



European Parliament
**FORMER MEMBERS
ASSOCIATION**

News from the FMA December 2023



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EPRS Event - 6 December

***President José María Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado:
A Historical Appraisal***

The **FMA Annual Events** took place on **6-7 December 2023** at the European Parliament in Brussels. Starting off, Former MEPs attended an [EPRS event](#) commemorating the late President of the European Parliament and Former President of the FMA, [José María GIL-ROBLES GIL-DELGADO](#). **Etienne BASSOT**, Director of the Members' Service, European Parliament Research Service (EPRS) welcomed the participants in the room and connected online. Current [FMA President Klaus HÄNSCH](#) introduced the event, representing [European Parliament President Roberta METSOLA](#).



President HÄNSCH honoured **José María GIL-ROBLES GIL-DELGADO** by quoting the late President: *"The association has filled a gap, one that would have been very regrettable; it has enabled those of us who at one time or another have represented Europeans, to remain in contact and has been able to draw on the knowledge acquired over the years and ensure that it is used to consolidate this 'sui generis' body which brings together and channels our peace efforts."*



EPRS Event - 6 December

*President José María Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado:
A Historical Appraisal*

The event was attended by **Former Presidents of the European Parliament and Former FMA Presidents** [Enrique BARÓN CRESPO](#) and [Hans-Gert PÖTTERING](#). Maria CAVALLARO, Professor at LUISS University Rome was connected online and performed the opening address.

There were eyewitness accounts by **Enrique BARÓN CRESPO**, Former President of the European Parliament, and **Jaume DUCH GUILLOT**, Director General for Communication and Spokesperson of the European Parliament, moderated by **Wolfram KAISER**, Head of the Service of the European Parliament History Service.



[EPRS Briefing](#)



[Recording](#)



[More pictures](#)



Annual Cocktail & Dinner - 6 December

The **FMA Annual Cocktail Reception and Dinner** took place in the Members' Restaurant of the European Parliament on 6 December 2023 from 18.30 to 21.30. The event marked the end of an intense year of activities and programmes.

The **Vice-President of the European Parliament**, [Rainer WIELAND](#), attended and spoke on behalf of the **President of the European Parliament**, [Roberta METSOLA](#): *"We need to come back to a time where politicians are again actively participating in all aspects of their work (...). I thank the FMA for all the work they are doing in promoting European democracy."*

Former and current MEPs were present, including the **Vice-President of the European Parliament**, [Marc ANGEL](#). Closing the FMA's Annual Dinner, **President HÄNSCH** fittingly promoted the FMA's role and importance in encouraging participation in the 2024 European elections by reiterating that *"first and foremost we need to keep the European Union of peoples and states together! We Former Members of the European Parliament stand ready to put our whole impact to do just that!"*



Annual Cocktail & Dinner - 6 December

Speech by FMA President Klaus Hänsch

“

Five points for reflection on the upcoming European elections in 2024.

1. The promise of European unification was a war-free Europe. What was not promised was a crisis-free Europe. Today, war is back and crisis is permanent.

In these times, the first and foremost thing is to keep the European Union of peoples and states together. We former Members of the European Parliament stand ready to do just that. We are not campaigning for this or that result in the European election next year, but simply for the highest possible turnout. Our experience reminds us we did overcome crises after crises for almost half a century.

Our self-confidence reminds us we solved seemingly unsolvable problems despite all the gloomy prophecies and doubts. History teaches us that there are times of progress and renewal. And there are times of perseverance and preservation. This is more important than ever before.

2. The war in Ukraine confronts Europe with questions that it has not had to answer for almost 30 years: The question of a common foreign policy, security and military defence and the question of an expansion of its competences beyond the scope of Maastricht and Lisbon treaties. At the same time, our Union faces a new prospect of geographical enlargement to the east in terms of sovereignty and democracy.

The Union needs a rapid and far-reaching internal reform and a decision on when and in what form a country like Ukraine can join the Union. The creation and the keeping of a strong, stable, and decision-making European Union takes precedence over its geographical enlargement.

3. Many people and leaders in the world and some in Europe consider our Union to be a liberalist and inefficient obsolete model. Some Member States appear exhausted. The Union must fear exhaustion. And we will not let it die of exhaustion.



Some want to reduce the Union to a mere single market or even a free trade area. They claim that this would make it more attractive to citizens again. The truth is, a common market without a common policy on climate protection, without the euro, without cooperation on internal security and without military defence will not make the Union more popular, but more irrelevant.

We do not need a trivial Europe.

For us, former Members of the European Parliament, it is crystal clear: No inadequacy, no omission, no mistake is reason enough to let our Union disintegrate or to contribute to its destruction. We continue to stand for the Europe of democracy, where an elected majority is ruling while remaining subject to the rule of law.

The nation state may exist without democracy. For the European Union, Democracy is existential. Our European Parliament is not a copy of one of the national parliaments in Europe.

It should not try to become such a copy. It is the freely elected parliament of the world's first project of transnational democracy.

There is no doubt about that. Let us be proud of it.

4. Our actual challenge is transition. To a geographically larger Union, to climate protection, digitalisation with AI, military defence. That means transition to global responsibility, global interest, and global influence.

In other words, our Union must change from a project of peace to a project of power. In the middle of the last century, the aim was uniting Europe against the belligerent self-destruction of the European peoples. Today, the aim is about keeping Europe together for our self-assertion in the world.

If we allow our Union to weaken and disintegrate, it will become a playing field for foreign powers. If we allow the Union to drift, the Union surrenders.

The more globally the Union acts, the more European it must become and the more clearly it must show the world what it stands for: The Union stands for the rule of democracy and the rule of law and for freedom against the impositions of autocracies and the threats from dictatorships.

If Europe allows itself to be dismantled, it will leave world history: First politically, then economically and finally also culturally.

According to all surveys in all member states, most Europeans want Europe to speak with one voice in the world. We all do not necessarily have to sing all with one voice - nor do we all have to sing at the same volume.

But finally we must agree on the same text for what we want to say to the world. A Europe that can no longer be heard in the world and that no longer wants to mean anything to the world is losing its future, and even worse it will lose its soul.

5. Uniting Europe is not anti-national; after all, the European Union does not stem from another planet. Rather, it was created by nation states.

They then had the courage and the foresight to forge ahead on a historically new path. Today we must have the courage and the foresight to keep our Union together despite all the crises and gloomy prophecies. The union of the European states and peoples is not done, yet it is the best we have.

There is no other political creation in world history with comparable appeal and resilience as the European Union.

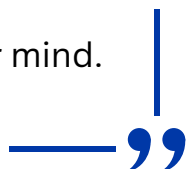
That is a great story.

Let us not be faint-hearted about it.

Let us be proud of it.

Our Union is far more than just a construction of power and market economy. It is an ethos that sets an example to the world of the rule of democracy, and the rule of law. And human rights for all men and women.

Our Union is worth standing by it with a warm heart, a strong hand and a clear mind.



Klaus Hänsch
FMA President

FMA Librorum

FMA_HAEU Publication ‘Participation in Europe’

On 7 December 2023, from 10.00 to 11.00, FMA Vice-President [Monica BALDI](#), and EP to Campus coordinator and FMA Board Member [Michael HINDLEY](#) (editors) presented the [FMA_HAEU Publication “Participation in Europe”](#) during the Librorum event at European Parliament in Brussels.

The book explores ways to enhance civic education and envision a European landscape where citizens are not just spectators but active architects of their democratic future. The publication is based on contributions of speakers and guests during the hybrid conference on 16 June 2023. The event was opened by **FMA President [Klaus HÄNSCH](#)**.



FMA Honorary Secretary [Teresa RIERA MADURELL](#) introduced the editors and emphasised that according to the white paper on European governance *‘participation is crucial to achieve more democratic governance in the EU’*.

FMA Librorum

FMA_HAEU Publication 'Participation in Europe'

[Dieter SCHLENKER](#), Director of the Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU) and [Valentina RIBOLDI](#), Communication Unit Italian Erasmus+ National Agency – INDIRE, both made a short online intervention, before the meeting moved on to a Q&A session with the audience, present and online.



The event ended with the final remarks of the editors. **FMA Vice-President Monica BALDI** stated that *“education is crucial! The book which was a common effort (...) shows that through dialogue, education and training we can truly achieve a better Europe!”*

[FMA_HAEU
Publication](#)

[Recording](#)

[More pictures](#)

FMA Annual Seminar

New technological transition: opportunities and challenges

From 11.00 to 13.00 (Brussels' time), the FMA held its [Annual Seminar 2023 on 'New technological transition: opportunities and challenges'](#) in the European Parliament, Brussels. Guest speakers **Associate Professor of IT Law at the University of Tartu and Research Fellow at the School of Transnational Governance (EUI), [Marta CANTERO GAMITO](#)**, and **CEO of the Customized Artificial Intelligence Solutions company Querlo, [Francesco RULLI](#)**, made insightful presentations on the opportunities and challenges of new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.

Marta CANTERO GAMITO explained the perceived “Trilemma of political governance” and stated that *“we stand at the verge of a major transformation – the shift from human to machine decision-making. The democratization of generative AI tools (...) triggers the question of why do we expect more of machines/legislators than we do of ourselves?”*



FMA Annual Seminar

New technological transition: opportunities and challenges

During his intervention, **Francesco RULLI** focused on the potential of AI and weighed the ethical considerations and potential pitfalls associated with integrating AI into democratic systems: *“Artificial intelligence emerges as a pivotal force, capable of both aggravating problems and facilitating positive outcomes. It possesses the potential to amplify the spread of fake news or serve as a secure harbour for authentic information.”*



FMA Secretary [Teresa RIERA MADURELL](#) moderated the Q&A session with the audience and FMA Board Member [Paul RÜBIG](#) drew the final conclusion of the Annual Seminar. During the Q&A session, the audience was particularly interested in the ethical considerations and problems of AI. FMA Board Member [Dr Godelieve QUISTHOUDT-ROWOHL](#) for example asked the panelists: *“How can we guarantee, particularly in the context of academia, that students do not misuse the technology of AI to write their official reports or theses?”* Similarly, **Former European Parliament and Former FMA President** [Hans-Gert PÖTTERING](#) inquired: *“How can we ensure that the possibilities of AI are in line with data protection rules and are not misused as it might be the case in a totalitarian state like China?”*. Amongst the students who were present during the seminar, questions came up focusing on how to make sure that young people are educated enough in these new technologies and what their use might mean for a democratic system.



Watch the recording of the FMA Annual Seminar again in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish and **share it with your contacts!**



[Programme](#)

[Recording](#)

[More pictures](#)

FMA Management Committee meeting

On 7 December 2023, following the Get-Together lunch, the [FMA Management Committee](#) met to discuss the future projects of the FMA in 2024, in particular the [visits](#) organised by the FMA to Belgium and Hungary under the Presidency of the Council of the EU. Also discussed was how - in light of the forthcoming EU elections - to invite outgoing MEPs to join the Association. The FMA visits facilitate and promote a pluralistic political dialogue with representatives of national parliaments and governments in order to assess the progress made in EU affairs.

The Management Committee will meet in 2024 on 31 January, 10 April (new Management Committee), 16 October and 4 December.

More information on the upcoming activities for FMA Members in 2024 can be found further below in this Newsletter.



From left to right: Edward McMILLAN-SCOTT, Michael HINDLEY, Godelieve QUISTHOUDT-ROWOHL, Jean-Pierre AUDY (Treasurer), Elisabetta FONCK (Secretary General), Klaus HÄNSCH (President), Monica BALDI (Vice-President), Teresa RIERA MADURELL (Honorary Secretary), Miguel Angel MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ, Manuel PORTO and Paul RÜBIG

[Read here the Press Release
about the FMA Annual Events](#)

Advantages of the European Union



The **December Bulletin** is now available online!

This issue is dedicated to the **Advantages of the European Union** and keeps you up to date on the **FMA's activities**. You have received an electronic version only, unless you have requested to receive a printed copy by post.

The Bulletin is available in [English](#), [French](#), [German](#), [Italian](#) and [Spanish](#).



FMA March Bulletin

The March Bulletin is currently being prepared with focus on the **Freedom of Politicians**.

This edition will also include a report on the FMA Annual Events that took place in December 2023.



President Hänsch meets (Vice-)Presidents Political Groups and new Quaestor responsible for the FMA

15-16 November 2023

On Wednesday 15 November 2023, FMA President [Klaus HÄNSCH](#) met with **S&D President** [Iratxe GARCÍA PÉREZ](#) to inform her - among other matters - about the activities of the Association to encourage participation in the 2024 European elections through the experience of former Members of the European Parliament.



On the following day, **President HÄNSCH** also had a meeting with **ID Vice-President** [Gunnar BECK](#), accompanied by **ID Secretary General Philip CLAEYS** to present the recruitment campaign of the Former Members Association for outgoing members in 2024 and other future activities.

Preceding this meeting, **President HÄNSCH** met with [Isabel WISELER-LIMA](#), newly appointed Quaestor of the European Parliament, responsible for the FMA, together with Quaestor [Fabienne KELLER](#).

The Members of the Management Committee thanked Mr [Christophe HANSEN](#) for his support for the FMA throughout his mandate and wished him success in his future endeavours.



Book presentation of Miguel Ángel Martínez Martínez

Socialist, democrat and Europeanist. *The political career of Miguel Ángel Martínez Martínez*

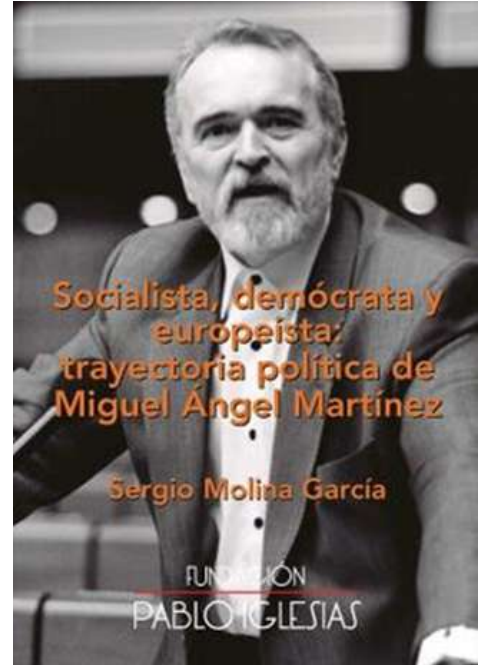
On Wednesday 15 November 2023, FMA Board Member [Miguel Ángel MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ](#) presented the book ‘**Socialist, democrat and Europeanist. The political career of Miguel Ángel Martínez Martínez**’, written by Sergio Molina Garcia, in the Library’s Reading room of the European Parliament.

The event was opened by **Members of the European Parliament** [Domènec RUIZ DEVESA](#) and [Cristina MAESTRE MARTÍN DE ALMAGRO](#).

FMA President [Klaus HÄNSCH](#) and former EP and FMA President [Hans-Gert PÖTTERING](#) introduced the event, where **President HÄNSCH** stated:

“The title of this biography, "Socialist, Democrat, and Europeanist," encapsulates the essence of Martínez' political philosophy. As a socialist, he has fought for social equality and justice. As a democrat, he has upheld the principles of inclusivity and representation. And as a Europeanist, he has worked tirelessly to strengthen the bonds that unite us as Europeans.”

The book was presented by Miguel Ángel Martínez Martínez, FMA Board Member and Former Vice-President of the European Parliament. The book is written by author Sergio Molina and published by the Pablo Iglesias Foundation.



In favour of an “alliance of democracies”

Hans-Gert Pöttering in India

From 18 to 26 November 2023, the former President of the European Parliament and past President of the European Parliament Former Members Association, Hans-Gert Pöttering, travelled to India. There he visited the city of Dharamshala in the state of Himachal Pradesh, where His Holiness the Dalai Lama lives in exile and where the Tibetan parliament and government-in-exile are located. The Dalai Lama had invited Mr. Pöttering to Dharamshala. The two have been friends for 20 years. Among other things, Mr. Pöttering invited the Dalai Lama to address the European Parliament in 2008 during the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. In addition to the audience with the spiritual leader of the Tibetans, talks with representatives of the Tibetan government in exile and with members of the parliament in exile were on the programme. Mr. Pöttering also travelled to New Delhi, where he held various political talks and gave guest lectures at the Hindu College and the Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Mr. Pöttering had already drawn the attention of the German public to the fate of the Tibetans in the past. In 2008, he criticised the Chinese Communist Parties treatment of minorities in connection with the Olympic Games. In 2013, Mr. Pöttering was denied entry to Tibet. In the talks with the former member of the European Parliament, the representatives of the Tibetan government in exile declared that China was committing "cultural genocide". It is common practice to place Tibetan children in boarding schools in order to systematically alienate them from their Tibetan culture. The aim of this practice is to thwart Tibetan identity and assimilate the population.



In favour of an “alliance of democracies”

Hans-Gert Pöttering in India

During his guest lectures in New Delhi, Mr. Pöttering advocated for closer cooperation between Europe and India. He emphasised that both regions are value partners. In times of increasing geopolitical systemic conflicts, Mr. Pöttering emphasised the importance of an "alliance of democracies" in order to counter authoritarian systems. Mr. Pöttering also emphasised that in the political tradition in Europe, as in India, the dignity of the individual is inviolable and the individual takes centre stage. In stark contrast, in totalitarian and authoritarian systems such as China and Russia, the collective takes centre stage and the dignity of the individual is sacrificed in favour of an ideology, said Mr. Pöttering.

Mr. Pöttering also expressed his delight that India is becoming increasingly visible on the international stage and that, with its G20 presidency this year, it has shown that it can and wants to play an important international mediating role. In his speech to 700 students, Mr. Pöttering encouraged the young generation in India to continue on this path and emphasised that he would welcome India taking on even more international responsibility. In this context, the former President of the European Parliament spoke in favour of a permanent seat for India on the United Nations Security Council. "The composition of the Security Council is no longer in tune with current times," said Mr. Pöttering.

With regard to the ongoing negotiations on a free trade agreement between the European Union and India, Mr. Pöttering called on both sides to be more willing to compromise. "The focus must be on the mutual will to reach an agreement. We must not let the negotiations fail because of small details," said Mr. Pöttering.

2024 European Elections and FMA recruitment campaign for outgoing MEPs

We wish to thank all Members who contributed to the FMA brochure for outgoing MEPs that will be published next year and all Members that attended the FMA Annual Events on 6-7 December 2023 and agreed to record a video for the promotion of the recruitment campaign.



We count on your support to invite outgoing and former MEPs to join the Association!

Stay tuned on our projects in the framework of the 2024 European Elections by following our website and social media channels!

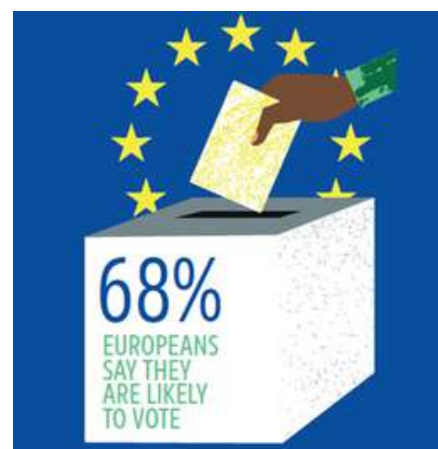


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Eurobarometer survey

Despite the complex geopolitical and economic context, Europeans continue to value EU membership and remain quite optimistic regarding its future. A large and stable majority of Europeans (72%) think that their country has benefited from EU membership. The main reasons for thinking this are that the EU contributes to maintaining peace and strengthening security (34%) and membership of the EU improves co-operation between countries of the EU (34%).

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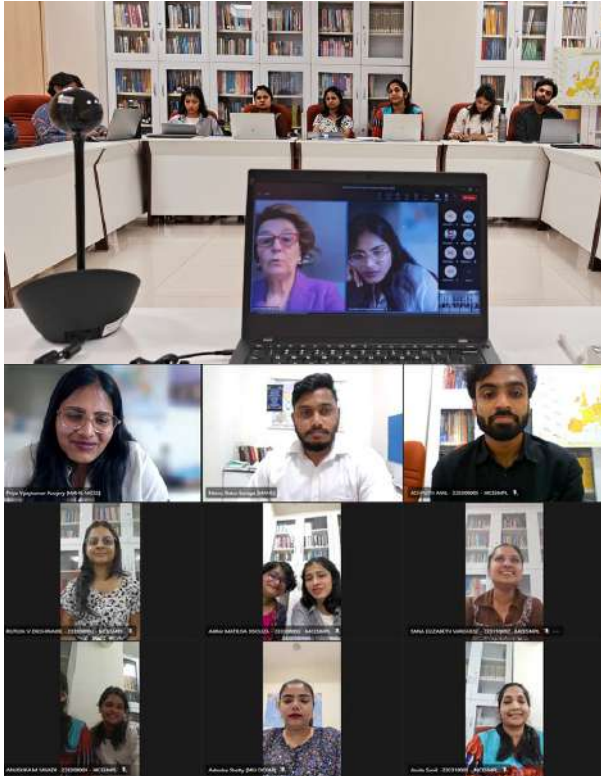


More information on the survey:

<https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3152>

EP to Campus programmes organised

The FMA continues to support education in EU affairs by contributing the experience and expertise of its members to webinars in Europe and beyond. Thanks to all participants, universities and the coordinators of the EP to Campus programme [Michael HINDLEY](#), [Manuel PORTO](#) and [Dr. Godelieve QUISTHOUDT-ROWOHL](#).



15 NOVEMBER 2023

Former MEP [Anneli JÄÄTTEENMÄKI](#) gave an online lecture at Manipal Academy for Higher Education about the '2024 European Elections'.

“*It was an astonishment to notice that students in India were so interested in European Union issues and were also so knowledgeable. This is an excellent base for good co-operation.* - [Anneli JÄÄTTEENMÄKI](#)”

23 NOVEMBER 2023

Former MEP [Birgit DAIBER](#) gave an online lecture at the University of Macau (China) on 'The EU Climate Policy'.

“*The debate with the participants was very lively. The thirty participants, most of them already PhDs and Masters, participate in programs on European, International, and comparative Law. Therefore, we could expect a high-level debate.* - [Birgit DAIBER](#)”



A report on these EP to Campus programmes will be included in the **March 2024** edition of the **FMA Bulletin**.





11 DECEMBER 2023

Former MEP [Edit HERCZOG](#) gave an online lecture at the University of Setsunan (Japan) on the ‘Best energy mix in the European Union’.

“At the Q&A session, a student raised the question about decision-making process of energy and environment policies in the EU. Ms Herczog emphasised the importance of the compromises in the EU with 27 member states. After the lecture, some students commented, “The lecture was very clear and informative.” Approximately 130 students were attending this important lecture. It was strongly believed that these Japanese students were much more stimulated to study European affairs, especially European energy and environment policies.

- Prof. Dr. Hiromasa Kubo

“I thank FMA for creating bridges and connecting me with the 130 students and their Professor, Professor Hiromasa Kubo at Setsunan University. It was a great honour that our lecture was opened by Prof. Dr. Takashi Yanagawa, dean of the Faculty. It is always a pleasure to talk with students, especially on a topic which I had the pleasure to work on since I entered the European Parliament in 2004, the EU's energy policy. - [Edit HERCZOG](#)

21 DECEMBER 2023

Former MEP and FMA Board Member [Manuel PORTO](#) gave an online lecture at Bilkent University (Turkey) on ‘The EU Green Deal and the Eastern Mediterranean.’

“Prof. Porto answered several student questions: on migration and European politics, on Euroscepticism, on the future of EU-Turkey relations and the rise of far right political parties.

- Prof. Ioannis N. Grigoriadis





18 MARCH 2024

Former MEP [Liliana RODRIGUES](#) will visit University of Oviedo in Spain and give a lecture on *'Perspectives on the challenges and shortcomings of the digital society'*.

9 MAY 2024

Former MEP [Elmar BROK](#) will hold an online lecture at Lutsk National Technical University on *'Ukraine's Accession to the EU: a View from the European Parliament'*.



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9 MAY 2024

Former MEP and FMA Board Member [Dr Godelieve QUISTHOUDT-ROWOHL](#) will hold an online lecture at University of Macau on *'2024 Europe Day'*.

9 MAY 2024

Former MEP [Liliana RODRIGUES](#) will visit the University of Łódź in Poland where she will hold a lecture on Europe Day, EU decision-making process and the role of the European Parliament.



25 MAY 2024

Former MEP [Birgit DAIBER](#) will give an online lecture at University "Chernihiv Colehium" in Ukraine at the International Scientific Conference *"Teaching and Learning EU: challenges for Ukraine"*.

Upcoming FMA events in 2024



FMA VISIT TO BELGIUM | 8-9 APRIL 2024

On the occasion of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the FMA will organise a visit to Belgium from 8-9 April 2024 to discuss the most important items on the EU agenda.

Registrations will be opened via mail in 2024.

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE | 9 APRIL 2024

The Annual Memorial Service organised by the FMA will take place on 9 April 2024 from 17.45 to 18.15 in room SPAAK 3C50 in the European Parliament in Brussels.

[More info](#)



COCKTAIL & DINNER DEBATE | 9 APRIL 2024

The Dinner Debate will take place on 9 April 2024 in the Member's Restaurant at 19.30, preceded by a Cocktail Reception from 18.30 to 19.30.

[More info](#)

ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY | 10 APRIL 2024

The FMA Annual General Assembly will take place on 10 April 2024 in room SPAAK 7C50, European Parliament, Brussels from 10.00-13.00.

[More info](#)



ANNUAL LUNCH | 10 APRIL 2024

After the Annual General Assembly, all FMA Members are welcome to participate to the FMA Annual Lunch in the Members' Restaurant from 13.00 to 14.30.





European Parliament
**FORMER MEMBERS
ASSOCIATION**

*The Members of the Management Committee and the Secretariat
wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and
a Happy and Healthy 2024!*

Composition of the FMA Management Committee



PRESIDENT
Klaus HÄNSCH



VICE-PRESIDENT
Monica BALDI



TREASURER
Jean-Pierre AUDY



SECRETARY
Teresa RIERA MADURELL



Michael HINDLEY



Miguel Angel MARTÍNEZ
MARTÍNEZ



Edward McMILLAN-SCOTT



Manuel PORTO



Godelieve QUISTHOUDT-
ROWOHL



Paul RÜBIG



QUAESTOR
Fabienne KELLER, MEP



QUAESTOR
Isabel WISELER-LIMA, MEP

*The FMA offices and the Bureau de passage will be closed from
22 December 2023 to 2 January 2024 included.*

