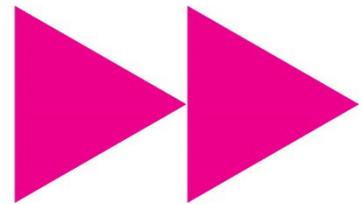


# Animate Europe





## Pitch – Animate Europe (event: “Beyond the obvious”, Rome)

- 5 mn presentation about our international Comic Competition -

### - What and why did this happen?

#### **Animate Europe: What is it all about?**

- Goal: The aim of Animate Europe is **to learn more about the idea of Europe and to see and discuss how it is perceived by its citizens** (especially by those, who are not surrounded by political discussions in their everyday lives) and **encourage more of this spirit of engagement.**

- Our international comic competition “Animate Europe” was launched after a request of the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs, asking for new and innovative ideas to **communicate about Europe.**

- We hoped that the comics we receive would **provide answers and initiate discussions about Europe.** *For ex.: Is there a strong vision of Europe? What can or should the future of Europe look like? How is Europe dealing with current crises? What topics and values lie at the heart of Europe and shape it? How can it regain its energy? Who or what will be the magical healer or super hero who can find the right medicine for Europe’s ailing heart?*

- Our stories provide various and sometimes even contradictory answers to these questions. Whether you’re looking at our two winning stories of Erasmus of Rotterdam discussing the EU’s present-day problems with a seal in the belly of a whale, or the warning message in “The Union”, which draws the grim vision of a divided Europe or the comic “The old lady gives no answer” that is possible calling to take a stand for Europe through active citizenship: all of them tell very different stories of Europe’s past and present and future, its opportunities and problems. => They serve as **food for thought and a basis for discussion on the Europe we would like to live in.**

- Overwhelming success: thousands of our comics travelled through Europe and beyond: they **sparked discussions and inspired people to get involved with Europe.**

### - Who was involved?

The **Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF)** is the German foundation for liberal policies. We seek to advance the idea of freedom both within Germany and abroad as a pillar of an open society. Abroad, we promote human rights, rule of law and democratic structures as well as market economy in more than 60 countries, where we work with local, regional, and national initiatives and organizations, think tanks and political parties.

For the three editions of our competition, we organized a jury of experts from the European cultural scene to evaluate the work of international comic artists.

### - When did it take place?

For the third time since 2013 (**3 rounds: 2013, 2015, 2017**), our foundation asked comic artists and graphic novelists from all over the world to share their ideas about Europe in our International Comic Competition “Animate Europe”.

This year, we asked comic artists: **How can we get Europe back on its feet? What can we do to “Re-Animate Europe”?**

#### **- How the competitions went ahead?**

All competition rounds took place in two phases:

1) the participants were asked to send a written proposal for a story together with the first two pages of their prospective story. Our expert jury took a close look at all the entries – in the 2017 competition that meant evaluating a total of 75 entries from 24 countries.

2) 7 finalists were selected.

**- Introduction of Marco Tabilio**, the winner of our 2013 edition with *Erasmus and the seal*.  
Topic: A seal gives Erasmus of Rotterdam food for thought on the unification of Europe.

“It was an excellent idea to select Erasmus as main character”, so the jury. “A historical figure, thinker, humanist and, at the same time, one of the first true Europeans; Tabilio chose a stunning constellation, by putting contemporary issues into a historical context with a surreal approach (& originality).

#### **- We also developed diverse communication tools: books, exhibition and postcards...**

... to spread the stories and visions of our comic heroes across Europe, we created further communication tools.

**MARCO TABILIO @ BEYOND THE OBVIOUS, ROME 2017**  
**“ENGAGE!” SESSION**  
**PITCH**



**// ERASMUS AND THE SEAL**

Erasmus and the seal is a fictional story. I chose Erasmus of Rotterdam as main character - a figure which can be identified as one of the first “Europeans”. At the beginning of the comic, he has just finished to write an imaginary book about Europe named “De Europa”. I found quite funny to pretend that the story is real and write fictional footnotes like in a commented edition of an essay.

While strolling in Rotterdam Harbour he accidentally falls into the sea, he’s been eaten by a whale. In the belly of the animal, he has a conversation about the idea(s) of Europe with a seal. The seal casts doubts but also helps to give new and unexpected perspectives.

At the end of the story, the “De Europa” gets hit from the harpoon of a whaler - but Erasmus has now plenty of new inputs to imagine a new Europe.

I heard about the first edition of Animate Europe from friends. From the beginning I thought it was a pretty interesting way to think about Europe as a topic and put on paper some of my considerations and doubts, and namely in the form of a comic story which is for me the communication medium par excellence.

**// MY EXPERIENCE WITH ANIMATE EUROPE**

It’s graphic, for example, the representation of a two-speed-Europe like an underwater ecosystem: to suggest the idea of small countries which cannot keep up with the strong economies, I drew the whale surrounded by small fishes. And later, when the seal asks: “What about the ones who are left out [from Europe]? [...] Are we building a fortress Europe, surrounded by barbed wire?”, I draw fishnets blocking and imprisoning fishes.

**// NARRATIVE TOOLS**

I always regarded the language of comics as a powerful medium. The combination of images and texts makes concepts more penetrating and easily involves larger audiences and young people. I remember that when I read Persepolis by Marjane Satrapi as a teenager, those were the first and most vivid informations about the history of Iran that I learned. Talking about reality comics, I would like to mention just a couple of books. Many know the masterpiece Maus by Art Spiegelman and there’s not much to say about it: the book manages to narrate the Shoah in an incredibly way. Kobane Calling by the Italian comics author Zerocalcare offers a deep and sincere reportage of the currently largest wound in the world, the Syrian war.

**// COMICS, A POWERFUL MEDIUM**

I think that comics can be a good tool to activate persons and ideas and - since I’m a big fan of Europe - to try to imagine and narrate Europe, its present and its future, together.