

## Personal and Sentimental

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Joining the European Movement during those leaden times gave me the impression of finding shelter from a great storm, of turning my back on gloomy reality and discovering a little island of normality and serenity in a noisy, furious ocean...

The writer of these lines belongs to what is probably the majority of Earthlings, whose memory is not so powerful that it allows them to reconstruct in detail events that took place a long time ago. So I sometimes regret not having kept a diary or taken notes more often. However, I can do a quite decent job of reconstructing those events which occurred from the moment I crossed the threshold of the European Movement in the winter of 1995, at the invitation of its then secretary general, Jelica Minić, who had invited me to take part in the preparations for the upcoming Day of Europe.

I followed the foundation of the first European Movement in Belgrade – the Yugoslav one – from afar, working in Brussels. At that time I just got an invitation saying: “Will you join us?” “Of course,” I thought to myself and, occupied by my work, as well as the vortexes of history spinning around our heads, immediately forgot both the invitation and the Movement.

### The Wrong Time, the Right Place

However, after my return to Belgrade a few years later, joining EMinS was a totally logical step for me. Of course, I was not yet aware of the important consequences that this step would have in my subsequent private life, but I very soon felt I was in the right place.

At that time, the European Movement was subleasing one of the offices on the first floor of the Institute of Economic Sciences, while meetings of its Steering Committee took place on the ground floor of the same building. The architecture recalled a lady from a well-off middle-class family, now slightly past her prime.

It was that time when history with a capital “H” was still rolling and raging through the streets of Belgrade and the territory of our former homeland, scattering and crushing our small lives as if they were straws in a whirlwind. Let me just remind younger people that, for instance, in those days it happened to more than one Belgrade man that the day started with him seeking some document from the police, or parking his car in the wrong place, and ended with him in an unidentified prison camp belonging to the “special units”, or on a faraway hilltop with a weapon in his hands.







than an association of citizens or an institution struggling for European integration. It became the place where I met my wife, and where our

**Various persons well-known or unknown were constantly passing through and buzzing around its office, projects were being written, plans devised, and publications and magazines prepared**

love was born. Therefore, our two kids may well be regarded as “children of Europe”. Praise be to European integration!

And what happened to the celebrations for the Day of Europe? Well, no opera diva or YU-rock star ever came, of course, nor even any leading European politician. However, some fine events did take place, like an auction of paintings whose proceeds were donated to people at risk, and there were also a few modest but very nice

concerts. We also published the planned brochure with the EMinS declaration, Monnet’s text, the biographies of the “fathers of Europe”, and so

on. Only the little flowers were missing... And finally, as in previous years, a modest ceremony on the premises of the “Cinematheque” crowned the celebrations.

In the years that followed, the European Movement kept developing further, growing continuously and bringing together more and more people in Serbia, both from Belgrade and beyond it. However, the preparations for the 1995 Day of Europe will forever hold a special place in my memory.

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