

[Events](#) :: A look back on our conference "European Citizenship in Challenging Times"

## A look back on our conference "European Citizenship in Challenging Times"



© European Commission

31 May - 1 June 2016

Barcelona hosted more than 200 people for the annual conference of the "Europe for Citizens" programme. The meeting was held on 31 May and 1 June 2016 and engaged participants from 30 European countries representing some 180 organizations, networks and projects on memory, citizenship, and civil society who make up the two strands of the Europe for Citizens programme, remembrance and civic participation. Organized by the European Commission in cooperation with the European Observatory on Memories of the University of Barcelona's Solidarity Foundation (EUROM) and with support from the Barcelona City Council, it aimed to bring together stakeholders from both strands of the Programme and a wider audience to reflect on a positive and cohesive message the European Union could send to its citizens in such challenging times.

The event was presented by the Vice Rector of the University of Barcelona, Carme Panchón, together with the director of the European Observatory on Memories, Jordi Guixé; the Deputy Director-General of Justice and Consumer Affairs of the European Commission, Francisco Fonseca Morillo; and the General Director of Cooperation in Catalonia, Manel Vila.



From right to left: J. Guixé, F. Fonseca Morillo, Carme Panchón, and M. Vila - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

During her introduction, Carme Panchón (University of Barcelona) underlined that public participation is a necessary element to articulate social and political changes within the European Union.

Jordi Guixé (European Observatory on Memories) stated that memory is a central issue of civic and democratic values, "a transforming agent," which reminds us of the "resistance to violence and exclusion". He highlighted the need to observe memorial conflicts in a transnational and transdisciplinary way, opening new doors to the memorial processes of the present and the future.

Francisco Fonseca Morillo (Deputy Director-General of Justice and Consumers of the European Commission) focused on the relevance of civic involvement and the need to promote a sense of belonging to make way "for a true European Society". To him, this can only become a reality if Europe is able to boost "bottom up processes" for direct partaking. "Citizenship demands participation", he stressed.

Manel Vila (General Director of Cooperation in Catalonia), underlined that European identity should be considered as fluid and complex as Europe itself. "Being European means to have different identities merged all together into one", observed Vila, who also asked for more generosity for refugees. "I cannot forget the silence on Sarajevo," he said. "One day the same will happen with the current refugee crisis."

### Opening Keynote

Adam Michnik, human rights activist and founder editor of the Polish newspaper Gazeta Wyborzca, introduced the conference in the opening keynote.

**"Europe can only be saved by European citizens"**



Adam Micknik - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

"What Michnik always argued and advocated for was that political and social change has to be based on the respect towards the others", remarked Pavel Tychtl (European Commission) as he introduced Adam Michnik. The Polish historian addressed the attendees with a strong concern about the revival of nationalisms and extremisms in Europe. According to Michnik, Europe is living in difficult times that resemble those of the twentieth century. "We are seeing again the demons of the 30's", he remarked.

"Democracy, and its meaning, is a very delicate establishment", he said, arguing that "we should not undermine and undervalue the fact that it may lose". To face this reality, the Polish historian encouraged the audience to recall the past and remember the discourse of the "great utopies" of the twentieth century. "If today we hear similar stories about the annihilation of the European Union, we must remember how that ended", remarked Michnik. Taking these challenging factors into consideration, he pointed out the need to surpass European nationalist claims and working for a common purpose through participation, accountability and openness. "Europe can only be saved by European citizens".

#### **Panel Session and Discussion on Membership : *How to foster identification with the European Union?***

**"We need to give citizens a real role"**



Pierre Benazet - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

According to a recent Eurobarometer result, only 6% of European citizens define themselves as Europeans before referring to their national identities. With this data, Pierre Bénazet (Radio France International) launched the first debate session of the conference. According to Bénazet, the data reminded him of the situation in former Yugoslavia, where less than 6% of the population had a sense of belonging to their country. He stressed that, while speaking of membership and citizenship, the focus of the debate would be to try to "find a way to help the citizens of the European Union to feel they are part of this Union; that they are part of a real citizenship".

This sense of belonging, fostered through education and remembrance, was the main point proposed by the Polish journalist and writer Grazyna Plebanek. For Plebanek, the transmission of memory and education are key factors, needed in order to truly include people in a European distinctiveness that recognizes their complex and multicultural realities. "Reducing identity to only one element is just a trick used by populist politicians", she observed.

The geographer and former French Ambassador Michel Foucher (College of World Studies) talked about the need for a "joint process" that takes into account "the wishes and expectations of the citizens and nations of Europe", bringing the European institutions closer to European citizens. Foucher called for more "political commitment by leaders" and for a more "global" Europe. "To improve identification we have to take the long view and accept that European Union is only an answer to a specific geopolitical context".



Grazyna Plebanek and Michel Foucher - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

For Claudia Wiesner (University of Darmstadt and University of University of Jyväskylä), debate is the fundamental method for achieving a true democracy. "Democracy is about debate", she asserted. Wiesner reminded the audience that "we have had serious breaches of the quality standards of national representative democracies" and one of the ways to improve this situation is to open the debate, to hear the voice of the people. "Those standards need to be strengthened", concluded Wiesner.

Paul Blokker (Charles University of Prague) highlighted the need for European citizens to experience a Union to facilitate true involvement in a transnational community. "The experiences of Europeans should be related with Europe", he said. Blokker also talked about the importance of listening to the public debate in order for it to have a real effect on European decisions. "We need to give citizens a real role", he claimed.



Claudia Wiesner and Paul Blokker - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

**Panel Session and Discussion on Protection : *How to consolidate the European Union's achievements and strengthen the Union's citizens' rights ?***

***"It's not about doing policy for people but doing it with people"***



Antonella Valmorbida and Francisco Fonseca Morillo - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

Moderator Antonella Valmorbida (European Association for Local Democracy) summarized the most resonating points of the session: the European Union's achievements and how to consolidate them, how to ensure citizens' rights and how to confront the current threats to the European Union's stability. According to Valmorbida, the "European Union, like democracy, is not an achievement but a process where we build step by step the community we want". To her, discussion is a fundamental issue to "preserve and maintain our big project".

Francisco Fonseca Morillo (Deputy Director-General of Justice and Consumers of the European Commission) stressed that education and in particular, information constitute citizens' main tool to truly embrace their opportunities and rights within the European Union. "Citizens have a lack of information regarding their own rights", he remarked. On how the Union may better engage with the European citizens, Fonseca stated that "we need real democratic participation through pan-European campaigns for the European parliamentary elections".



Friso Roscam-Abbing and Pierre Baussand - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

Friso Roscam-Abbing (Head of Fundamental Rights Promotion Department at the Fundamental Rights Agency) warned that "mere information" might become propaganda. This is the reason why "rights awareness must go beyond mere information". To do that, he stressed the need to learn to dialogue. "We need to cooperate better, learning to better listen to each other".

Pierre Baussand (Director of the European Social Platform) spoke similarly of the need to increase popular participation. "It's not about doing policy *for* people but doing it *with* people". Furthermore, Baussand demanded more accountability and transparency from member states. "We need to promote better legislation to engage our governments in the decision-making". In conclusion, Baussand affirmed that the solution would come "by engaging people outside this room", making sure they understand the European Union and approaching "the kind of right they want to see achieved". He also stressed the necessity of assuring that these rights are being taken into account by politicians.



Assya Kavrakova - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

To Assya Kavrakova (European Citizen Action Service) it is also necessary to have more commitment from politicians concerning protection. She called upon wisdom when selecting the needs that should be protected. "We have to safeguard, above all, the freedom of movement. It simply has a huge impact on Europeans' everyday lives", underlined Kavrakova. Kavrakova referred to citizens' participation as an essential tool needed in order to completely benefit from their rights within the Union. "We need to have additional roles for citizens".

The debate evoked questions on the proper transmission of information, equality, rights and migration within the European Union.

**Panel Session and Discussion on Participation : *How to build a Union that fully involves stakeholders and that encourages civic participation and democratic engagement ?***

**"We need to have citizens back in the democracy game both at national and European levels"**



Jurek Kuczkiewicz, Amaya Perez de Albeniz and Yves Sintomer - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

Jurek Kuczkiewicz (*Le Soir*) moderated the panel on participation and opened it by asking attendees whether they thought decision-making and citizens' participation had increased in the last five years in the European Union. The hands raised for "yes" were, as Kuczkiewicz observed "very few". From that evidence, he invited the panelists to speak.

Amaya Pérez de Albéniz (Acting Head of Unit of Europe for Citizens, EACEA) indicated that progress in the European Union had indeed been made. She used the Europe for Citizens program as an example of it, asserting that this is "a small program with great impact". On the other hand, she pointed to the difficulty of current times and lamented the low rates of European citizens' sense of belonging. Nevertheless, Pérez de Albéniz asserted that it is possible to improve this situation.

According to Yves Sintomer's findings (University of Paris VIII), around 90% of his European students are neither satisfied with their political system nor with politicians. On the contrary, 90% of Sintomer's Swiss students declare satisfaction with those issues in their country. This discrepancy, asserted Sintomer, reveals that Europe is "not democratic enough" and should open more channels of participation. "If we want to keep the beautiful European dream alive we have to change things", he observed, remarking on the need to "change the conception of politics at the Union level", direct democracy being part of it.



Virginie Van Ingelgom and Jan Robert Suesser - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

Virginie Van Ingelgom (Catholic University of Louvain), author of *Integrating Indifference: A Comparative, Qualitative and Quantitative Approach to the Legitimacy of European Integration* (2014), discussed why indifference could be more dangerous than dissatisfaction. Van Ingelgom talked about "fatalism", a term she used to describe citizens' feeling of helplessness concerning today's political development, which usually translates into people's indifference or passivity. According to her, Europe "needs to have citizens back in the democracy game" both at national and European levels.

Recalling Van Ingelgom's "fatalism", Jan Robert Suesser (European Civic Forum) added that in the current situation, mainstream European and national politicians explain that "there is no alternative" in order to justify their policies. The solution, Suesser suggests, will come by working towards more equality, more solidarity, more inclusivity and more democracy. "These four words put in practice will be enough for us, activists, to say 'we gained it', it is worth participating".

The debate covered issues concerning basically the European current participation system and its actual legislation.

### Concluding remarks

**"The European Union can be stronger if the voices of citizens are listened to"**



Francisco Fonseca Morillo - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

Francisco Fonseca Morillo (Deputy Director-General of Justice and Consumers of the European Commission) closed the first day of the conference expressing his sincere appreciation for the stimulating debates. "The debates of today are testimony to the rich and vibrant civil society that exists in Europe". He asserted that the discussions held during the conference also "manifest that the European Union can be stronger if the voices of citizenship are listened to". Coming to a close, Fonseca Morillo reminded the audience of the necessity of working "for a common interest", going beyond the agreements or disagreements and instead focusing on the debate. "Events like this contribute to a more cooperative European space", he said, stressing "the important feedback" of the discussions to shape European policies and funding on issues of citizenship.

[Events](#) :: Flashback on the Civil Dialogue meeting held on 1 June 2016

## Flashback on the Civil Dialogue meeting held on 1 June 2016



© Teresa Estrada - European Commission

1 June 2016

The "Civil Dialogue" meeting took place on 1 June 2016 in Barcelona in the premises of the University of Barcelona, as part of the Conference "European Citizenship in Challenging Times" that started one day earlier (see our report in this issue). It was the first meeting to occur in 2016, and the second to be officially held under the auspices of DG HOME (the last "Civil Dialogue" was held in Brussels on 15 June 2015).

The meeting was chaired by Marta Cygan (DG HOME, Director A "Strategy and General Affairs") during the morning, and by Marc Richir (DG HOME, then Deputy Head of Unit A1: "Interinstitutional relations and Citizenship") during the afternoon.

On this occasion, 37 organisations belonging to the Civil Dialogue group were represented and around 20 beneficiaries of action grants under strand 2 for 2014 and 2015 of the Europe for Citizens programme (EFCP) also attended it.

Marta Cygan welcomed the Civil Dialogue members by saying she personally viewed this Civil Dialogue as one of the main assets of the current programme, inasmuch as civil society organisations are an indispensable link between citizens and authorities, a place of political apprenticeship and civic engagement, and a major channel for citizens' participation. She underlined that it was important to consult stakeholders regularly to improve the implementation of the programme and to better exploit its results.

### A meeting mainly dedicated to the implementation and evaluation of the Programme

The main discussions, consultations and exchanges were about the programme implementation and evaluation.



From left to right: Marc Richir, Marta Cygan and Maria Teresa Barbat - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

In her capacity of Rapporteur of the intermediary evaluation of the EFCP, Maria Teresa Gimenez Barbat (MEP, Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe) gave a short presentation of the implementation report on the EFCP conducted by the European Parliament, which was then under preparation and to be adopted before the end of 2016.

During her [speech](#), she sketched the four main recommendations that would be put forward in her evaluation report:

- making this programme better known by potential beneficiaries and local administrations through a better communication strategy involving the national contact points of the Programme;
- increasing substantially its budget;
- enriching the programme with innovative lines of action, namely (a) the promotion of e-democracy at local, national and European levels, and (b) the integration of the "New Narrative for Europe" project;
- underlying the role of a secular perspective in the programme as a driver for European integration.

A round table followed, during which 14 members of the Civil Dialogue reacted to the speech of Ms Barbat and notably showed the added value of the programme and its extensive and transversal coverage.

The Civil Dialogue members were also informed that a mid-term evaluation of the EFCP, aiming at evaluating the ongoing programme implementation with regard to its general and specific objectives, and at starting a reflection on the future of the EFCP, would be submitted to the European Parliament, the Council, the EESC and the Committee of the Regions by 31 December 2017.

Marta Cygan wrapped-up the discussions by putting forward the many positive comments made about the EFCP (its user-friendliness, its unique support to small projects and small organisations, etc.), as well as its criticisms (challenging times, small budget, need for additional tools and funding) – many comments that would feed the mid-term evaluation of the EFCP 2014-2020, and contribute to its improvement.

The Agency presented the state of implementation of the Programme.

### Information points on current initiatives in the field of citizenship

The rest of the morning focused on current initiatives of the European Commission in the field of citizenship. Other Commission services actively participated:

- **DG JUST**, which chairs the Commission inter-services group on the 2016 EU Citizenship report, presented the [results](#) of its consultations on the subject;
- **Secretariat General** gave a [presentation](#) on ECI implementation, the Better Regulation package and the REFIT platform.

### An afternoon of workshops

Exchanges, discussions and reflections followed under the form of workshops during the entire afternoon. Two topics had been chosen by Civil Dialogue members for discussion:

*"Combatting immigrants' stigmatisation and promoting intercultural dialogue in a context of rising populism"*



Workshop A animated by M. Jopp - © Teresa Estrada / EC



Workshop B animated by O. Aitken - © Teresa Estrada / EC

- *"Reaching out to Union citizens in times of Euroscepticism"*.



Workshop C animated by N. Milanese - © Teresa Estrada / EC

Workshops were animated by Civil Dialogue members: Matthias Jopp, from IEP-Berlin; Oonagh Aitken, from VOLONTEUROPE; and Niccolò Milanese, from European Alternatives. Those workshops aimed at discussing the abovementioned topics during 1h15 under the prism of three sub-questions communicated a few days before to all Civil Dialogue members. At the end of the workshops, animators presented their [conclusions](#) in a plenary session.

### What is the "Civil Dialogue" Group ?

In its article 10, the [Regulation establishing the "Europe for Citizens" programme](#) (EFCP) for the period 2014-2020 provides that *"the Commission shall have a regular dialogue with the beneficiaries of the Programme and relevant partners and experts"*. This stakeholder consultation, called "Civil Dialogue", aims at developing, in the long term, a policy on participatory citizenship at EU level.

The "Civil Dialogue" consists in **regular meetings** between the Commission and approximately 58 key European level organisations and think tanks actively involved in the EFCP, some of which being also active in the fields covered by DG HOME:

- organisations which have been selected to receive an operating grant under the current EFCP 2014-2020;
- organisations which have received an operating grant under the former EFCP 2007-2013 and have expressed their continued interest to take part in the dialogue;
- organisations/think tanks which have expressed an interest in the Programme and/or work in this policy area.

In addition, **specific meetings with stakeholders** interested in specific actions or themes may take place as needed.

The "Civil Dialogue" group discusses all matters related to the programme, its annual priorities, and its implementation. It encourages **exchanges of experiences and of good practices in both Strands** ("European Remembrance" and "Democratic engagement and civic participation"). It also contributes to the dissemination of the programme's results. And it monitors and debates policy developments in the related fields.



Civil Dialogue meetings usually take place in Brussels.

## Sixth Edition of the European Remembrance Networking Meeting



© BD / European Commission

1 June 2016

The sixth networking meeting of organizations active in the field of memory, citizenship and remembrance took place on the second day of the conference at El Born Centre of Culture and Memories. The panels of debate and workshops allowed the leaders of the main projects on memories in Europe to share their most successful practices.

### Opening session

The opening session was guided by the Commissioner of Memory Programmes for the City of Barcelona, Ricard Vinyes, who was accompanied by Jaume Asens, Deputy Mayor of Barcelona; Pavel Tychtl, representative of the European Commission; and Jordi Guixé Coromines, director of the European Observatory on Memories (EUROM).



From left to right: Jordi Guixé, Pavel Tychtl, Jaume Asens and Ricard Vinyes - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

Ricard Vinyes introduced Barcelona's historical memory to the attendees underlining the city's experience during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), a conflict from which thousands of refugees emerged. "Refugees are part of our city's experience", he said. "Solidarity", he added, "is a slogan that must go along with memory".

Jaume Asens (Deputy Mayor of Barcelona) shared a brief reflection on democratic memories and Barcelona's public policies concerning it. "Retrieving memories constitutes a priority for today's government". According to him, getting memory back is crucial for attaining democracy, for it is people who ultimately enable memory to take shape. "This city is a cultural product of anonymous people", stressed Asens.

Pavel Tychtl (Europe for Citizens) reminded the audience of the overall purpose of the networking meeting, initiated in 2011 in order to better understand local contexts and to approach the complexity of European memories. Since then, the meetings have constituted an attempt to bring people together to create a European platform that can "meet across different traditions, experiences and backgrounds". Tychtl also highlighted local level contexts as essential in understanding Europe as a whole. "We need to bring our memories together", he stated.

Lastly, Jordi Guixé (EUROM) pleaded for European institutions to defend "memory as a right and not just as a duty or a responsibility". Returning to the original goals of this sixth European networking meeting, Guixé hoped the event could enable new processes of transnational and transversal public memory. "There is a real social demand for getting to know more about what happened in the past, about memory".

### Opening Keynote: "Memories of Europe in the Art of Elsewhere"

**Andreas Huyssen, founding director of the Center for Comparative Literature and Society of Columbia University**

*"European memory cannot be fortress. It must include memories of Europe as they circulate across the world"*



Andreas Huyssen - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

Andreas Huyssen (Columbia University) focused his lecture on the work of three contemporary artists that allowed him to explore European memory as a transnational element, as a global and collective construction. "European memory cannot be fortress. It must include memories of Europe as they circulate across the world", stated Huyssen, for whom transnational messages "may retrieve pieces of history to explain facts beyond national borders".

"Memories need embodiment, but they cannot be represented in a mimetic fashion, because then they are limited by their representation". Aiming to show how important it is to think of memory as a global experience in which the discourse about "the other" disappears, Huyssen concluded that "Arts can open up an alternative horizon, a way to be European and planetary at the same time". Huyssen concluded his speech talking about the "waste of time in modernity", its instability and its dislocation.

### Panel Dialogue 1: Memory, Citizenship, Solidarity

*"We should look at the past to learn from our successes and failures"*



Ksenija Vidmar - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

Moderator Ksenija Vidmar (University of Ljubjana) introduced the first panel by stressing the importance of thinking of memory as a means to further understand the past and better prepare for the future. "For the first time in modern history, we have true means and opportunities to co-create memories for the future", she said. According to Vidmar, "we have a say in how the future will remember the failing present".



From left to right: Aline Sierp, Siobhan Kattago and Nader Hashemi - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

Aline Sierp (Maastricht University) challenged the audience by declaring that "a European memory still does *not* exist". During her speech, Sierp discussed whether European memory can exist at all. "A lot of people believe that a European memory cannot exist because it cannot

refer to a common source of historical narrative. Other scholars argue that European Union requires a common memory to construct a common identity", she noted. From Sierp's view, the difference between a national narrative and a European dimension of memory is very much a question of form. Therefore, a collective European memory can be possible. "It can be done through dialogue and exchange by integrating different perspectives into a new framework where they can coexist together and create a new big frame".

Nader Hashemi (University of Denver) emphasized the need for a *transnationalisation* of memories.

Siobhan Kattago (University of Tartu) noted that we should not forget that the history of Europe is "a history of wars, genocides and expulsions," and in this sense the current refugee crisis provides a new lens with which understand the process of construction of European memories. As an example, she highlighted the "irony" of the walls that are being built at European borders after the fall of the Berlin Wall while Eastern Europe remembers the crimes of communism as part of the collective European memory. "I wonder if memories of the refugee crises of the early twentieth century have been forgotten or if they are selectively remembered." To Kattago, memory may enable Europe to deal more effectively with the current humanitarian emergency. "The refugee crisis of the twentieth century Europe was far more complex than the current one. We should look at the past to learn from our successes and failures of the time". According to Kattago, "episodes regarding refugees as a product of the failure of nation states and international system is still valid today".

## Panel Dialogue 2: Public Policies on Memory in Spain

*"Memory is not a duty, it is a right"*



From left to right : Ricard Vinyes, Montserrat Duch and Francisco Ferrandiz - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

Montserrat Duch (University Rovira i Virgili) moderated the second panel of the day and briefly addressed the main problems of Spanish memory in terms of "amnesia" and "forgetfulness".

The anthropologist Francisco Ferrandiz (Spanish National Research Council) spoke of the historical "silence" and "oblivion" that has existed thus far regarding Spanish dictator Francisco Franco's crimes. "All this silence, darkness and denial are preventing Spain, a democratic state, to release its demons". As an example of how difficult it is for citizens to bear such a silence, Ferrandiz pointed to the exhumation of common graves, a "desperate act committed by victims' offspring" to learn more about an unfinished past. "The voices of the victims need a legitimate space to be expressed express and turned into memory", claimed the anthropologist.

Ricard Vinyes (Barcelona City Council) underlined the need of working for citizens' memory by allowing citizens to participate in the building processes of images that aim at transmitting the experiences of the past. "We need as much support as possible to give a meaning to this spaces and build pedagogical debates".

## Workshop 1: Social Participation and Memory: Exchange of Best Practices

*"Without dialogue, nothing can change"*



From left to right: Maria Laura Marescalchi, Harri Beobide, Jordi Font, Ferenc Gerloczy and Nuria Ricart - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

Núria Ricart (University of Barcelona) moderated the workshop that summarized European initiatives on social participation and memory, presenting the examples of three different projects.

Maria Laura Marescalchi and Harri Beobide introduced EUROCLIO, a non-governmental organization created in 1993 that today connects with 75 organizations of history educators, associations and institutes from more than 40 countries. Its goal is to develop critical educational tools for the recent history of national countries and Europe. Marescalchi (Italy) and Beobide (Spain) explained EUROCLIO's methodology through the recently launched project "Silencing Citizens", which aims to improve students' understanding of why and how censorship has been used throughout time in different European societies.

Ferenc Gerloczy presented the experience of the Living Memorial of Budapest, an "in progress" monument born as a popular protest against a memorial that allegedly commemorates the 70th anniversary of the Nazi German occupation of Hungary. The Living Memorial began as

an "unofficial and popular reaction" that placed a set of chairs in front of the monument to fight against the "falsification of history". As Gerloczy detailed, the Living Memorial denounces the fact that the monument portrays Hungary as "absolutely innocent", when it was actually responsible for sentencing around 450,000 Jews to death during the Nazi occupation. Despite its original purpose, the Living Memorial has now become a place to debate over democracy and social integration.

Jordi Font discussed the experience of the *Museu Memorial de l'Exili* (Memorial Museum of Exile - MUME). Located in the border area of La Jonquera (Spain), the museum aims to explain the "great exodus" that took place during the Spanish Civil War by leaving a "permanent print" not only on the memory of citizens but also on the territory. According to Font, the particularity of MUME is its educational service. "The Museum has been expanded beyond its physical walls creating paths and itineraries organized to create a memory-based tourism", he explained.

## Workshop 2: European Networking

**"Critical modern consciousness must be based on the complexity of history and its multiple contradictory aspects"**

Seven speakers took the floor for the second workshop of the event to speak about their organizations' experiences in teaching and training about memory.



From left to right: Bruno Boyer, Rafal Rogulski, Nicolas Marty, Marcello Flores, Ophelia Leon, Alma Masic and Kostis Karpozilos - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

Bruno Boyer presented the Memorial de la Shoah in Paris, "dedicated to the remembrance of the Holocaust and the study of other genocides". Advocating for a European "inclusive memory", the Holocaust Memorial establishes the Jewish Holocaust as the "common basis" or the "starting point" from which to approach other European mass atrocities, thus creating a transnational and comparative network in which "every mass atrocity is unique", remarked Boyer.

Rafal Rogulski introduced the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity (ENRS), created by the Ministers of Culture of Poland, Germany, Hungary, and Slovakia. According to Rogulski, these countries "acknowledged the need for dialogue on the twentieth century history and established a European network for the research and dissemination of contemporary European history". ENRS leads projects such as European Remembrance, focused on stimulating and intensifying international cooperation among institutions and organizations operating in the field of research on the twentieth century European history.

Nicolas Marty presented the project Mémoires Européennes de Frontières (Memories of European Borders - MEFRO). Led by the Université de Perpignan Via Domitia and the European Observatory on Memories (EUROM), the MEFRO network unites another seven organizations and focuses on the promotion of social research and analysis on remembrance and heritage in the specific context of European borders. Overall, it aims to transfer knowledge "in order to promote social awareness on the uses of the past". Marty underlined the fact that "networking in a European framework offers a huge possibility to avoid difficulties".

Marcello Flores (Istituto Nazionale per la storia del Movimento di Liberazione in Italia - INSMLI) presented the discussion currently taking place in the INSMLI network regarding the forthcoming construction of a museum-study center dedicated to Italian Fascism in the former *Casa del Fascio* in Predappio, Mussolini's hometown. "It is a fact that the memory of victims is an essential and indispensable point of every historical reconstruction; we must emphasize that critical modern consciousness must be based on the complexity of history and its multiple contradictory aspects", reflected Flores.

Ophelia Leon presented the International Committee of Memorial Museums in Remembrance of the Victims of Public Crimes (ICMEMO). ICMEMO is part of the largest network of museums worldwide, ICOM, created by the UNESCO in 1946. Above all, Leon explained that its primary goal is "promoting peace through cultural dialogue, cooperation and knowledge".

Alma Masic presented Memory Lab, a network that works to connect people and organizations from Western Europe and the Balkans through "mutual learning, dialogue, exchange and constructive critical assessment of remembrance and history". On the whole, Memory Lab aims at contributing to the "integration of post-Yugoslav space into a shared European civil society and memory space".

Kostis Karpozilos introduced the Contemporary Social History Archives of Greece (ASKI), considered the leading archival institution for the history of political and social movements in the country. The main goal of ASKI is to encourage and influence public debate on memory as well as on present-day issues. According to Karpozilos, the main problem when working with memory is that it may "limit our political imagination". To Karpozilos, we should acknowledge "this idea of memories operating as conservative narratives" and try to be in dialogue with it.

## Final speech

**Bruno Groppo, historian at Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS)**



Bruno Groppo - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission

The leading expert in the history of working class movement, historian Bruno Groppo (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), dedicated his lecture to "Russian memories". Specifically, Groppo spoke of Russia's current perception regarding its Stalinist past and its sociopolitical consequences. Throughout his discussion, he described how an important part of Russia's population is currently overcoming its "traumatic history" by selecting those elements that lately are understood as positive. "Currently, half of the Russian population has a positive image of Stalin as a military leader and responsible for the modernization of the country." According to Groppo, the reconstruction of this memory feeds a series of tensions with the memories of the neighboring countries, especially the Baltic countries and Poland. At the heart of these conflicts stands the memorialization of Russian resistance to the German invasion and the victory of the Red Army over Nazism, "the only positive episode" that emerges from the reconstruction of Russian history after the end of socialist regimes.

### Closing

At the end of the conference on June 1, the representatives of the two strands of the Europe for Citizens programme gathered again, this time at El Born Centre of Culture and Memory, for the closing session.

The farewell words were shared on an informal stage of the museum and included speeches by Carme Panchón (University of Barcelona), Marc Richir (DG Home Affairs of the European Commission), Jordi Guixé (EUROM), and Gala Pin (Councilor of Participation of Barcelona). They all thanked both the organization and the audience for their active participation. Gala Pin remarked the success of the conference regarding the quality of the debates. She also stressed the importance of recovering democratic memories for the construction "of a new Europe for everyone."



Gala Pin - © Teresa Estrada / European Commission