



FORMER AND CURRENT EUROPEAN LEADERS GATHER IN BRUSSELS TO MARK 25 YEARS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT FORMER MEMBERS ASSOCIATION

A Shared 'Commitment for Europe': FMA 25th Anniversary and Commissioner Kubitius' Vision for a Genuine European Defence Union

From 2 to 3 June 2026, former Presidents and Members of the European Parliament, senior EP officials, and other distinguished European figures gathered at the European Parliament in Brussels to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the [European Parliament Former Members Association \(FMA\)](#). At a time of significant geopolitical and democratic challenges for Europe, these anniversary events brought together current and former European leaders to consider the importance of parliamentary democracy, institutional memory, and European cooperation in determining the future of the European Union.

Since its foundation in 2001, the FMA has fostered dialogue between former Members of the European Parliament, European institutions, and civil society, promoting democratic values, parliamentary diplomacy, and civic engagement across Europe.

We had the honour of welcoming the five former Presidents of the European Parliament to our event; [Enrique Barón Crespo](#), [Josep Borrell](#), [Pat Cox](#), [Klaus Hänsch](#), and [Hans-Gert Pöttering](#). We were welcomed by EP President, Roberta Metsola to the European Parliament on 2 June for a brief meeting.

FMA 25TH ANNIVERSARY OPENING EXHIBITION – 2 JUNE

The official programme began on 2 June with the opening of the **FMA 25th Anniversary Exhibition at the Yehudi Menuhin Space in the European Parliament**. The exhibition retraced the history and legacy of the Association and highlighted the continued contribution of Former Members to European public life and democratic dialogue.

The opening programme included:

- **16.00** – Statement by [Klaus Hänsch](#), President of the Former Members Association (FMA) and former President of the European Parliament
- **16.10** – Choral performance by the European Parliament Choir, directed by **Maxim Hauk**
- **16.30** – Introduction to the exhibition by [Monica Baldi](#), Vice-President of the FMA who curated the exhibition

The exhibition was opened for viewing on **Monday, June 1 and will be on display until Friday, June 5**. The exhibition features *Soixante-dix-neuvième pensée, L'Européen*, a bronze sculpture created in 2002 by **Jean-Michel Folon**. The sculpture was donated to the [House of European History](#) by former EP and FMA President [Enrique Barón Crespo](#) in 2019 and has been exceptionally loaned for this exhibition, marking its first public presentation.

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE – 2 JUNE

The anniversary celebrations also included the Annual Memorial Service in the **Hemicycle of the European Parliament from 17:45 to 18:15**, to honour [former MEPs](#) who have passed away in the last year. The outgoing President of the FMA [Klaus Hänsch](#) opened the ceremony and a tribute was delivered by European Parliament Vice-President [Katarina Barley](#). The honour roll call was read by the Vice President of the FMA, [Monica Baldi](#). The service was concluded by former President of the European Parliament, [Josep Borrell](#).

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For immediate release



The event was broadcasted live on the [FMA website](#) and is still available.

DINNER DEBATE – “The way to achieve a genuine European Defence Union” - 2 JUNE

The evening dinner debate took place between **7.30pm and 9.00pm at the Multifunctional Institutional Restaurant at the European Parliament**. The dinner commenced with a keynote address by the [European Commissioner for Defence and Space, Andrius Kubilius](#), about Europe’s strategic future and security priorities. The speech, titled "*The way to achieve a genuine European Defence Union*", focused on the key issues and challenges currently facing the European Union in this area. Following his speech, there was an interactive exchange with FMA members.

We were delighted to welcome to our 25th anniversary celebration events: the President of the [European Association of former members of parliament of the member states of the Council of Europe \(FP-AP\)](#), [Hon. Rosa Maria Mandicò](#), as well as a delegation from the [US Association of Former Members of Congress \(FMC\)](#), with two former Member of the U.S. Congress: Vice-President of the FMC Executive Committee [The Hon. Dennis Ross](#), and [The Hon. Russ Carnahan](#).

ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY – 3 JUNE

On 3 June, the FMA Annual General Assembly brought members of the Association together to review activities and elect the governing bodies. The election took place **from 9:00 until 13:00** and the **FMA’s new President, Josep Borrell, was elected at the Management Committee meeting that took place in the afternoon.**

ABOUT THE FMA

The [European Parliament Former Members Association \(FMA\)](#) is made up of over 700 members, from the 27 Member States plus the United Kingdom, who voluntarily offer their experience and expertise to carry out the many activities of the association. With professionalism and passion, the members are committed to strengthening international democratic networks, building democracy and making people understand the functioning and current rules of the European institutions, especially the Parliament. Particularly appreciated is the participation of FMA members in seminars, conferences, in cooperation with universities and schools, such as the well-known educational program "[EP to Campus](#)", in study visits and EU Presidency.

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