listen more to the feelings of the people.

Why is it that populism – fear and distrust of the ‘other’ – is gaining now?

Foundations should be studying that question. It is important for the future of our society. Why do people focus so much on the short term? Why don't they care about the long-term future, except their own and that of their own children? Why is the public spirit lagging? Foundations have not given enough time and money toward addressing these issues.

For example, the European Citizens Action Service, directed by Tony Venables, is an NGO that tries to help other NGOs and individuals make their voices heard with the EU and defend citizenship rights. It is still

fighting for its survival. I believe this is a missed opportunity. The demand is there, but the offer is not there.

The EFC and NEF have been able to work internationally without a European Foundation Statute. Do you believe that a European Foundation Statute is necessary and, if so, why?

When the ECF developed its programmes at European level in the 1970s and 1980s, it was at a time when you could still get partnerships with the European Commission. These programmes were based on individuals who trusted each other. It was by chance that I met Hywel Jones when he was working at the European Commission, and he had a dream. We at ECF managed to help him realise the dream that became ERASMUS. At that time, we did not need a European Foundation Statute – the ECF was the only truly European foundation. Now things are completely different. Today there are more than 100,000 foundations in Europe. Now, also, the world is getting more global, more international.

Nevertheless, the partnership between the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) and the EU to develop and operate the ERASMUS and TEMPUS programmes remains a good example of how a foundation could play an important international role. Think about it – the TEMPUS programme was created after the Berlin Wall fell. The ECF got the programme started in less than one month. We could respond quickly because we already had competent people running the ERASMUS programme who could be set to work on TEMPUS. The EU could not have launched TEMPUS so quickly without the ECF.

I am sure that a model like that partnership 'across borders' between the EU and the ECF could tomorrow be facilitated by a European Foundation Statute, as foundations are still handicapped by their national status. I was

handicapped trying to run EURYDICE and ERASMUS. I could not employ people in Brussels through the Netherlands-based ECF. I had to create the European Cooperation Fund in Brussels to be able to conduct activities in Belgium.

Today, transnational giving is increasingly necessary and useful. There are transnational giving systems organised by the King Baudouin Foundation and others. But these provide only a *pis aller* (a last resort). Today it is complicated if an Italian citizen wants to help a Belgian foundation. A voluntary European Foundation Statute will be a plus. It will simplify the work of foundations and increase citizens' interest in foundations. It will increase giving to foundations from different countries. As we have seen, it will facilitate partnerships between foundations, public authorities and European institutions. Harmonised tax benefits would promote the launching of foundations.

What do you believe have been your most significant accomplishments in the foundation sector and why?

Let me say first that I was never alone in these accomplishments. They always were achieved through teamwork. For the first 16 years, founding Chief Executive John Richardson was the driving force at the EFC. I think our most significant accomplishment was to bring more transparency to the foundation sector through the EFC's Code of Practice.

A second accomplishment was diversification of activities. Previously, education and health were the main concerns of foundations. Today, foundations are entering the political field, the environmental field and more. This diversification has been fostered by the creation of European bodies such as the EFC and NEF.



The philosophical garden at the Erasmus House in Anderlecht, also the site of the EFC's creation in 1989

The third is decentralisation. It is important to decentralise risk. I never would have succeeded if I had put all the eggs in one basket.

As to programmes and initiatives, the most significant for me is the ERASMUS programme. The EFC was another significant accomplishment. It represented the beginning of the role of

foundations in helping democracy to survive. This is the cornerstone on which foundations could build a political role.

What have been your biggest disappointments in your work in the foundation sector and why?

The admonition is 'think global' or even 'think European'. But most people are still thinking 'national'. That is perhaps normal, but it is a big handicap. There is much that is stupid with nationalism. Think about the despair in France over the results of the 2010 Football World Cup. But as an aside, I think that football is important at the local level because people at least realise that they belong to something. For foundations, nationalism and national arrogance sometimes have been a handicap.

Another disappointment has been in trying to build partnerships. Today, it is almost impossible to build partnerships with the European Commission because you have to answer a voluminous call for tender and bureaucrats decide. A big disappointment is bureaucracy. Foundations are not accustomed to the bureaucracy of European institutions. Let us hope that the adoption of a European Foundation Statute will make it easier.

What advice do you have for current and future foundation managers, donors and policymakers in terms of being effective in the foundation sector?

In 1967, I got into the foundation sector by chance. Today, most people go into the sector because they want to achieve something. I have four thoughts.

First, today, you must be a professional in the field. You need to understand the history of foundations, what foundations are today and what roles they should play.

Second, you need to manage risks. Foundations face several types of risks, including financial, political, legal, ethical and programmatic risks. This requires collecting and analysing information, staying informed and looking ahead. That is what I tried to do at the ECF. We used the ECF National Committees to provide ECF management with information about what was going on in their respective countries. Europe is diverse. You need to know what is going on at the national and local levels, as well as the European and international level. Organisations such as the EFC are excellent sources of information.

The third piece of advice is that you must embrace what I call 'creative destruction'. Never start something you don't know how to stop. Do not stick with a programme that doesn't work. Kill it and start afresh. Venture capitalists have a saying: 'If you are going to fail, fail fast'. Evaluate why you have failed. Stay consistent with your broad mission, but renew your priorities. You need to have the aptitude to change.

Finally, you need to learn how and when to leave in time – never attempt 'a bridge too far'. This is also true for institutions. They need to learn how to

disappear in time. Increasingly, foundations are opting for the limited-life model. Rather than being set up in perpetuity, they set a fixed number of years in which they will disperse all the assets and cease operations. I think this is a good model.

Institutions need to change and adapt. And when they run out of mission, they should go away. I thought it was entirely appropriate for my successors at the ECF to change the foundation's direction. Some of the initiatives launched during my tenure at ECF, such as the European Institute of Education and Social Policy, the East-West Parliamentary Practice Project and the EFC, still survive because they still have a mission. Many others have disappeared. This is as it should be.

In retrospect, how would you characterise your career and *modus operandi*?

I have tried, with varying degrees of success, to use the organisations I have headed to provide institutional structure (and frequently initial funding) to people who have approached me with a project close to their hearts. These structures – whether ECF, European Cooperation Fund, AICE or NEF – allowed these people to try their projects, or launch them with some chance of success, and even occasionally see them set forth under their own steam. Several of these projects were able to take off and reach cruising altitude thanks to this institutional fillip. The EFC, I am proud to say, is one such project.

I have also tried, although sometimes in vain, to encourage different projects or organisations to develop networks of contacts and knowledge exchanges among themselves, and even to establish partnerships. The never-ending task of darning and re-darning this patchwork led me to travel relentlessly across Europe and around the world to the detriment of

Raymond and Elizabeth
(2010)



my family life. If my nomadic lifestyle was onerous to me, my wife and children probably suffered more from my long and all-too-frequent absences.

Was it worth it? In any event, after covering so much ground, the time has now come to heed the poet's counsel and unhitch my steaming horses.

At the age of 80, what advice do you have for people wishing to live a happy life?

Of course, happiness depends on many factors. But for me, happiness involves outdoor manual activity, intellectual activity, family and friends.

I have always found reading to be the most intelligent way of wasting one's time. Books are windows through which I have escaped the cacophony of the day. Like the French writer Valéry Larbaud wrote, I love a 'well-turned



Cover of grandson's book

phrase, drawn slowly and delicately from the depths of thought'.

My garden, like my reading, is a privileged place to learn and to think. It evolves over time, transforming with the seasons. Forever unfinished, my garden has been my learning ground, a fragile and threatened place. A few months of relaxed attention and neglect can disfigure it forever. Any forceful intervention, on the other hand, leaves scars slow to disappear. Insufficient care can rob it of life, but too much can cost it its soul. Gardening has taught me the beauty of simple and unpretentious things, a sense of moderation, patience, and appreciation of a job well done. Yesterday I spent the whole day in my garden. When I am tired from working in the garden, I have my books.

Family is important. I spend time with my grandchildren. I like to help them with their studies. Yannis, my eldest grandson, is entering secondary school and he chose a programme in both French and Dutch. For me, this will be great because I will be able to use my Dutch again to help him with his studies. Another grandson, Amayas, age seven, helped me write a book on our Maransart garden and did the illustrations.

Keep a lot of friends. Friends are important. Don't become isolated. Don't leave your group of friends.

In June 2010, Jean Gordon organised a dinner in Paris for my 80th birthday with my old friends Ladislav Cerych, Jean-Pierre Jallade and David Parkes. The younger staff of the European Institute of Education and Social Policy and its current Chair, Alain Michel, also attended the dinner. In July, I had another celebration with my old friends and colleagues, Luce



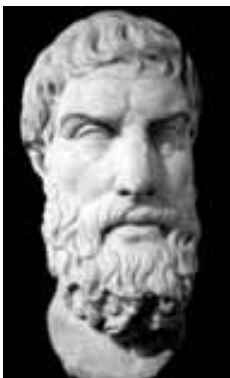
Raymond Georis friends from the European Institute of Education and Social Policy, celebrating his 80th birthday at the Vatel Institute restaurant (L–R): Jean Gordon (current Director), Jean-Pierre Jallade (past Director), Gloria Arjomand (Project Assistant), Raymond Georis, Alain Michel (current Chair), Ladislav Cerych (founding Director and past Chair), David Parkes (former Deputy Director), and Christina Keyes (Assistant Editor of the *European Journal of Education*) (Paris, June 2010)

Pépin and John Ashton. I will be seeing Luce, Domenico Lenarduzzi and Hywel Jones soon. I keep in touch with friends.

I believe that Aristotle was right—happiness is the greatest good and happiness comes from action. In my professional life, happiness has come from helping other people to be happy by realising their dreams.

I have one additional thought: I am a big admirer of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. In his book *Citadel* he wrote something along these lines: 'My rich shopkeeper friends prefer security. I have preferred the life of the nomadic man always pursuing the wind.' For me, the wind has been, as we say in French, *le bon vent* (a good wind).

Epicurus



What are your thoughts and plans for the future?

I have been thinking about another Greek philosopher, Epicurus. At age 80, I have decided to leave Aristotle and his students at the Lyceum to take refuge in the tranquil garden of Epicurus. I wish to replace Aristotle's call to action with Epicurus' pursuit of serenity enjoying 'a just and lasting peace' with my family and friends.

Given the apparent incapacity of mankind to humanise the world, which is fast becoming the devil's place, I remember Rector Brugmans' question

when I arrived at the College of Europe in 1956: 'What is your opinion of the devil?' At 80, I now have an opinion. The devil is not only over-consumption and short-term thinking. It is also violence, fanaticism, intolerance, arrogance and ingratitude. This is the reason why I am following Epicurus' advice and taking refuge in my garden – without isolating myself from the external world, but nevertheless keeping it at a distance.

While enjoying the present rapid succession of my days in Maransart, I hope to benefit from happy moments still to come. Most importantly, like Proust, I take great pleasure in remembering numerous moments of things past.

Raymond Georis at a farewell party for a European Cultural Foundation staff member (Amsterdam, June 1987)



“Without isolating myself from the external world, but nevertheless keeping it at a distance.”

Index

- Adenauer, Konrad 51
 Adler, Jill 7, 76, 112, 114, 140, 152, 153, 155
 Albert II of Belgium 90
 Alexander the Great 41
 Alting von Geusau, Frans 107
 Aquinas, Thomas (St) 40
 Aranguren, José-Luis 73
 Aristotle 40, 41, 175
 Arjomand, Gloria 175
 Aron, Raymond 73
 Ashton, John 7, 75, 76, 114, 175
 Auquier, Magali 139
 Awartani, Marwan 7, 18
- Basmanov, Alexander 152
 Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands 45, 75, 101, 103, 145
 Bikmen Bugay, Filiz 131
 Blaisse, Mark 144
 Borsinger, Nicolas 19
 Bourgès-Maunoury, Michel 136, 137
 Boyle, John 52
 Briggs, Asa (Lord) 7, 79, 80, 124
 Brophy, Michael 92, 120, 122
 Brugmans, Hendrik 50, 51, 52, 53, 55, 69, 73, 76, 108, 134, 138, 139, 145, 175
 Brunner, Guido 81
 Buffett, Warren 158
- Carême, Maurice 21
 Carter, Jimmy 139
 Cerych, Ladislav 7, 52, 58, 61, 79, 81, 84, 123, 124, 174, 175
 Chabert, Jacques 75
 Charhon, Francis 16, 129
 Chenal, Odile 7, 75, 96, 115, 125
 Clinton, Bill 114
 Couve, Pascale 111, 112, 113, 114, 115
- Dahrendorf, Ralf 88
 Davignon, Etienne ('Stevy') 148, 149
 De Gasperi, Alcide 51
 De Raedt, Henri (Abbot) 39
 Defraigne, Pierre 162
 Degryse, Annemie 7, 111
 Dehaene, Jean-Luc 7, 137, 138
 Delbrouck, Emile (Eric Blue) 24, 45
 Delors, Jacques 86, 134, 136
 Demaret, Paul 138
 Dickson, Chris 7
 Didisheim, Michel 7, 92, 93
 Drachkovitch, Milorad 52
 Driessen, Jozien 152
 Dubrulle, Mark 140
 Dumont, René 58
 Dutt, Beulah 64
- Edding, Friedrich 73
 Epicurus 14, 175, 176
 Erasmus, Desiderius 14, 38, 42, 43
 Evens, Corinne 7, 8, 141
- Fernandez, José-Antonio 81
 Figel, Ján 81
 Flynn, Pádraig 129
 de la Fontaine, Jean 25, 27, 44, 66
 Forman, Shepard 121, 152
 Fragnière, Gabriel 79, 135
 Francombe, Leona 88, 150, 151
- von der Gablentz, Otto 134, 136
 Gambke, Gotthard 89
 Gates, Bill 158, 159
 De Gaulle, Charles 41
 Georis, Amayas 24, 174
 Georis, Charles 23, 24
 Georis, Gabrielle 24, 46
 Georis, Georges 24, 29, 30, 31, 35, 46
 Georis, Hélène 29, 31
 Georis, Jean-Gangulphe 22, 23, 24
 Georis, Jules 23, 24, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38
 Georis, Yannis 24, 174
 Georis-Coates, Elizabeth 7, 9, 15, 24, 36, 38, 52, 56, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 65, 66, 70, 71, 72, 95, 145, 154, 173

- Georis-Janssen, Madeleine 23, 24, 32, 34, 38
 Gilson, Étienne 40
 Giscard d'Estaing, Valéry 103
 Gorbachev, Mikhail 150
 Gorbachev, Raisa 150
 Gordon, Jean 7, 79, 80, 94, 174, 175
 Gracq, Julien 44, 45
- Hall, Peter 73, 74
 Hamburg, David 139
 Harris, Christopher 132
 Hergé 44
 Hesiod 108
 Hidalgo Schnur, Diego 133
 Hillenius, Hans 90, 92
 Hitler, Adolf 27, 29, 30
- Ibrahim, Mo 16, 132, 133
- Jallade, Jean-Pierre 7, 79, 121, 174, 175
 Janne, Henri 73, 107, 145
 Janssen, Albert-Edouard 40
 Pope John-Paul II 144, 152
 Jones, Hywel 7, 17, 43, 81, 82, 83, 84, 107, 122, 129, 130, 145, 168, 175
 De Jouvenel, Bertrand 73
- Keyes, Christina 175
 Kilmurray, Avila 132, 133
 King, Alexander 73
 Kirchberger, Alexandre 7, 129
 Kirchberger, André 81
 Kohnstamm, Max 73
 Koopman, Jan 114
 Koyunsagan, Zerrin 131
 Kropf, Daniel 7, 18
 Krüger, Angelika 130
- Laird, Sally 88
 Larbaud, Valéry 173
 Lebret, Louis-Joseph (Abbot) 58, 59
 Leibbrandt, Gottfried 120
 Lenarduzzi, Domenico 7, 81, 83, 107, 175
 Leonard, Dr 63
 Lévi-Strauss, Claude 154
- Macdonald, Norine 7, 131, 132
 de Madariaga, Salvador 52, 137
 Madl, Ferenc 138
 de Maistre, Joseph 54
 Princess Margriet of the Netherlands 7, 75, 76, 96, 101, 107, 108, 109, 111, 114, 120, 123, 125, 127, 145, 146
 Maritain, Jacques 40
 Martinez-Cuadrado, Miguel 79
- Mathol, Lise 7, 76, 115
 Mauriac, François 108
 Mawji, Aly 133
 Meerdink, Jan-Herman 90
 Menuhin, Yehudi 125
 Michel, Alain 174, 175
 Miller, J A Y 63, 64, 65
 Monjardino, Carlos 15, 92, 118
 Monnet, Jean 14, 51, 121, 122
 Moulin, Léo 73,
 Murphy, Ray 133
 Mussolini, Benito 29, 31
- Napoleon 14, 22
 Niemeyer, Horst 92
- O'Sullivan, David 129
- Pai, A V 63, 64, 65
 Parkes, David 174, 175
 Pascual de la Parte, Nicolas 137
 Péguy, Charles 27
 Pépin, Luce 7, 80, 81, 123, 174–175
 Perroux, François 58
 Persson, Kristina 133
 Philip, André 73
 Pöttering, Hans Gert 140
 Prince Philippe of Belgium 136, 140

- Picht, Robert 75, 76, 151
 Pierides, Mr 77
 Pifer, Alan 91
 Proust, Marcel 44, 176

 Racine, Jean 39
 Remi, Georges 44
 Reynaud, Paul 31
 Richardson, John 7, 15, 81, 82, 93, 111, 120, 143, 145, 164, 169
 Richardson, Wendy 8
 Rienstra, Dianna 7, 9
 Roberts, Frank 122
 De Rougemont, Denis 73, 76
 Rukanova, Sevdalina 8, 11

 Sabanci, Güler 131, 133
 Saenz de Miera, Antonio 92
 de Saint-Exupéry, Antoine 44, 55, 94, 175
 Salole, Gerry 7, 8, 11, 16, 131, 143, 154, 163
 Scassellati, Ubaldo 89
 Scholten, Ynsoo 75, 101, 103, 104, 105, 108
 Schuman, Robert 14, 51
 Schwartz, Bertrand 73
 Segerstedt, Torgny 73
 Semprún, Jorge 96

 Sluizer, George 69, 70, 73, 74, 102, 145
 Smith, Alan 7, 78, 81, 83, 86, 87, 99, 118, 123
 Soares, Mario 144
 Solana, Javier 132, 137, 139
 Spaak, P H 51
 Stephan, Rüdiger 76, 129

 Tayart de Borms, Luc 7, 8, 16, 127, 129, 145
 Tinbergen, Jan 52, 73
 Tindemans, Leo 79, 103, 104, 105, 107
 de Tocqueville, Alexis 54
 Tracy, Michael 118
 Truman, Harry 145
 Tsyboula, Sylvie 92
 Twain, Mark 45

 van der Wiel, Alko 75, 107, 115
 van Sitteren, Raphael 7
 van Tongeren, Annette 115, 123
 Vassiliou, George 77
 Veil, Simone 118
 Venables, Tony 167
 Verli, Angelique 81
 Vilar, Emilio Rui 16, 131
 Vincent, Marie 7, 139
 Visalberghi, Aldo 73
 von Moltke, Konrad 79

 Warin, Colombe 7, 128, 129
 Watkiss, David 7, 9
 Watson, Katherine 8, 17
 Wedell, George 79
 Welling, Willem 89
 Wellington (Duke of) 14
 White, William S 7, 95
 Williams, Peter 89, 90
 Wilson, Lesley 7, 81, 84, 123
 Winter, Elizabeth 88

 Young, Michael 73
 Yourcenar, Marguerite 45

 Zeldin, Theodore 155
 Zweig, Stefan 42

