

How can Europe Help the Balkans Consume its History?

Taking a closer look at history education in South East Europe

Public Event
18 December 2017
09:00-17:00

House of European
History
Rue Belliard 135, 1000
Bruxelles, Belgium

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Programme

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The project will be implemented with the financial support of the Austrian Development Cooperation as part of the initiative "NETUCATE – Networked education creating a skills web for participation and sensitivity."

Introduction

It is often said that Winston Churchill believed that “the Balkans produces more history than it can consume.” Besides the fact that this quote is incorrectly attributed to him, and that it was originally made in reference to Crete, it nevertheless resonates very well with all those involved in the promotion of responsible history education in this region. There is a visible difficulty for the established public and political cultures to refrain from using historical interpretations and concepts as divisive tools, or worse – using history as a weapon. But, what does it actually mean when a society ‘consumes’ history? And if we acknowledge that ‘dealing with the past’, ‘facing history’, ‘overcoming’ and so on entail the proper ‘consumption’ of the past, which history should be dealt with, by whom and how?

Yet, we too easily forget that the school history teacher has to somehow prepare young people for wrestling with the many political, cultural, ethnic and ideological interpretations, and (ab)uses of the past. Can this teacher do so while working for those same political rulers which (ab)use this subject? Does this teacher have the right tools and resources, and – perhaps the most important question – does society even desire that the teacher does so? As one of the most politicised school subjects, little to nothing is left to the professional community, and history curricula as well as textbook production cycles are eagerly controlled, or at least protected from a wider reflection, orientation and ownership by a broader professional community, which includes teacher trainers, historians, teachers, educators, assessment experts, and didactics.

Looking at history education, the way in which it is organised, prepared, and delivered from this angle may ultimately support the region to not only consume the history produced, but build a larger appetite amongst their students. Not however to simply ‘get the narrative’, but to be equipped with the complex understanding of the creation of multiple narratives.

Aims:

To-

- Inform European policy makers in the field of Education and Training, Citizenship (Europe for Citizens) and Neighbourhood and Enlargement about the work of civil society and educators to promote responsible history education in the Western Balkans.
- Connect policy makers across European Institutes and other stakeholders working on history education as a tool for peace and reconciliation.
- Identify best practices of dealing with history education in the Western Balkans.
- Identify connections and opportunities for addressing the (European) history of the wars of the 1990s in Yugoslavias through collaborations.
- Propose ways forward for history educators and other stakeholders dealing with history and memory in the affected countries to deal with the history of the wars of the 1990s in Yugoslavia.

Programme

09.00-09.30: Registration and welcome with coffee/tea

09.30-10.00: Opening Words

- **Constanze Itzel**, House of European History manager
- **Jonathan Even-Zohar** - Director of the European Association of History Educators
- **Zvezdana Kovac** - Executive Director of the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe

10.00-11.00: How can Europe build on common cultural heritage and history in the Western Balkan? *Panel Discussion with representative of the European Commission:*

1. *Walter Zampieri, Head of Unit Culture, Directorate-General Education & Culture*
2. *Pavel Tychtl, Europe for Citizens, Remembrance, Directorate-General Home Affairs*
3. *Diego Marani, Policy coordinator for cultural diplomacy at the European External Action Service*

Discussion objectives:

- To identify the role of history and cultural heritage in European policy making
- To touch on the role these policies have for the strengthening of the enlargement process. In which way?
- To consider how the European Year of Cultural Heritage can act as a bridge between EU MS and non-MS (in particular Western Balkan)
- To reflect on the work of the WB Platform for Education and Training
- To reflect on the accomplishments and perspectives of the House of European History

11.00-11.30: Coffee Break

11.30-12.30: State of Play and Ways Forward on Reform of History Education and Reconciliation

1. 'What happens in the Classroom? Teachers, teaching practice and controversy across Western Balkans' *presented by Rodoljub Jovanović and Dea Marić*
2. 'Process of Reconciliation in the Western Balkans and Turkey: A Qualitative Study' *presented by Anja Gvozdanić and Vanja Kukrika*

12:30-14:30: Lunch, followed by a custom **guided tour of the House of European History**

14.30-15.30: Best Practice of **regional cooperation for dealing with sensitive and controversial history**. Two parallel sessions:

1. *'Yugoslav Wars as viewed across Europe' presented by Lucija Balikić & 'Learning History which is not yet History – EUROCLIO results to date and ways forward by and for history teachers in countries affected by war' presented by Judith Geerling*
2. *'Joint History Project', presented by Mr Costa Carras and Professor Dubravka Stojanović*

15.30-16.00: Coffee break

16.00-17.00: Concluding panel: *“How could Europe help the Balkans “consume” its history?”*

- *Markus J. Prutsch – Senior Researcher at the European Parliament*
- *Constanze Itzel, House of European History manager*
- *Costa Carras, Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe*
- *Jonathan Even-Zohar - EUROCLIO*

Moderated by Pavel Tychtl – European Commission, DG Migration and Home Affairs, Europe for Citizens Programme

17.00-18.00: Drinks reception

Contributors:

- **Lucija Balikić**- *President of the International Students of History Association*
- **Costa Carras**- *Deputy Secretary and JHP Rapporteur to the Board of Director at the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe*
- **Jonathan Even-Zohar**- *Director of the European Association of History Educators*
- **Judith Geerling**- *Senior Project Manager at the European Association of History Educators*
- **Constanze Itzel**, *House of European History manager*
- **Rodoljub Jovanović**- *Researcher at the University of Deusto, Spain*
- **Zvezdana Kovac**- *Executive Director of the Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe*
- **Dea Marić**- *Researcher at the University of Zagreb, Croatia*
- **Dubravka Stojanović**- *Professor of Contemporary General History, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade*
- **Pavel Tychtl**- *Policy Officer at the DG Migration and Home Affairs of the European Commission, where he is responsible for the Remembrance Strand of the 'Europe for Citizens' programme*
- **Markus J. Prutsch** – *Senior Researcher at the European Parliament*
- **Walter Zampieri** – *Head of Unit Culture, Directorate-General Education & Culture*
- **Anja Gvozdanović** – *Research associate of the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb*
- **Vanja Kukrika** - *Project coordinator at Omladinski komunikativni centar in Banja Luka*

- **Diego Marani** – *Policy coordinator for cultural diplomacy at the European External Action Service*

Partners:

The European Association of History Educators is a non-profit organisation based in Den Haag, The Netherlands. Established on the request of the Council of Europe, EUROCLIO is an umbrella association of more than seventy organisations and associations in the field. EUROCLIO’s mission to support the development of innovative and responsible history education through multi-perspectivity.



The Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation based in Thessaloniki, Greece. They advocate principles of social responsibility, sustainable development, and reconciliation among the peoples in the region

The International Students of History Association is a non-governmental organisation. Founded in Budapest in 1990, ISHA aims to further improve communication and provide international exchange opportunities for students of history and similar sciences.



Hosted by the House of European History

**HOUSE OF
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Projects:

ePACT Research findings: needs for educational transformation in the region

Over the last three years EUROCLIO and CDRSEE worked together with the History Teachers Associations of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia within the project ePACT (Educational Partnership for Advocacy, Capacity and Transformation) to establish a new evidence base that maps the needs of history teachers to improve the quality of history education. The report is expected to be ready by the beginning of December, and will be launched during the conference.

<https://euroclio.eu/projects/epact-education-partnership-advocacy-capacity-building-transformation/>

How to learn history which is not yet history? The case of 1990s Yugoslav Wars

Since 2016 EUROCLIO has been working with leading members of the History Teachers Associations of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia to establish a common response to the question: "How to learn history which is not yet history? The case of 1990s Yugoslav Wars". The project aims to contribute to the field of European remembrance and to raise awareness among European educators on the challenges of teaching about such a recent conflict in the countries affected by the war. The project team analysed the challenges and opportunities to bring the 1990s in history teaching in a Joint Position Paper, and created a common database, for which they mapped existing resources that could be used for future collaborative development of educational materials and training modules on a regional level.

<https://euroclio.eu/projects/learning-a-history-that-is-not-yet-history/>

Joint History Project

Since 1998, the Southeast European Joint History Project, brings together historians, teachers and all those interested in history education. We are a multilingual community and we offer to share with you a wealth of teaching resources for exciting history lessons. Multi-perspective history teaching is our passion and we believe in critical thinking as a crucial life skill.

<http://jhp.education>