

## **CLAUDIA SBUTTONI**

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The European Observatory on Memories (EUROM) is a multidisciplinary and transnational network that advocates for a plurality of memories in Europe, led by the University of Barcelona's Solidarity Foundation. A recent agreement with Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR), achieved through the international training program Alliance for Historical Dialogue and Accountability (AHDA), has enabled the exchange of students between the two organizations.

As a graduate student studying fascism and political violence during World War II in the Department of Italian at Columbia University, I was eager to learn how those working in the fields of history and memory treated the issues I was considering in my own studies. This summer, I participated in a partially-funded eight-week internship with EUROM Coordinator and alumnus of the Alliance for Historical Dialogue and Accountability Program (AHDA), Oriol López-Badell. The AHDA, to facilitate its study of the impact that memory of conflicts has had on contemporary society, created the Mapping Historical Dialogue Project (MHDP) to visualize and connect projects around the globe that address issues relating to historical dialogues, historical and transitional justice, human rights, and public and social memory. While at EUROM, I contributed to this digital map by collecting and processing information from 16 of its network partners in order to enlarge AHDA's database. I also acted as the liaison between EUROM and Columbia, as well as the representative of EUROM for MHDP's conference calls.

I was interested in working in Barcelona to better understand a country which was only able to rid itself of authoritarian rule 40 years ago, as well as a city that embodies historical dialogue and accountability, and is active in issues of memory and preservation of history and the questioning of fascism. Learning more about the Spanish Civil War through my work here has supplemented and expanded my own studies and interests in World War II. By confronting moments in European history in order to address their consequences today, EUROM's work seeks to challenge hegemonic strains of history. Although not much happened on the memory

front in Barcelona after the restoration of democracy in the mid-1970s, EUROM's efforts are urging the city to come to terms with its past. It is exciting to be a part of an organization that encourages democracy and the plurality of memories.

Moreover, in July 2016 I attended ICOM's General Conference, that gathered the international museum community around the theme of "Museums and Cultural Landscapes" in Milan, Italy. Within the context of the conference, EUROM co-organized the annual meeting of ICMEMO, the International Committee of Memorial Museums in Remembrance of the Victims of Public Crimes. I wrote a report in English that was published on [EUROM's website](#), covering all presentations, sessions, and discussions which focused Dark Tourism: Ethics & Education, Dictatorships in Latin America and Eastern Europe, and the Reproducibility of Memorial Heritage. I also covered the visits to Fossoli (Ex-Deportation Camp Fossoli) and Carpi (Museo del Deportato), which were useful for my own research. Through the conference I met many researchers and professionals connected to my specific area of research: Fascist internment camps for civilians of former Yugoslavia in Italy and Italian-occupied territory. I was introduced to a network of people and museums working on my topic.



I also attended and helped organize the international event "[Victory over fascism. Barcelona 1936](#)" on July 18th at the University of Barcelona, to mark the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. In addition to the English report filed for the ICOM conference, I reported in English on this conference for press and the [EUROM website](#). I also edited articles published by the EUROM, and edited all existing information available on their website.

Working with EUROM has been an excellent opportunity for me to expand my professional skills, my knowledge of World War II, my experience in the fields of history and memory, improve my Spanish and Italian language skills, and widen the scope of my research. Through the expansion of my professional network, I made valuable connections that will facilitate further research. EUROM gave me the chance to explore how historical dialogue functions to shape cultures of democracy, and how history and the memory of historical violence become tools through which to prevent future genocide and mass atrocities.

