Who doesn’t know him? Asterix the Gaul who rebelled against the Romans and in his adventures travelled all over Europe. He brought the tea across the Channel, relished Belgian Waterzooi and enjoyed Greek wine. A true European avant la lettre!

Other comic strip heroes aren’t much impressed by barriers, be they geographical or mental, either.

Europe has an eventful past – What does its future look like? Do we even need a European super hero to rescue the Union?

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation organised the International Comics Competition “Animate Europe” to find out.

The Belgian Comic Strip Center is very happy to support Animate Europe. This competition proves that the world of comic strips is a free universe without borders to the imagination, encouraging creativity all over the world. It’s our sincere wish that this may be a metaphor for the future of Europe.

Willem De Graeve
Animate Europe
International
Comics Competition 2013
In my perspective the entries of the Animate Europe contest show how comics can tell about a complex topic in a (seemingly) easy and often humorous way.

Lilli Gärtner

Artists can also mean a lot to Europe, for the continuation of the tradition of the graphic novel, the storytelling. Starting up a creative process involves a lot of people, the creation itself is maybe a very individual moment, but the economic, financial and cultural results are not to be underestimated. The governments, city councils and cultural organizations who have high appreciation of comics and graphic art see an important increase of visitors in their museums, galleries, shops and events.

Thorsten Ernst

Animate Europe is transforming the idea and the vision of Europe into the popular language of comics - to make people think about the essentials of our European community and to give comprehensible links for those who are not interested in bureaucracy and detached politics.

Linda Torfs

Europe can mean a lot to artists. It can be, like in this competition, the inspiration for their stories, but it also can give them an international platform. There is a massive cross-over of talent and editors/artists with potential all over Europe. International festivals are important, because they make the community, the possibilities and bounds stronger.

Paul Gravett

Comics come into being thanks to the clever and harmonious combination of various elements - drawings, words, symbols, colour ... - like Europe is the interplay of cultures, traditions, languages, needs and minds ...

Andreas C. Knigge

I was hugely impressed by the quality and diversity of voices and themes from the entrants to this competition. Their storytelling in words and pictures reaffirms the power of the comics medium to bring to life the many different personal and political perspectives on Europe.

This initiative of Naumann Foundation created a great opportunity for people of different cultural background to show their talents and to share also their vision of Europe. Once again, this proves that comics can transport serious ideas. I’m very happy to discover the variety of artistic approach of each participant.

Marzena Sowa
The year is A.D. 2013.
Europe is in a deep, deep crisis.
Well, not entirely ...

That’s what the famous first lines of “Asterix and the European Union” could sound like. Indeed, many European member states are faced with severe financial and socio-economic problems. EU citizens are more and more losing faith in the European institutions. A new narrative is called for that is appealing and redefines the European project. Politicians, scientists and journalists are desperately trying to give answers.

We were looking for a different perspective, not a Brussels or ivory tower one. We asked artists from all over the world to tell and draw their story. On Europe’s past, present or future. On European myths, dreams or reality. We asked them to ANIMATE EUROPE.

And here they are: the five best comics. As diverse in approach, topic and style as the European Union and its 28 member states. But what all artists have in common: They ANIMATE EUROPE!

Enjoy the read!

Hans H. Stein
Regional Director
European Institutions and North America
Andreas C. Knigge is a publicist, lector, translater and literary agent. He was co-founder and editor of the magazine Comixene and later editor-in-chief at Carlsen's. He published several books on comics, lastly the biographies of Charles M. Schulz and Hansrudi Wäscher.

Lilli Gärtner works as an illustrator in Leipzig. She studied drawing and illustration at the University of Fine Arts (HFBK) in Hamburg and the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) in Baltimore.

Linda Torfs is the owner of the international comic bookshop and gallery MEKANIK STRIP. Furthermore, she is the organiser of LAMBERMONTMARTRE, an annual open air exhibition for painters, sketch-artists and photographers. Linda was the president of the commission of comic books and illustrators of the Flemish Fund of Literature and is the initiator of the comic wall project in Antwerp.

Marzena Sowa is a graphic novelist. She holds a degree in French and Italian literature. In collaboration with Sylvain Savoia, she has been publishing the comic book series “Marzi” which tells the story of her childhood in communist Poland and got her a nomination for the Eisner Awards.

Paul Gravett is a London-based freelance journalist, curator, lecturer, writer and broadcaster, who has worked in comics publishing and promotion since 1981. He is the founder of Escape Magazine, and writes a monthly article on comics appearing in the UK magazine Comics International, together with a monthly column for ArtReview. He has written for various periodicals and is the author of several books on the subject of comics, including Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese Comics (2004), and Graphic Novels: Stories to Change Your Life (2005), as well as most recently Comics Art (2013).

Thorsten Ernst is a freelance TV author. After his degree in political studies and philosophy, he explored the radio and TV world and shaped the magazine Tracks (Arte) as an author. He worked for a TV production company for several years, but decided to venture into self-employment and has been roaming the world of pop culture ever since.

Willem De Graeve is the director and communications manager of the Belgian Comic Strip Center in Brussels. He has written several articles about comics, including a literary analysis of an album by Jacques Martin. He also regularly gives lectures on the history of Belgian comic strips at home and abroad.
André Slob
The Pool
Europe is like a family: it should do its best to stick together

Emily Victoria Solichin
Saving Europa
The wizard of time tries to alter the course of history

Kilian Wilde Lukas Wilde
Bordering
Two Europeans take a look at Europe from across the Mediterranean

Luke Ellison
Salute!
A greeting bounces back and forth through Europe

Marco Tabilio
Erasmus and the seal
A seal gives Erasmus of Rotterdam food for thought on the unification of Europe
works as comics artist and illustrator.

Wanting to become an art teacher he studied in Delft and graphic design in Rotterdam, he deliberately cut the ties with the past and plunged for years in a world of traveling, career switches, yoga and buddhism. He worked in cafes, restaurants and movie theatres, prepared in Norway to volunteer in Angola during the civil war. He designed websites, stayed in ashrams, lived in buddhist monastries in France and Nepal, and finally thought it might be a good idea to return to what had always remained close to his heart: drawing and comics.

specializes in comic style art, illustration, and paintings.

She is currently studying at the The Art Institute of Chicago. She received a distinguished scholar merit scholarship from Pasadena City College and an award for superior achievement in art history from Bina Bangsa School in Kebon Jeruk, Jakarta, Indonesia. She illustrated Dr. Ritsuko Hirai's first year Japanese study book and worked together with Dr. Debashish Banerji on the "Ajanta Project", turning ancient Indian cave carvings into a graphic novel. She was the youngest exhibitor at the International New York Art Expo 2012 and had several solo exhibitions: at the University of California Los Angeles, CA 2012, Century Books Pasadena, CA 2012 and The Grove Los Angeles, CA 2011 ("Discover Wonderful Indonesia").

works as freelance illustrator, graphic designer and (unpaid) comics artist.

A media designer by training, he enjoys all means of visual expression, be it digital art, pencil scribbles or painting on canvas. He has published several comics, illustrated books and edits the two-weekly web comic "Tale of Fiction".
Lukas Wilde

is a postgraduate and research assistant at the Institute of Media Studies at the University of Tübingen focussing on narrative visuality and operational graphics.

He holds a Master's degree in Theatre and Media Studies, initiated several performance groups, worked as comics author for the art’s sake, as copywriter and is essentially a man of the theatre.

Luke Ellison

works as freelance photographer, illustrator, and conceptual designer.

He holds a Master of Fine Arts in Illustration and Comic Arts from Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts from Lourdes College, Sylvania, OH and an Associate of Science Degree in Applied Digital Media from Owens Community College, Toledo, OH. He also studied photography at the New York Institute of Photography.

Marco Tabilio

works as illustrator, comic author and video maker.

He received a Bachelor's degree in "Comics and Illustration" from the Accademia di Belle Arti Bologna. During his studies he moved to Hamburg where he focused on Media Information. In 2013 he completed his Master's degree in "Media illustration" at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna. His work has been exhibited near Bologna, in Venice and Hamburg. He recently contributed to the 3rd issue of the Hamburg based independent comic magazine "Bohtoggs". As a video maker he regularly shows his work online and produced an animation music video for the Italian band Father Murphy.
Let me take you back to a period of turmoil that threatened my beloved family and that turned out to be a real testcase...

I was married young.

Maybe too young.

What to do...

You meet someone and you fall in love.

You don't feel like waiting.

You act.
RAISING A FAMILY IS SERIOUS BUSINESS.

DEALING WITH DIVERSE CHARACTERS IN THE SAME HOUSE IS NOT MAKING IT EASY.

I HAD MY SHARE...

BELIEVE ME.

BUT THEY'RE YOUR CHILDREN.

YOU KNOW WHY YOU'RE DOING THIS.

YOU'RE IN THIS TOGETHER.
Many, many nights my wife and I discussed our situation.

How do we bring this bunch together?

How to stop them chasing each other and live peacefully?

Is there a way to get them working together?
THEN, ONE NIGHT DURING A VERY HOT SUMMER, I UNFOLDED THE PLAN TO BUILD A SWIMMING POOL IN THE BACKYARD.

NO NEED TO SAY THAT THIS WAS WELcomed WITH SHEER ENTHUSIASME.

WE COULdn’T WAIT TO GET STARTED!

AND TRUE, IN OUR EAGERNESS TO TAKE A DIP,

WE SKIPPED SOME DETAILS THAT WOULD BE TAKEN CARE OF LATER.
What can I say...

We all make mistakes.

What counts is the result.

We were connected.

There was a focus.

They fancied a dip in the pool too of course.

Also envy, from neighbours.
Ah! What a feast it was when finally the morning of the initiation arrived!

Me and my wife were proud and deeply moved.

But very good times as well.

We had some hard times yes, I have to admit.

At the end accepting each other is what saved us.
HARD TO BELIEVE I'M SAYING THIS, BUT I THINK LOVE PULLED US THROUGH.

THE LOVE BETWEEN ME AND MY WIFE AND FOR OUR CHILDREN.

WHO, WHEN YOU'RE READY FOR IT, CAN TEACH YOU MANY THINGS.

GIVE THEM GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT.

LET THEM PLAY AND BE A GENTLE TEACHER.

BE THERE WHEN THEY NEED YOU.
Even after a fierce argument we always talked things over.

Forget what happened.

We united again . . .

And renewed our focus on the reward waiting at the end . . .

Sipping longdrinks at our very own pool!

Who wouldn't want that!
I SUMMON THEE, O' GREAT HEROES FROM ALL CENTURIES!!
COME FORTH FROM THINE TIMELINE!

WHAT IS THIS PLACE?!
I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT AT 6...

PRITHEE!
WHITHER IS THE PRIVY?

IS THIS ALL YOUR DOING,
YOU SUSPICIOUS FREAK?!

A-AAAH! IMPOSSIBLE!
THIS CAN'T BE EXPLAINED BY LOGIC!

I'M SURE IT'S CORRECT!

i think you owe them an explanation!

WHY AM I HERE WOULD FART!
DO YOU WANT TO DIE?!
I'LL GIVE YOU ANYTHING!
JUST DON'T KILL ME...
MY CLIENT IS WAITING!
RETURN ME IMMEDIATELY!!

BY MY THROTH! I HAVE BUT NAUGHT, MY GOODMAN!

they look so unreliable
are you sure your magic didn't fail again??
IN THE FUTURE WHERE YOU NO LONGER EXIST...

DESTRUCTION AND CHAOS OCCURS.

BUT I SEEK CHANGE, TO ALTER THE COURSE OF HISTORY,

BY CHANGING THE ULTIMATE MYTH...

DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

YOUR MISSION IS TO...

SAVE EUROPA
BUT ISN'T IT JUST A MYTH?
STOP WASTING MY TIME!

A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS! WE MUST SAVE HER—

ANYTHING'S POSSIBLE WITH MY MAGIC, LIKE SUMMONING YOU ALL TO THIS PLACE...

BESIDES, AREN'T YOU CURIOUS TO CHANGE HISTORY?

WHAT'S IN IT FOR US!?

... WHAT A ... PROBLEMATIC BUNCH!

AHA! A WISH!!

IF YOU CAN SAVE HER, I WILL GRANT YOU ONE WISH.

if you can, that is!!!

AREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO GET THREE?

AAAANYTHING YOU DESIRE~~

NOW THAT YOU'RE FINALLY INTERESTED...

BE PREPARED

OFF YOU Gooooo!!!
Quick, the bull's away, someone make a move!

I-isn't it too dangerous?

Methinks tis' most splendid!

Albert's turn

Charging ahead without planning, how foolish!

Fare thee well! Adieu, my goodman!!

Do not fear, milady! For I am here to save thee!

O' mighty beast! I challenge thee to a duel!

Please ... do not resort to unnecessary violence.

Ye art in safe hands, my noble lady!
Juan's turn

Don't worry little missy!

Now look how it's done !!!

I'm used to doing much worse things than kidnapping you.

Why... do you have to hurt others? ... aren't you hurting too, inside?

Deep down, you're a good person. You don't have to do this...

What do you mean?  

Darn it !!!

Moranda's turn

Excuse me, you! The princess over there!

How 'bout we make a deal? Return home, and you will be paid a generous amount.

You could stay here and establish a good career to make lots of profit like I do !!!

Huh! How useless !!! Now's my turn.

You can have all the riches in the world, but does that make you happy?

Like love, maybe...?

aren't there more important things than wealth?

Hmph!! I'm leaving!
I have to decline; kind old man, I made up my mind.

When you find something you truly believe in, do not ever give it up either.

I wish you happiness, then.

Ah... young lady, do not follow the bull! Please think about it again... for your own sake!

Sorry everyone, it seems that I couldn't make it either...

Welcome back...

Snap

Bam!

You have failed because you pursue your own selfish interests!

If you were to use team work, you could have succeeded in saving her...

Now, Go!!

This time, we will work together!!!

I am giving you one more chance to work hand in hand.
CONSIDER YOUR FUTURE!
IS IT WHAT YOU REALLY WANT TO DO!?

HE'S DEFINITELY A SWINDLER! THAT BULL MAY FOOL AND KIDNAP YOU!!

I GUESS WHAT YOU ALL SAID IS TRUE...

MILADY, THOU WILT MAKE THEE PARENTS WORRIED SICK!

ACCORDING TO HOW MYTHS DEVELOP, BEING IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH A DIVINE BEING MIGHT END BADLY!

NOW DISAPPEAR! RETURN BACK TO YOUR OWN TIMELINES!!
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS, HUH...
THE PAST CANNOT BE ALTERED.

THESE WISHES...
COULD HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED
BY THEIR OWN EFFORTS.

ALL OF YOU MAY TAKE
A BREAK AND GO HOME
TO YOUR FAMILIES!

MY PEOPLE, METHINKS
WE PERCHANCE NEED TO
RE STRATEGIZE!

THIS TIME, I'LL NEVER,
GIVE UP TILL IT WORKS!

I'M CHANGING MY WAYS
tO PURSUE MY DREAMS!

AFTER ALL, IT IS NOT HISTORY
THAT NEEDS TO BE CHANGED,

BUT THE HEARTS
OF THE PEOPLE.

Let's see who should
we summon next!

it COULD BE you!
Sooo... What's going on?

Take a look, Kili! Ready?

Behold! EUROPE!

Luke... You DO realize that Spain is over THERE, right?

Oh. You sure?

Yeah... That's just the other side of the bay. We passed it on our way from the airport, remember?

Oh. It's still impressive, right?

TANGER
MOROCCO
So we decided to travel to one specific border where Europe ends - or begins, depending on which side of the border you're on.

To a frontier, where thousands of people head to, year after year, legally and illegally, in order to find their specific vision of some 'Europe'.

Morocco, very nice country!

Tangier is great city, very modern! Marrakesh also, very nice!

Where do you travel?

Who, Uh... to Ceuta?

Oh, like... Spain?

Yeah...

It's really hard to explain why you would want to fly to Tangier in order to travel to Europe...

I'm still not sure what we ACTUALLY want to do once we are there...

Did you know that in 2005 about a thousand people tried to climb the fences at night?

Most try to cross by boat, though.
Tangier is like one huge transit station for backpackers from all over the world.

But no one has ever heard of Ceuta.

On the way, we read a lot about immigration issues, how some had to endure weeks hidden in a truck, barely surviving the petrol-mixed water in order to reach the other side. *

Lonely Planet says: "Leaving the beggars and street hustlers behind, you cross over a 100 m no-man’s-land of hopelessly placed barricades, part of a € 30 million fence erected by the EU."

"This experience alone is worth the trip and linger thereafter."

It really felt like we were the first non-Spanish tourists ever to come here...

CEUTA
But we were here for a specific reason, after all...

Do you speak English?

No?

Hahaha...

Do you know CETI?

Inglés?

C.E.T.I.?

Si, el Inglés. No problema. Ahora, CETI. Buen día.

Spain tightened its immigration guidelines for the Ceuta-peninsula.

In deviation from European law, people waiting for the results of their application for asylum are forbidden to move to mainland Spain.

They are confined to the exclusive CETI (Centro de Estancia Temporal de Inmigrantes) in most cases for years of waiting time. Only about 3-5% have a chance to travel on legally.

Luckily, we were really well prepared...

Uhm... we are doing some research.

For a project... from America!

SL, no problems.

But you need... Permission.

Permission?

Yes, I wrote a lot of mails before, but no answer. Who can we ask?

Now Fin de Semana Weekend.

Go to Plaza De Los Reyes.

Delegacion del Gobierno. On Monday.

Monday?!

SL, it may take a while.

Unfortunately we had to leave on Tuesday...
Since even all the 15000 employment in Ceuta is covered by Moroccans for a few Euro per hour, CETU-inhabitants can basically just wait, day after day.

Seven to three to Wiiiiiiiiii

I'm counting the ratio of joggers to soldiers to dogwalkers. Dog enriched walker units.

Am I? I call them DEWnits. "DEWnits. Nice!"

In Europe you need hobbies to pass your time, right?

I like counting.

"DEWnites."

The book goes on:  

"It is not easy to choose: The border – an invitation to discover Africa, to get to know this exotic neighboring country!"

Hey there, amigo! May we offer you some whisky?

Where you from...? Poland? England?

Two hours time lag gets you CEUTA.

Two hours time lag gets you CEUTA.

In recent years, Ceuta has noticed groups of Algerians and Sub-Saharan Africans arriving. They form groups of various sizes, but are not rooted here in any meaningful way."

Communications:

"Hey, what's up?"

"Ah, with... barca! - shite?

"Yeah, actually, from Tangier, airplane."

"Nooo, you speak English around here?

Hey, where are you from...? Germany, Romania. We just came here to visit the beautiful Ceuta."

Hey, where are you from...? Morocco. We don't like Morocco. We don't like Africa. We go to Spain as much as possible."

"Ceuta, there's a big problem!""There is nothing going on!!"
About 300 Euro and 750 Dirhams...
Both our cellphones...
The mp3-player...
Wallet with ID, driver's license, bank and credit cards...
One almost empty whiskey bottle...
Luckily, we left the passports at the hotel...

Huh...? Just... get robbed?
Did we...?

We kept all our important stuff in that pouch, right...?

Ouch...? How am I supposed to draw a comic without references???
Policía Nacional. We finally feel like real refugees, lost in the system. And with only €6.36 and no cards left in our pockets; behind the unknown sensations of...

...hunger...

...shut...

...and a lack of public toilets.

There is no bathroom here. "Maybe supermercado, Vale."

But people sympathize with our problem and try to give us good advice.

This was lucky this didn't happen in Morocco?

And we have no money left.

Huh...

I thought he said we are lucky not to look like Moroccans, or we'd been sucked all the way from here to Bioparque.

We'll never know.

Finally we get to talk to a police woman and her two translator.

Most frequently asked questions:

He was Muslim, right? No Spanish, right?

Brown

Moroccan, correct?

Darn, that.

Actually, I'm pretty sure they were... Spanish guys, you know? Like you?

Europeans?

Lots of whiskey involved.

Next time, no drink whiskey, drink beer.

Makes you less so drowsy.

Could have fight them. Beer better.
I assumehungry! How long can you survive without food????

Should we hike back up to the C.E.T.L.? You wouldn’t believe how dependent you are on your phones with all those contacts, pins, online banking options.

But after some reeeeeddy confusing detours through town...

... it was actually pretty simple to get money wired via Western Union.

Only later we found out on the news that the biggest wave of refugees in, like, years was to hit the Costa_Melilla_fences.

Now our flight leaves tomorrow, and we didn’t get to the bottom of ANYTHING!

Not even of that whiskey bottle.

Because it was STOLEN?

Soooo, you guys were in Spain, right?

Do you have any insider recommendations...?

I heard there was a place called Ronda, with some authentic bullfighting!

We don’t have time for that, we need to be in Liverpool in five days, and we HAVE to stop in Avi.

Ali is THE BEST.

HEY, CAN YOU SEE EUROPE OVER THERE????
HALLO!
HALLO!
HALLO!
HALLO!

HALLO!
HALLO!
HALLO!
HALLO!

SALVE!
¡HOLA!

HALLO!
HALLÂ!
HEJ!
ALO!
DIA DUIT!
HELO!
OLÁ!
HELLO!
AHOO!
BONJOUR!
HALO!
HALO!
HALO!

¡HOLA!
¡HOLA!
¡HOLA!

OLA!
OLA!
OLA!

HALLO!
HELLO!
HELO!

BONJOUR!
BONJOUR!
BONJOUR!

HEJ!
HEJ!
HEJ!

AHOJ!
AHOJ!
AHOJ!
I had just finished writing my new book, the "De Europa". (1)

I was pretty satisfied but also very tired.

So I poured some excellent beer into a mug and went to the harbour for a walk. (2)

My thoughts were still circling around the book and I was enjoying them while breathing the sea air.

Phah! It stinks! It's gone bad!

Throw it into the sea.

I don't want food scandals on board!

But the harbour is not the right place to go for a stroll if you are lost in thought.

Hey! Who's that?

In the North Sea I recovered consciousness.

---

1) The only traces we have of the De Europa, written by Erasmus in 1511 and meant to be the final chapter of The Praise of Folly, have reached us thanks to the typographer Markus Tabloewen of Antwerp (1530). He claims that the other editions make a mistake excluding it, because "since it's about madness, the anecdote is in the right place."

2) According to critic R. Tobilić, the De Europa is probably nothing else but an allegory; the fictional travel of Erasmus has to be read as a representation of dialectic issues. Another wing of the reviewers, trusts word by word the Erasmian anecdote, included the talking seal.
(3) The meaning of the seal has been a disputed theme for a long time. Some say it's a malevolent demon, a counterpoint of the philosophical proposition in an animal form. Other insist on the zoological concreteness of the animal, whose fussiness is well-known by the naturalists.
DID I OFFEND YOU?

NO.

SO, WHICH THOUGHTS ARE YOU DEALING WITH?

I JUST FINISHED WRITING THIS!

IT'S AN ESSAY ABOUT EUROPE.

SO WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I SNIFF A GOOD SMELL OF DRIED MEAT.

THAT'S ME. I WAS IN A BARREL OF SMOKED MEAT.

I THINK I WOULD TASTE A BITE OF YOU, IF YOU WEREN'T SO OLD.

NO, BUT TELL ME WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE De EUROPA!

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE SPECIES PHOCA VITULINA IS CARNIVOROUS?
IS THAT ALL? AND?

YES, VERY INTERESTING. REALLY.

THE EUROPE OF CULTURES AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF COUNTRIES ARE A MARVELLOUS IDEA, OF COURSE.

BUT I'M USUALLY WARY OF THEORETICAL DISSERTATIONS. AS TIME GOES BY, I NOTICE MORE AND MORE IT'S DIFFICULT TO SQUARE THINGS UP WITH THEORIES.

BUT REALITY HAS TO AIM FOR A MODEL! OTHERWISE WE DON'T KNOW WE'RE GOING TO!

YOU THINKERS ARE SO ADORABLE WHEN YOU GET EXCITED THIS WAY!

THE SINGLE CURRENCY, FOR INSTANCE, VERY COMFORTABLE FOR TRAVELLERS. SURE, EUROPE WOULD BECOME AN INTERNATIONAL BEING.

BUT DO YOU THINK IT'S GOING TO BE EASY? WHAT IF SOME COUNTRIES CAN'T KEEP UP WITH THE STRONG ECONOMIES?

WOULDN'T THIS CREATE A TWO-SPEED-EUROPE? (5)

NAMELY TWO EUROPES, ONE RICH AND ONE POOR?

I DIDN'T THINK ABOUT IT.

YOU SEE?

I THINK I SHOULDN'T EAT SOMETHING. I CAN'T FOCUS ANYMORE.

(4) From this disputed point some academics start to cast doubts on the authenticity of the Erasmian anecdote: "It's not probable that a carnivorous marine mammal had an empiricist and realist approach", they say.

(5) And about this passage: "This is a typical concern of a South European – they say – but the seal is a Northern animal! It doesn't make sense!"
AND SUPPOSE THAT SOME COUNTRIES RESOLVE TO STEP OUT OF THE SINGLE CURRENCY, OR EVEN GET OUT OF EUROPE!

WE’LL HAVE TO REMEMBER EUROPE AS AN ABORTED ABSURD DREAM!

OR AS A SORT OF WEIMAR REPUBLIC, FULL OF FAILED GOOD PURPOSES.

(6)

AS WHAT?

NOTHING. I WAS THINKING OUT LOUD.

DO YOU THINK THAT GREAT FINANCIAL GROUPS WILL ACCEPT THAT EUROPE MEDDLING IN THEIR BUSINESS? NO WAY.

(7)

I’M NOT ALWAYS GETTING WHAT YOU MEAN, SEAL.

SOMETIMES I TAKE MY IDEAS TO EXTREMES.

HAM... IS THERE SOMETHING TO EAT?

THERE ARE SOME SHRIMPS OVER THERE.

(6) And this allusion to the Weimar Republic is inexplicable. Besides the fact that it comes four centuries in advance (the academic M. Kuntaroba has calculated 408 years), the comparison definitely doesn’t fit.

(7) Oh, this part is clearer: a seal wary of (financial) sharks sounds probable.
THE WHALE HASN'T DIGESTED THEM YET.

WOU D YOU MIND FEEDING ME?

THEY ARE DELICIOUS!

DISADVANTAGES OF HAVING FINS.

THEN WHERE ARE THE BORDERS SUPPOSED TO BE? A CORE EUROPE LIKE CHARLEMAGNE'S EMPIRE?

OR SHOULD IT ENCOMPASS THE TURKS OF CONSTANTINOPLE AND PALESTINE OF JESUS?

AND - WHY NOT? - MESOPOTAMIA, WHERE EVERYTHING GOT STARTED...

WHAT ABOUT THE ONES WHO ARE LEFT OUT?

ARE YOU ALLOWED TO ENTER EUROPE OR ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO DO IT ON THE SLY, LIKE AN EXCLUSIVE PARTY?

ARE WE BUILDING A FORTRESS EUROPE, SURROUNDED BY BARBED WIRE?

ARE WE MAKING A PROMISED LAND AND LETTING PEOPLE DIE ON THEIR WAY?
At this point of the story we don't remember anymore: we were debating about the authenticity of what? Of the disappeared book, the De Europa? Or of the anecdote of the whale itself?...
IN THE GULF OF FINLAND, OR MAYBE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA, BETWEEN VENICE AND THE AEGEAN SEA.

BUT IT ALSO COULD BE THE OCEAN OF PORTUGAL, BEYOND THE PILLARS OF HERCULES.

I GOT OFF IN FRONT OF THE DUTCH COAST.

THANK YOU FOR THE CONVERSATION.

SEAL?

YES?

IT LEFT.

I ALWAYS REMEMBER WITH PLEASURE THE ENCOUNTER WITH THE SEAL.

TO MY FRIENDS LAUGHING AT ME, I SAY: YOU'LL BETTER HAVE A PERSONAL SEAL TOO.

YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT: ROUND AND SHINY, WITH EYES LIKE HEADLAMPS...

(9) ... or we were talking about the comic about the anecdote? And who made the comic? Erasmus was not a cartoonist... was he?
(10) And finally: who wrote the footnotes?