

Presentation of the Book

Turkish Founding Fathers of United Europe
2 October 2025, Strasbourg, France

Speech by Theodoros Rousopoulos
President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Dear Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye, Dear Mr Karaca,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I am particularly happy and honoured to address you on the occasion of the presentation of the book of Mr Kayhan Karaca, to which I had the honour to contribute with a preface.

Being a historian myself by education, and still enjoying very much the reading of historical sources and books, I cannot but welcome very much an additional stone to our common historical knowledge on the creation of the European ideal.

History is not a distant archive of dates and events; it is the living foundation upon which our present and future are built. When we know our history, we know who we are. We understand the struggles that secured our liberties, the sacrifices that upheld dignity, and the mistakes that must never be repeated.

This book is an exceptional piece of research which, like a time machine, takes us back to moments when things that are part of our everyday life today were not yet taken for granted.

I am thinking in particular of the European Convention on Human Rights.

At that time, it was an exceptional and innovative proposal — by which States agreed to transfer part of their national sovereignty to a supranational body, in order to prevent the horrors of another world war.

The original Convention was exhibited in the Hemicycle on the very first day of this Assembly's session, bearing the signatures of the founding fathers of the human rights protection system, gathered in Rome on 4 November 1950.

Among them is the signature of Mr. Fuat Köprülü, then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

Let us never forget: the Convention is not just words written on parchment, but a daily responsibility.

These words must be lived, translated into action, by all who truly believe in the principles of freedom and the respect of human dignity.

This year, we mark both the 75th anniversary of the Convention and the membership of Türkiye in the Council of Europe. It is therefore an ideal moment to celebrate our shared history.

At the Council of Europe, we are entrusted with safeguarding human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. This mission cannot be fulfilled without respect for our shared historical experience. By engaging with history critically and honestly, we cultivate the wisdom to build a future of peace and cooperation. Through his deep research into Council of Europe archives and sources,

Mr Karaca offers us not only an exciting insight into Türkiye's journey to the Council of Europe, but also an enlightenment about our common history and European identity.

Let us therefore commit ourselves to knowing, teaching, and remembering.