

Management development

# The Leadership Club at the frontier



**Y**ou will all have heard the amazing news from CERN (the European Organisation for Nuclear Research) about the discovery of the so-called "God particle" (see *Cend* 640, page 2). What you probably don't know is that a group of senior managers from the EU Institutions were actually at CERN just two weeks' earlier as part of the Leadership Club's annual away day that the European School of Administration organised.

The purpose of this visit was to witness what leadership is like at the edge of experience, and we explored three very different sorts of frontier.

The first was the scientific one at CERN, where, among others, we met a distinguished theoretical physicist John Ellis who spent most of his career there and who managed to explain extremely complex concepts in understandable language. You can follow his explanation on You Tube (see link below).



The second concerned the frontiers of the mind at the Museum of 'Outsider Art' (*Art brut* in French), where we were introduced to some extraordinary works of art produced by people out of a desperate personal compulsion, usually in secret, and certainly not created for public display.

The third – and this was the main purpose of the event – had to do with the political frontiers whose limits

were expanded in such an extraordinary fashion by the so-called founding fathers of Europe. In visiting the Jean Monnet Foundation in Lausanne, we were privileged to see some of the most precious archive material that exists about the origins of the European project, which the Foundation's Director Gilles Grin and Chief Archivist Françoise Nicod presented.

Perhaps the most striking pieces were the original nine drafts of the Schuman Declaration written over a period of just two weeks! Clearly, there was a considerable sense of urgency to get things moving! Above all, we were reminded what an extraordinarily ambitious – and politically risky – project this was, coming as it did just five years after the end of the Second World War. The foundations of the construction of Europe needed courage and vision in the same way as does its maintenance during our present difficulties.

All in all, a sobering yet inspiring reminder to us, as we seek to exercise real leadership in our institutions.

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▷ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YL96kNBHQ00>