

University of Luxembourg

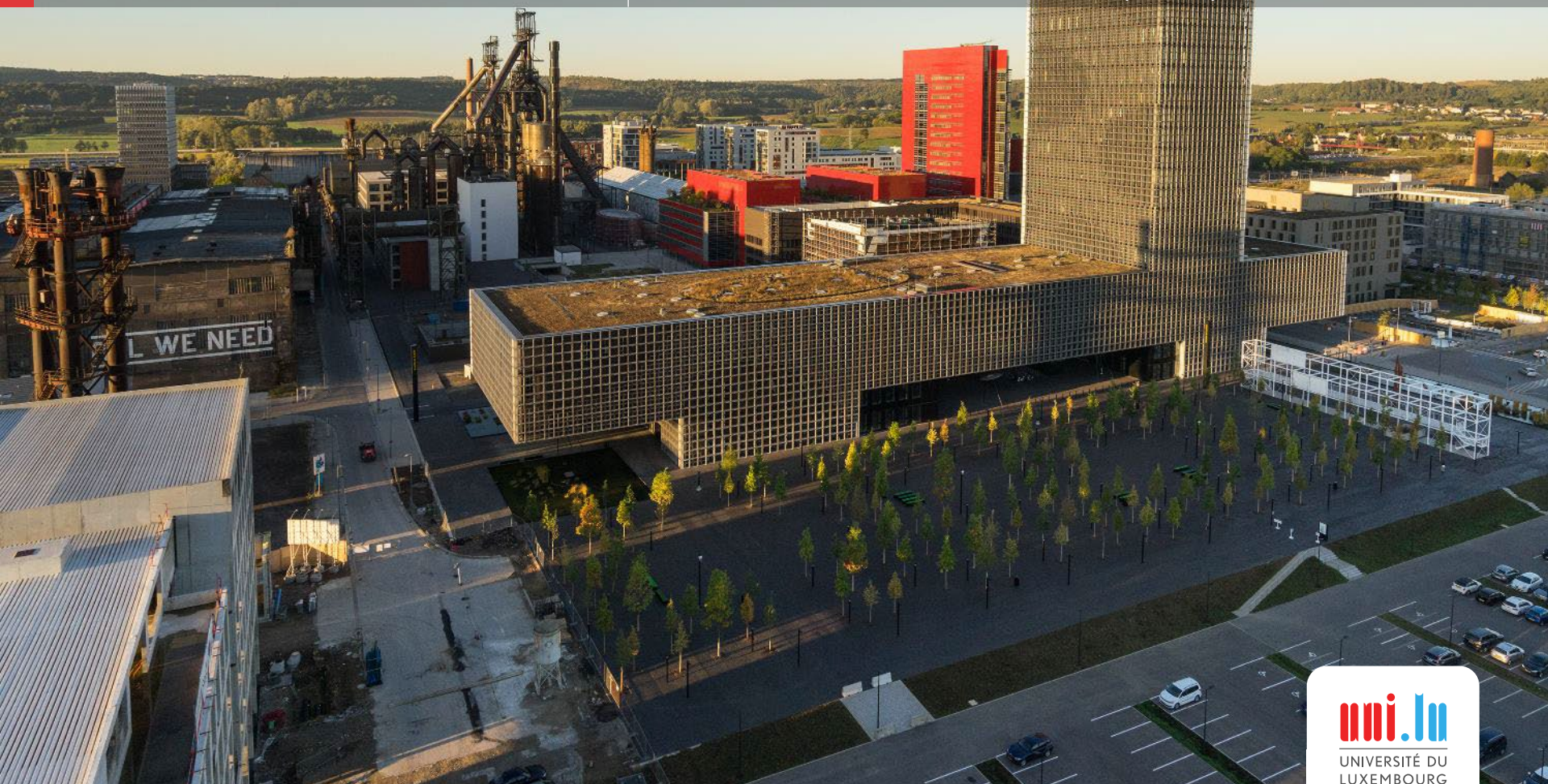
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The female face of Europe – hidden histories, transnational dynamics, new approaches

Research Seminar RSCS, 29 October 2024

Elena Danescu (C²DH Luxembourg)

Jean Monnet Fellow, RCSC, EUI Florence



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1. Introduction

Presentation of the Research project “The female face of Europe...”

2. European Integration Studies through Oral History and Multimedia Research - Innovative methodology and new content creation

Example: Oral History Research Project (2022-2025) (work in progress)

Pioneering women in Luxembourg international relations

3. Preliminary findings

Mapping the role of women in Luxembourg post-war diplomacy through the lens of oral history

4. What's next?

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1. Introduction

Historiography – An overview

The role of women in international relations has been the focus of increasing interest since the mid-1970s, resulting in a growing body of research. Researchers have turned their attention to a wide range of subjects:

- from pacifism during the Second World War (Gottlieb & Johnson, 2022) to the feminist movement,
- from human rights (Briatte, 2020) to gender studies and intersectionality (Carver & Lyddon, 2022).
- In the field of European studies & Europeanisation, interest in the part played by women has gained traction among researchers - mirroring policy developments, with work beginning on a first common policy on women's economic and social rights in the 1970s.

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In more recent years, the research community has focused on topics such as:

- parity issues (Bereni & Reveillard, 2007; Deshormes, 1991)
- women's participation in the exercise of political power (Woodward, 2004; Union interparlementaire, 1995)
- the concept of gender mainstreaming (Abels & Mushaben, 2012)
- the role of women in European integration (Hertner, 2021; Briatte, Gubin & Thébaud, 2019).

But the attention paid to women's impact on power relations (Hubert 2022), institutions (Carbonell, 2019; Dénéchère, 2016) and diplomacy (Seidel, 2023) has remained marginal.

Although women from all horizons – intellectuals and experts, diplomats, activists, trade unionists and many others – played a crucial role in the post-war European project, their impact has yet to be explored in depth (Sluga 2021; Abels, MacRae 2021), despite the fact that recent shifts in historical practice have led to a re-evaluation and reinsertion of women in disciplines such as international relations, history and sociology (Müller, Tömmel 2022; Owens, Rietzler 2021; Sluga 2021; Holzhauser 2021).

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A four-pronged approach:

- The **profusion and variety of multimedia and multilingual archival sources and collections** (print, digitised and born digital) about women in European integration history kept at the Historical Archives of the European Union (**HAEU**), available through the [HAEU database](#)
- The ongoing interest at the European University Institute (EUI), the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSC), the HAEU and the Alcide De Gasperi Research Centre (AGC) in implementing multilayered, inter- and transdisciplinary research and dissemination projects dedicated to women
- The expertise at the University of Luxembourg/[Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History](#) (C²DH) in the field of contemporary European history, including as a result of the ongoing interdisciplinary research project [“The role of women in international and European relations of Luxembourg” \(2022-2025\)](#), the creation of new oral history sources and the outstanding capabilities in terms of digital methods, tools and practices of digital historiography, including new forms of dissemination of [research results](#)
- The possibility of sharing and developing this research in synergy various scholars, research groups and networks, etc from the RSC and EUI leading to enhanced knowledge and a deeper understanding of European integration history from a multidisciplinary perspective

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Goals and Outputs

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General Research Questions

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Multi-media Research

a). Biographical documentary

The **biographical documentary 'Pierre Werner, a European vocation'** is primarily composed of video accounts by major players in the European integration process recorded by the CVCE as part of its '*Pierre Werner and Europe*' research project, as well as images and photos from the Pierre Werner family archives, to which the CVCE has been granted exclusive access. Subtitles in English (Duration: 22' 45", June 2022). Source: <https://wernerreport50.uni.lu/biographical-documentary/>

b). Podcast series (with Radio 100Komma7)

Source: <https://wernerreport50.uni.lu/podcast/>

c). Documentary Portal on the Werner Report and EMU origins set up by the University of Luxembourg/ C2DH in cooperation with the EUI Florence.

Source: <https://wernerreport50.uni.lu/>

d). Consolidation of the methodology and best practices for repository

2. Oral History Research Project – *The role of women in European and international relations in Luxembourg (after the Second World War) (2022-2025)*

Main objectives

- To conduct filmed interviews with women from a wide range of backgrounds whose action left a mark on European and international relations in Luxembourg
- To publish them – in full, as a series of themed excerpts and in transcription form – on the C²DH research infrastructure and on the dedicated platform
- Digital methodology and toolbox (network analysis, distant reading)
- **The resulting multimedia resources will also be shared with the HAEU Florence and Jean Monnet Foundation Lausanne**

Source: <https://www.c2dh.uni.lu/fr/projects/le-role-des-femmes-dans-les-relations-europeennes-et-internationales-du-luxembourg-apres-la>

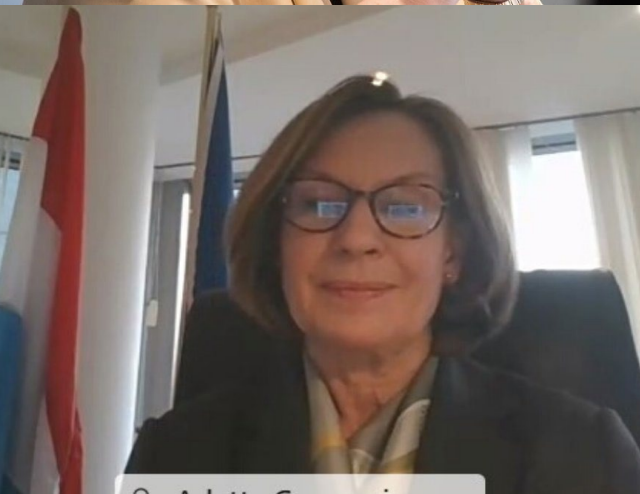
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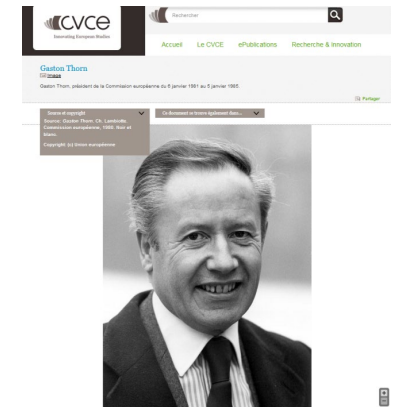
Evolution of women's participation in Luxembourg's political life

A few key factors – Individuals, challenges and opportunities

Gaston Thorn (1928-2007) and Pierre Werner (1913-2002) inaugurated a new era for Luxembourg, and new prospects for a whole generation of young female politicians.

During the **Werner-Thorn era** (1960s and 1970s), **European integration entered a new phase**: Luxembourg City became the financial and legal centre of the EEC, and Pierre Werner ensured that the project for a single European currency gained ground.

With the appointment of Gaston Thorn as the first President of the European Commission in 1980, Luxembourg consolidated its position as an influential international player and consensus builder.



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20 APRIL
14:00 - 18:30

21 APRIL
09:00 - 13:30

Maison du Savoir
Salle Germain Dondelinger, 17th floor
2, avenue de l'Université
L-4365 Esch-sur-Alzette

WOMEN'S NARRATIVES AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION HISTORY

Even though women played a vital part in the European project launched after the Second World War, their role has yet to be fully explored. By adopting an interdisciplinary approach and divers methodological backgrounds, the conference aims to analyse the topic of women from a variety of perspectives including specific historiographical traditions and theories related to the history of women, biographical narratives in the development of the European project, the "female lobby" in favour and against Europe, gendered entanglements related to European democracy, rights, policies, institutions and actors, digital storytelling and oral history in developing new knowledge of the past.

The conference is organised in connection with the project "The role of women in European and international relations in Luxembourg" (2021-2025), developed by the University of Luxembourg, Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C2DH) and Europe Direct at the University of Luxembourg (ED-UNILU).



Elena DANESCU François KLEIN

Women's narratives and European integration history

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

20-21 April 2023

University of Luxembourg



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Thank you for your attention!

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