9th International Meeting of the EUROM Network

ARCHITECTURES OF DISCOMFORT

Berlin Cervantes Institute
3-5 November, 2026

TAKING STOCK 2026. 9TH EUROM NETWORK MEETING

ARCHITECTURES OF DISCOMFORT

HERITAGE AND SITES OF MEMORY.

The 9th EUROM Network Meeting invites participants to reflect on public memory as a form of collective heritage, both as an intangible social and political process and through its material presence in monuments, buildings and urban spaces that embody difficult or contested pasts. Through discussions on architecture, urbanism, heritage policies, museology, public art and civic participation, the event will address the political, social and ethical challenges of preserving and transforming places marked by violence, dictatorship, colonialism and other traumatic histories. Berlin, with its internationally recognised experience in confronting difficult pasts through the urban landscape, provides a particularly fitting setting.

The conference will examine the decision-making processes behind memorial projects, the tension between historical preservation and contemporary democratic values, the economic and institutional challenges involved, and the need to place victims and affected communities at the centre of memory policies. It will also link these debates to current European initiatives, such as the evolution of the CERV programme. Open to the public, the meeting will bring together academics, policymakers, architects, artists, representatives of European institutions and civil society organisations.

Organised by the European Observatory on Memories (EUROM) and the Instituto Cervantes Berlin, in collaboration with the Jean Monnet House and the Institute of Memory of Navarre. Co-funded by the European Union's CERV programme.

PROGRAMME

TUESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER

3:30 pm – Registration of participants

4:00 pm – 4:15 pm – Welcome remarks

- Barbara Gessler Head of Representation of the European Commission in Germany
- Ignacio Martínez-Castignani, Head of Instituto Cervantes Berlin
- Dr Jordi Guixé, Director of EUROM

4:15 – 5:15 pm – Opening keynote

Making the Past Present at Sites of Contested Memory

- Professor HG Merz, Architect

Moderated by Dr Stefanie Endlich, Universität der Künste Berlin

5:15 – 5:30 pm – Coffee break

5:30 – 6:45 pm – Panel 1

Architecture for Memorial Heritage and Civic Values in Public Space

- Philippe Prost, Architect and Professor (ENSA Paris-Belleville)
- Dr Annalisa de Curtis, Architect (Politecnico di Milano)

Moderated by Dr Jordi Guixé, EUROM

6:45 – 8:00 pm – Panel 2

Urbanism and Memory landscapes

- Dr Liliana Iuga, Institute for Urban Design and European Urbanism (RWTH Aachen University)
- Dr Kathrin Golda-Pongratz, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC)
- Dr Axel Klausmeier, Berlin Wall Foundation

Moderated by Debora Righetti, Jean Monnet House

8:00 pm – Welcome cocktail and networking

WEDNESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER

9:00 am – Registration of participants

9:30 am – 10:45 am – Panel 3

Rethinking Memorial Values: The New AgoraEU and CERV+ programmes

- Barbara Gessler, Head of Representation of the European Commission in Germany
- Dr Markus Prutsch, European Parliament
- CERV-REM-OG Beneficiary Organisations:
    - Sharon Reichel, Association of European Jewish Museums
    - Tena Banjeglav, Documenta
    - Paula O'Donohoe, EuroClio
    - Rafal Rogulski, ENRS

Moderated by Oriol López, EUROM

10:45 am – 11:00 am – Coffee break

11:00 am – 12:30 pm – Panel 4

Dissonant Heritage in the Making: Contributions from across Europe

- Dr Harald Bodenschatz, Social Scientist and Urban Planner (TU Berlin), and Victoria Grau, Doctoral Researcher (Fachhochschule Potsdam)
- Dora Ivanova, CEO of the Buzludzha Project Foundation
- Alessia Zampini, PhD and Professor (Università di Bologna)
- Birgit Kann, Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR)

Moderated by Jan Schultheiß, German Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building, Vibrant Communities, National Urban Development Projects (BMWSB)

12:30 pm – 2:00 pm – Lunch and networking

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm – Panel 5

Re-signifying Contested Heritage: from State Violence to Colonial Legacies

- Dr Horst Hoheisel, Artist
- Nasra Elliott, Engagement Producer at National Museums Liverpool
- José Miguel Gastón, Former Director of the Navarre Institute of Memory

Moderated by Dr Daniel Rico, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

3:30 pm – 4:00 pm – Coffee break and networking

4:00 pm – 5:00 pm – Panel 6

The Role of the Arts in Shaping Memory / Theatre as a Tool for Political History

- Dr Maria Milisavljević, Translator and Playwright
- Monica Bonvicini, Professor (Universität der Künste Berlin)

Moderated by Dr Piedad Solans, Art Historian and Curator

5:00 pm – 6:00 pm – Panel 7

Memory from an Artistic Perspective

- Pilar Millán, Artist
- María Amparo Gomar, Artist

Moderated by Dr Núria Ricart Ulldemolins, Universitat de Barcelona

6:15 pm – Closing remarks

THURSDAY 5 NOVEMBER (OPTIONAL)

10:30 am – 12:30 pm – Guided tour

Holocaust and Memory Sites in Berlin

- Curated by Dr. Stefanie Endlich

PANELS & SPEAKERS

KEYNOTE - MAKING THE PAST PRESENT AT SITES OF CONTESTED MEMORY

How can architecture and design bring difficult histories into public view without erasing their complexity or aestheticising the evil they bear witness to? This keynote explores the challenges of interpreting and preserving sites of contested memory, and the responsibility of design in making dissonant heritage accessible while respecting its historical significance.

HG Merz is a German architect and museum designer, and founder and director of hg merz architekten museumsgestalter, an architecture practice specialising in museum and exhibition design and the refurbishment of listed buildings.

Stefanie Endlich is an independent author and curator, and Honorary Professor of Art in Public Space at the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK). Her books and exhibitions explore monuments and memorial sites, visual arts, architecture and the history of Berlin.

PANEL 1 - ARCHITECTURE, MEMORY AND CIVIC VALUES IN PUBLIC SPACE

How can architecture express remembrance, dignity and recognition in shared public spaces? Focusing on Holocaust commemoration and gender perspectives in memorialisation, this panel brings together Philippe Prost's approach to architectural design and remembrance and Annalisa de Curtis's exploration of contested narratives, architectural heritage and representations of the human body.

Philippe Prost is an architect and professor at ENSA Paris-Belleville. His award-winning practice explores the relationships between architecture, historical heritage and context, combining craftsmanship and innovation to reinterpret places shaped by the past.

Annalisa de Curtis is an architect, researcher and curator whose transdisciplinary work connects architectural history, heritage and contemporary design, exploring new ways of engaging with contested narratives of buildings and human bodies.

Jordi Guixé (moderator) is the director of the European Observatory on Memories (EUROM) and a historian specialising in memory policies, heritage and public space. His work explores how the legacies of conflict can contribute to democratic transmission.

PANEL 2 - URBANISM AND MEMORY LANDSCAPES

Cities are shaped as much by what they preserve as by what they leave out. This panel explores how urban planning and design can make traumatic histories visible or render them invisible. Liliana luga examines the preservation and adaptive reuse of residential heritage in Eastern Europe, Kathrin Golda-Pongratz explores urban memory and inclusive public spaces, and Axel Klausmeier addresses contested monuments and politically charged heritage.

Liliana luga is a research associate at RWTH Aachen University. Her research focuses on residential heritage, adaptive reuse, and architectural and urban history in Eastern and Central Europe.

Kathrin Golda-Pongratz is an architect and professor at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia (UPC). Her research addresses urban cultures, public space, memory, migration, participatory planning and social inclusion.

Axel Klausmeier is director of the Berlin Wall Foundation. He holds a PhD in art history and medieval and modern history, and researches contested monuments and politically charged built heritage.

Debora Righetti (moderator) is Public Relations Officer and Lecturer at the Jean Monnet House, the European Parliament's museum-house in Bazoches-sur-Guyonne. Her work explores sites of European integration as places of shared European heritage.

PANEL 3 - RETHINKING MEMORIAL VALUES: THE NEW AGORAEU AND CERV+ PROGRAMMES

How can European funding help sustain memory work and strengthen democratic engagement across Europe? Representatives of the European Commission and the European Parliament will discuss the opportunities and challenges presented by the new AgoraEU and CERV+ programmes, and beneficiaries of the CERV-REM-OG operating grant, will share their experiences and the practical realities of sustaining memory initiatives.

Barbara Gessler has been Head of the European Commission Representation in Germany since March 2024. With three decades of experience in European institutions, she has worked on EU funding programmes and communication, and previously headed the Culture Unit at the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

Markus Prutsch is Head of Unit at the European Parliament and Associate Professor of Modern and Contemporary History at Heidelberg University. His work focuses on European identity, democratic values and remembrance policies.

CERV-REM-OG Beneficiary Organisations

EuroClio – European Association of History Educators is a European network based in The Hague that supports history and citizenship educators through innovative teaching approaches, educational resources and international collaboration.

European Network Remembrance and Solidarity (ENRS) is an international institution based in Poland fostering dialogue on twentieth-century European history and the development of cultures of remembrance.

Documenta – Centre for Dealing with the Past is a Croatian civil society organization addressing difficult and polarizing historical events across the 20th and 21st centuries. It documents, researches and fosters public dialogue to encourage societies to deal with their past.

Association of European Jewish Museums (AEJM), based in Amsterdam, is a European network of Jewish museums and heritage institutions. It fosters collaboration among its members, to preserve, promote and present Jewish cultural heritage.

Oriol López (moderator) is a historian and EUROM coordinator. As an international relations officer, he connects academic networks, institutional cooperation and public history, fostering dialogue and public engagement through Barcelona's memorial heritage.

PANEL 4 - DISSONANT HERITAGE IN THE MAKING: CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ACROSS EUROPE

What should become of monuments and urban spaces inherited from totalitarian regimes? Drawing on case studies from Bulgaria, Italy and Germany, this panel explores how architecture, art and urban planning can engage with the contested legacies of fascism and communism. From preservation and reinterpretation to artistic intervention and urban transformation, speakers examine how these difficult sites can acquire new meanings in contemporary society.

Harald Bodenschatz is a social scientist and urban planner specialising in urban history, planning cultures and the political dimensions of European cities. Since 1980, he has contributed to sensitive redevelopment projects in historic city centres.

Victoria Grau is an urban planner and doctoral researcher whose work focuses on urban regeneration, heritage and participatory approaches to public space and memory. Her doctoral research examines urban planning as an instrument of occupation policy.

Dora Ivanova is an architect and founder of the Buzludzha Project Foundation. She leads international efforts to preserve and reinterpret Bulgaria's Buzludzha Monument as a site for critical engagement with twentieth-century history.

Alessia Zampini is an architect and professor at the University of Bologna. Her research focuses on monument conservation and restoration in times of war, strategies for preserving dissonant heritage, and heritage-making processes involving local communities.

Birgit Kann is Project Lead at the German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR), where she coordinates a research project on integrated approaches to dissonant heritage in Europe.

Jan Schultheiß (moderator) works at the German Federal Ministry for Housing, Urban Development and Building (BMWSB), where he leads work on integrated approaches to dissonant heritage within the Urban Agenda for the EU.

PANEL 5 - RE-SIGNIFYING CONTESTED HERITAGE: FROM STATE VIOLENCE TO COLONIAL LEGACIES

Can contested monuments and heritage sites become spaces for recognition, dialogue and reparation? This panel explores how artistic interventions, decolonial museum practices and memory policies can transform difficult legacies of state violence and colonialism. Drawing on Horst Hoheisel's counter-monuments, community engagement in the United Kingdom and initiatives addressing Francoist repression in Spain, the discussion considers how societies can re-signify the past through democratic and restorative approaches.

Horst Hoheisel is an internationally renowned conceptual artist who has spent three decades rethinking monuments and memorials through counter-monuments, absence and public participation.

Nasra Elliott is Engagement Producer at National Museums Liverpool, where she develops collaborative programmes connecting museums and communities through inclusive, decolonial approaches to heritage, remembrance and participation.

José Miguel Gastón is the former director of the Institute for the Memory of Navarre, where he led public memory initiatives addressing Francoist repression through exhumations, sites of memory, education and documentation.

Daniel Rico (moderator) is an art historian and professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB). His research focuses on heritage, iconography, visual culture and the historical uses of monuments and public art.

PANEL 6 - THE ROLE OF THE ARTS IN SHAPING MEMORY

How can art challenge established narratives and bring the legacies of conflict and violence into public view? Through theatre, performance and visual art, Maria Milisavljević and Monica Bonvicini explore how artistic practices can open new perspectives on difficult pasts and question the ways in which history is represented in public space.

Maria Milisavljević is an internationally acclaimed playwright and translator whose work explores memory, violence, gender and contemporary European history through theatre and performance. She holds a PhD in English cultural studies.

Monica Bonvicini is a visual artist whose work spans sculpture, installation, drawing, video and public art, exploring the intersections of architecture, power, gender and space. Since 2017, she has held the Professorship for Sculpture at the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK).

Piedad Solans (moderator) is an independent curator, writer and researcher with a PhD in Art History, specialising in contemporary art, critical theory, feminism and visual culture. Her work examines the structures and technologies of violence in armed conflicts.

PANEL 7 - MEMORY FROM AN ARTISTIC PERSPECTIVE

How can contemporary art revisit historical memory, challenge symbolic boundaries and contribute to processes of recognition and reparation? Pilar Millán explores cultural and political boundaries through historical memory and myth, while María Amparo Gomar Vidal examines memory, gender and identity through participatory artistic projects. The panel also considers how public space, monuments and public art shape the ways cities remember their pasts.

Pilar Millán is a visual artist whose interdisciplinary practice explores cultural and political boundaries through historical memory and myths in contemporary contexts.

María Amparo Gomar Vidal is a visual artist whose work investigates memory, gender, identity and materiality, focusing on collective and affective processes of symbolic reparation through participatory projects.

Núria Ricart Ulldemolins (moderator) is an associate professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Barcelona, with a PhD in Public Space and Urban Regeneration. Her research focuses on monumentality, public art, public space and memory.

SURVEY

This activity is co-financed by the European Commission and for its evaluation we kindly ask for your collaboration in filling in this survey. You will need the information indicated below.

Thank you very much!

- *Project reference no.: 101236354*
- *Activity type: Mutual Learning*
- *Title: Taking Stock of European Memory Policies 2026*
- *Date: 3 November 2026*
- *Three days*
- *In person event*
- *Berlin*

MORE INFORMATION

europeanmemories.net

ORGANIZATION:

EUROM EUROPEAN OBSERVATORY ON MEMORIES

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COLLABORATION:

MEMORIA

Gobierno de Navarra Nafarroako Gobernua

MAISON JEAN MONNET