

CEGESOMA - State Archives

NEWSLETTER

No 114 - June 2026



NEWS

EHRI-BE

The TRACE-BE project helps EHRI-BE strengthen its communication efforts and prepare new initiatives, including a fellowship program, a series of workshops, seminars, and other events. Follow EHRI-BE on LinkedIn, Facebook, and its website so you don't miss a thing!

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READING ROOM

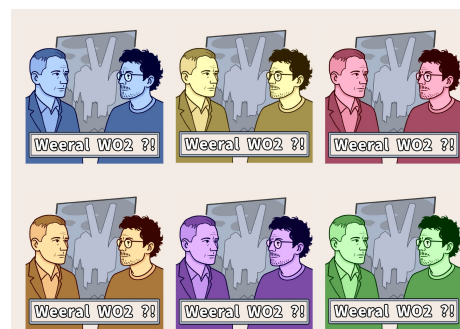
The CegeSoma reading room will be closed exceptionally from Tuesday, August 4, through Thursday, August 6, 2026, due to staff shortages. Thank you for your understanding. To find out where and how to access our collections, visit our website.

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'WEERAL WO2?!'

In the podcast series Weeral WO2?!, Nico Wouters and Koen Aerts explore sensitive issues and persistent myths surrounding World War II: from the impact of the Soviet Union to postwar repression in Belgium, including a little-known episode in the history of Leopold III.

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ON THE AGENDA

BAUDOUIN. UN ROI FACE AUX CRISES DE SON TEMPS.

Join us on October 9 for an exceptional public history event (in French) with Vincent Dujardin to mark the release of his new biography of a king who faced the major crises of 20th-century Belgium. He will be interviewed by Catherine Lanneau.

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RESEARCH

THE FED-TWIN BEMULTILAT PROJECT

Achievements and new prospects for a project that aims to promote, utilize, and facilitate access to the Diplomatic Archives (some 6 linear kilometers) held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, and Development Cooperation.

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Creating a Belgian National Holocaust Research Infrastructure

The European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) is a European research infrastructure that supports and promotes Holocaust research, commemoration and education on a transnational level.

EHRI-BE is the national node representing Belgium within this distributed research infrastructure. EHRI-BE is composed of different institutions located in Belgium with expertise in Holocaust documentation, research, commemoration and education at the different levels of the Belgian federal state.

Modern, democratic Europe developed out of the ashes of Auschwitz, making the Holocaust a defining legacy of European history. To fully grasp the depths of Europe's darkest period, it is crucial that we continue to learn about, commemorate and research the Holocaust.

[Learn More](#)



Thanks to [the TRACE-BE project](#), EHRI-BE will now be far more active when it comes to its communication activities.

Quite rightly too, given all that is planned for the next few years, including a TRACE-BE fellowship programme (launching in 2027) and a host of workshops, seminars and other events.

So, to keep up with the latest news about EHRI-BE's activities and developments, as well as those across the wider EHRI network, follow EHRI-BE on [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#) and don't hesitate to regularly check out [the news page of the EHRI-BE website](#).

Other news

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["Weeral WO2?!" Podcast Episodes Before Summer Break](#)

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Exceptional closure of the reading room



The reading room at Cegesoma **will be closed on Tuesday, 4 August; Wednesday, 5 August and Thursday, 6 August 2026** due to staff shortages. We appreciate your understanding.

To find out where and how to consult our collections, go to the [“Consult our collections”](#) tab.

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"Weeral WO2?!" Podcast Episodes Before Summer Break



In July and August 2026, the "*Weeral WO2?!*" podcast series will have its summer break. But before then, Nico Wouters and Koen Aerts will release a few more new episodes.

Inspired by D-Day on 6 June, Nico and Koen debate **whether the Soviet Union won World War II**. It's a delicate question, especially given how Russia today exploits this history to legitimize its invasion of Ukraine. In the next episode, Nico and Koen take a critical look at the mother of all WWII myths in Belgium: **Was the postwar repression anti-Flemish or not?**

Two weeks later, there will be an episode with the mysterious title "**The Barons of the Forest: How Leopold III Missed His Appointment with History a Second Time.**" Find out the incredible story behind this at the end of June. In the final episode of this first half of 2026, **Nico and Koen will talk with historian Karel Strobbe about his book on Belgian prisoners of war**. So enjoy the summer with the first ten episodes of this podcast series, which generated a lot of buzz during its launch and now has thousands of listeners. In September, Nico and Koen will be back with a new series of episodes.

Weeral WO2?! is available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or directly via the website www.weeralwo2.be (feedback welcome at weeralwo2@gmail.com). Weeral WO2?! is a podcast produced in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy (Ghent University), with support from Archiefpunt, CegeSoma, and FARO. Flemish Support Center for Cultural Heritage.

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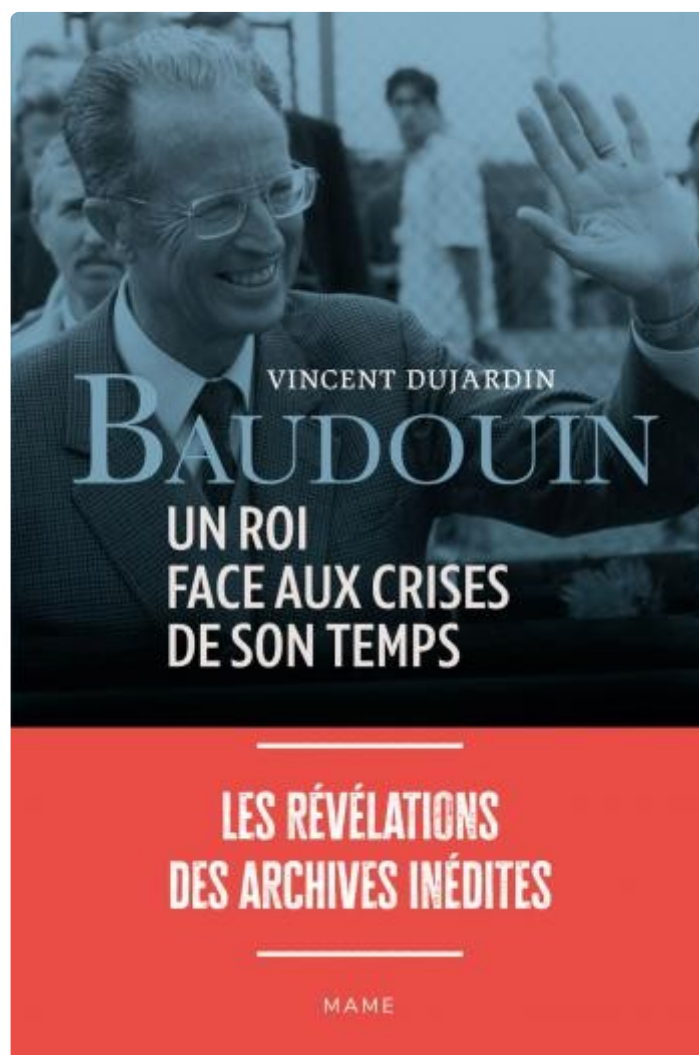
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Baudouin, un roi face aux crises de son temps

Public History Meeting 2026 – 3

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Lecture and discussion in French with guest speaker Vincent Dujardin **An interview by Catherine Lanneau**

On 9 October, Cegesoma and the nonprofit organization “Les Amis du Cegesoma” will be pleased to welcome Vincent Dujardin, professor of history at UCLouvain and a specialist in Belgian political history, to mark the publication of his book ‘Baudouin. Un roi face aux crises de son temps.’ He will be interviewed by Catherine Lanneau, professor at Liège University.

The history of the monarchy and the personalities of successive Belgian kings are subjects that leave no one indifferent. Belgian historians have contributed significantly to writing this history, from Leopold I to Leopold III. Until now, there has been no true biography of King Baudouin, whose reign spans the turbulent context of the royal question to the federalization of the Belgian state.

The fruit of nearly twenty years of research, this 800-page book draws on exceptional source material: King Baudouin's personal archives, political and spiritual diaries, private correspondence, agendas, Belgian and foreign administrative archives, as well as numerous firsthand accounts, including those of Queen Fabiola and several political and diplomatic figures close to the monarch.

Through the figure of Baudouin, the political history of Belgium, Europe, and the world in the second half of the 20th century also unfolds: the war and its aftermath, the Royal Question, decolonization, the Lumumba affair, the great strike of the winter of 1960–1961, institutional reforms, European integration, relations with foreign leaders, and the crisis triggered by the king's refusal to sign the abortion law. How does one write the history of a king? What archives are available, and how can one make use of long-unpublished private archives without succumbing to the fascination of the document itself? How can the monarch's personal diaries be cross-referenced with diplomatic archives, oral testimonies, and administrative sources? What can the historian say about "the man behind the king"?

This exceptional event will allow us to explore some of these questions and examine the choices, limitations, and challenges of writing a historical biography.



Vincent Dujardin is a full professor at the Catholic University of Louvain. He is a visiting professor at the University of Strasbourg. He has also taught at KULeuven and Jagiellonian University in Kraków.

At UCLouvain, he served 10 years as director of the Institute of European Studies. His research focuses on Belgian political history, European integration, and international relations.



Catherine Lanneau is a full professor of contemporary history at Liège University and secretary of the FNRS contact group "Belgium and Contemporary Worlds."

Her research focuses primarily on the history of Belgium, Wallonia, and Franco-Belgian relations in the 19th and 20th centuries, with a particular emphasis on media activity by pressure groups and think tanks.



09/10/2026 - 14:00 to 15:30

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Where: CegeSoma Conference Room, Aviation Square 29 – 1070 Brussels

When: Friday, 9 October 2026 (2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.)

Registration required: isabelle.ponteville@arch.be or 02.556.92.11.

The book can be bought on site: Vincent Dujardin, *Baudouin, un roi face aux crises de son temps*, Mame, 2026, 800 p. (€30.00- only cash)

Event fee: €5.00 (payable on site in cash)

Main language

French

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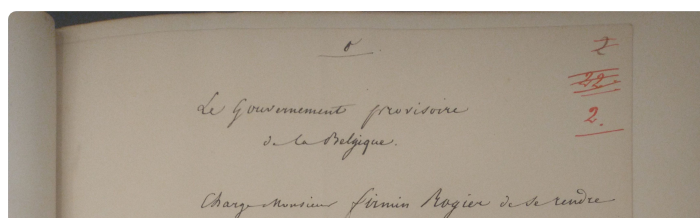
The FED-tWIN BEMULTILAT Project

Opening Diplomatic Archives to Researchers and the Public

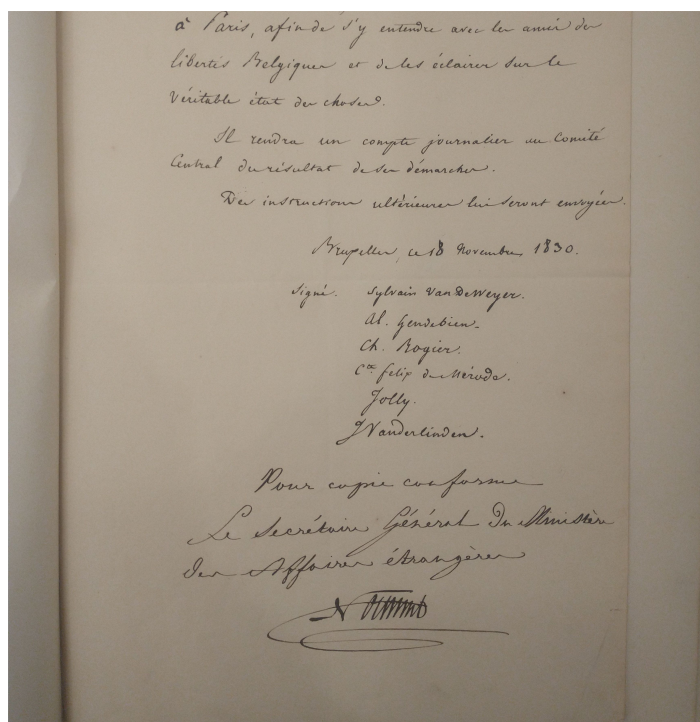


As a reminder, the FED-tWIN BEMULTILAT project began in 2023. It is led by Vincent Genin within a dual institutional framework: CegeSoma/State Archives, under Michael Auwers, and the University of Liège, under Catherine Lanneau. The project aims to highlight, utilize, and make accessible the Diplomatic Archives (just over 6 linear kilometers) held by the Belgian FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, and Development Cooperation, which are scheduled to be transferred to the State Archives. Combining archival work, basic research, teaching, and public history, this project focuses specifically on the issue of multilateralism.

Background



Since independence in 1830, Belgium has been part of the existing international order. A small, open economy in the 19th century and a country with permanent, perpetual, and guaranteed neutrality, it had



Minutes of the Diplomatic Committee, the predecessor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 18, 1830, SPFAE.

to carve out a place for itself among the Great Powers, up until World War I and the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference. At that conference, it was relegated to the rank of countries with “special interests.” No longer neutral (until 1936) and now a member of the League of Nations, it entered a major international arena in Geneva within the framework of collective security.

Although a small country—and at times an arbitrator in international disputes—it nevertheless contributed significantly to this multilateralism through some of its representatives, such as Paul Hymans (League of Nations), Ernest Mahaim (ILO), Camille Gutt (IMF), Fernand Dehousse (Universal Declaration of Human Rights), Paul-Henri Spaak (NATO, UN, European institutions), and Michel Hansenne (ILO).

Today, Belgium is a member (or observer) of most existing multilateral organizations (IAEA, Benelux, IBRD, CERN, UNCTAD, CPA,

ICC, FAO, ILO, WHO, NATO, UN, etc.).

Diplomatic archives are thus a gold mine. Until recently, no inventory of these collections was available, and access to these sources was long considered, at best, discretionary—if not legally questionable. Thanks to a marked improvement in the situation, there is now a gradual shift toward greater openness regarding these archives.

Achievements

Several scholarly articles have already been written as part of this project, examining Belgium’s role in multilateralism based on sources preserved by the Diplomatic Archives:

- « Une historiographie née sous le signe de l’hétéronomie. Des *memoranda* de Banning au programme scientifique de Michel Huisman (1863-1953) », in *Revue Belge de Philologie et d’Histoire*, 101, 2025, p. 873-888.
- « Maintenir l’anglais hors-pouvoir. Une réaction américaine à Versailles (1924) », in Guido Braun, Renaud Meltz, Camille Desenclos (dir.), *Langues et diplomaties (du XVe siècle à nos jours)*, Stuttgart, Kolhammer, 2024, p. 241-253.
- « Émile Banning (1836-1898), de Liège à la conception de la politique étrangère belge », in *Revue d’Histoire Liégeoise*, IV, 2024, p. 73-87.
- « L’article 18 de la Déclaration Universelle des Droits de l’Homme de 1948. Temporalités des droits de l’homme et liberté religieuse », in *Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique. Louvain Journal of Church History*, vol. 119, 1-2, 2024, p. 158-193.

The FRS-FNRS Contact Group “Belgium and Contemporary Worlds” organized a first study day on November 22, 2024, at CegeSoma on the theme “International Relations and Emotions.” On April 17, 2026, a second symposium was held at the University of Liège, chaired by Professor Michel Dumoulin, with the assistance of Professor Catherine Lanneau (ULiège), on “Multilateralism: Methodological Issues and the Belgian Case (19th–21st Centuries).” Of particular note were the quality of the discussions and the ability to create synergies among researchers in the history of contemporary international relations from Liège, Louvain-la-Neuve, and Luxembourg. A

publication is expected to follow, and a two-day international conference will be organized by the end of 2027.

Since 2024, oral interviews have been conducted with archivists from the FPS Foreign Affairs to ensure the “transfer of expertise” and “experience” emphasized by this project. At the University of Liège, since the 2024–2025 academic year, these aspects of the project have been fully integrated in the course on the History of Belgium's International Relations, and students are encouraged to write master's theses that draw on the Diplomatic Archives. During the 2025–2026 academic year, a research seminar also focused on the Belgian delegation to the 1919 Versailles Peace Conference.

The project's findings were also shared with a wider audience, notably through the radio program “Un jour dans l'histoire” on La Première channel : an interview about Aristide Briand in May 2026 and another about Paul-Henri Spaak in June 2026.

New Perspectives

A special issue of *Jalon de recherches* focusing on the Diplomatic Archives will soon be published. Its aim is to provide a historical, archival, and legislative overview of the sources held by the ministry. It will be followed by a more comprehensive Guide to Sources.

From September 2 to 6, 2026, Vincent Genin will participate in the international symposium in Bern. There, he will present the edition of the Belgian Diplomatic Documents relating to the CSCE (1968–1975).

The edition of the correspondence between the historian Théodore Juste and the diplomat and politician Jean-Baptiste Nothomb is scheduled to appear in the *Bulletin de la Commission royale d'histoire*. Remarkable archival documents representative of Belgian diplomatic activity over nearly two centuries are scheduled to be exhibited at the end of the year at the State Archives in Liège and at the University of Liège.

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