

# BRINGING HISTORY

TO LIFE

MAKING HISTORY EDUCATION  
MEANINGFUL FOR ALL  
STUDENTS

## CONCEPT NOTE

### EUROCLIO 26TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

Professional training and  
development course

**Gdańsk 4-7 APRIL**



EUROCLIO – European Association of History Educators is delighted and honoured to organise the 26th Annual Conference and Professional Development and Training Course in Gdańsk from 4-7 April 2019.

It is safe to assume that history educators like learning history and want to know more. Students, on the other hand, often do not choose to learn history. This leads to one of the key challenges for history educators: How to interest all students in learning history? It is to address this key challenge that decided to choose “Bringing History to Life! - making history education meaningful to all students” as the theme for its 26th Annual Conference.

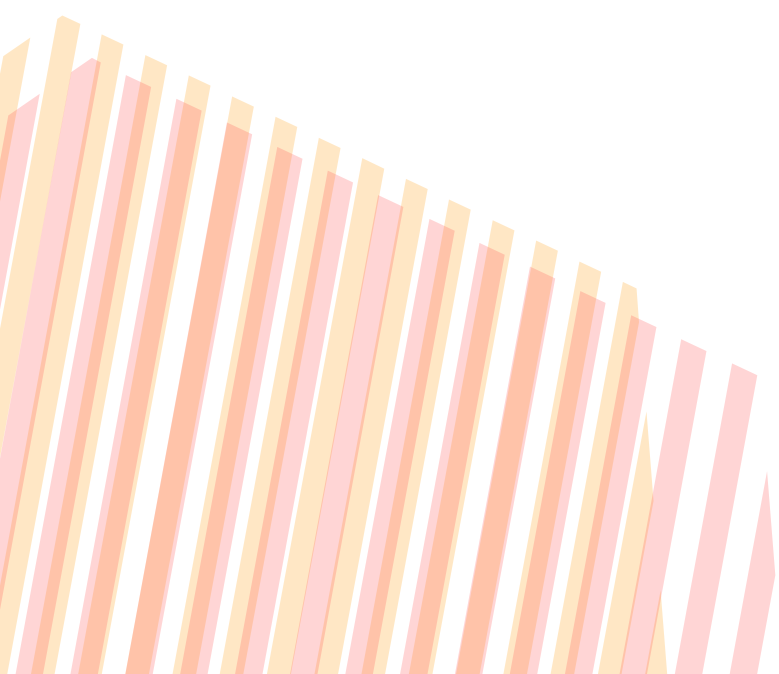
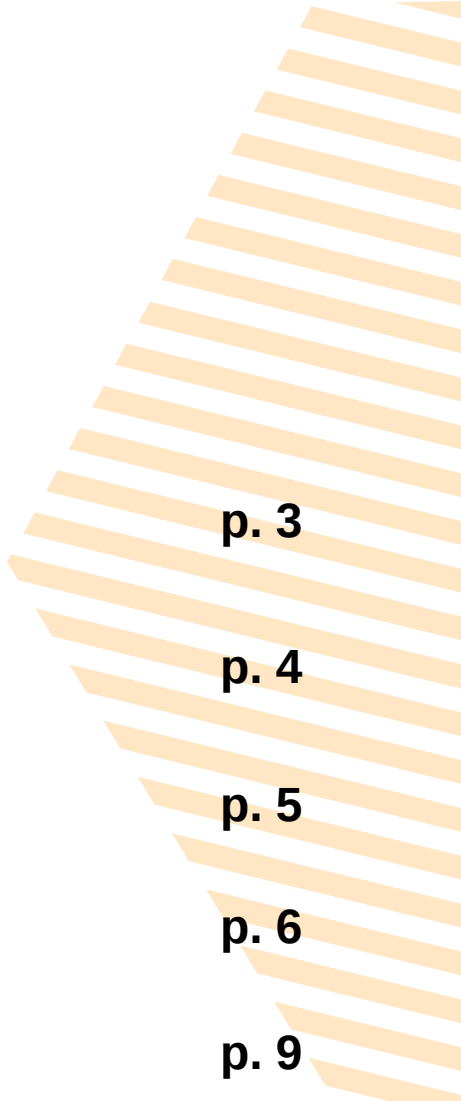
During the 26th Annual Conference, we hope to welcome between 200 and 250 history, geography, heritage, and citizenship educators and education professionals from all across and beyond Europe. They will participate in an intensive professional development course; exchanging best practices and obtaining new insights from academia and civil society.

This concept note serves as a guide to the conference themes and aims, and the preliminary programme.



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# BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE

Making history education meaningful to all students

It is safe to assume that history educators like learning history and want to know more. As a result, they develop a deep historical knowledge, which helps them to make meaningful connections, see new information in its historical context and ask questions to guide research and reading. Students do not necessarily have these advantages, and also did not always choose to learn history. This leads to one of the key challenges for history educators: How to interest all students in learning history? How to bring history to life?

The conference will explore different ways to make learning history meaningful and motivating for students. These will include:

- Looking at the impact of big events on ordinary people;
- Using history to think about fundamental questions;
- Linking history to current affairs;
- Using popular history (such as games, movies and graphic novels) in the classroom;
- Using historical artifacts and visits to heritage sites to make history tangible.

Through this exploration, history education will be linked with current affairs and students' everyday life, thus deepening their ability to make connections, to contextualize information, as well as their curiosity in the past. As a consequence, students' understanding of (and interest in) history is prompted, and they develop critical thinking skills, essential for becoming responsible citizens in the globalized 21st century.



## KEY QUESTIONS

To be addressed at the 26th EUROCLIO Annual Conference “Bringing History to Life, making history education meaningful to all students” are:

How can we **make the connections** between **current (European) affairs** and history clear and meaningful for students?

How can we spark and use **students’ curiosity** toward past events to provide quality **history and citizenship** education?

How can we **bring history to life**, interesting all students in learning history?



# Gdańsk



Gdańsk is the perfect setting to deeply investigate on how to bring history to life. In the last century, it has been a Polish city, a Free city, a German (occupied) city, part of a People's Republic under Soviet influence, to most recently become again a Polish city after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It has been the theatre of two world wars, two foreign occupations, and the cradle of the Solidarity movement. All those events have had a deep impact on families, individuals, cultures, and the history of the 20th century.

They continue to shape history today.

# KEY THEMES OF THE CONFERENCE

As students do often follow history lessons as part of compulsory education, without actively choosing the subject as something of their interest, they might lack the motivation and the curiosity to engage with past events. As a consequence, they would find it difficult to understand the impact events have on (their) everyday life and on current affairs. The conference takes a closer look to this perceived detachment of events in the past and today, investigating on how to bring history back to life, helping students to see the connectedness between past and present, and on how to spark their curiosity and motivation in deepening their knowledge.

The conference provides a wide range of activities, including active workshops, on-site learning, school visits, key-note speeches, panel discussions, a plenary workshop, and a market place of ideas. The main theme of “Bringing History to Life” will be deepened further thanks to three main subthemes.

# 1

## Key Events and their impact on current affairs

The conference addresses questions such as how did key events in the past shape today's world? How can one trace current history and international relations back to events that took place 50, 100 or 150 years ago? To what extent are our students able to recognize these links? How can we help them develop the critical thinking competences necessary to do so?

# 2

## Everyday life in the past

Gdansk is a city that underwent radical changes during the twentieth century. It has been a Polish city, a Free city, a German (occupied) city, member of a People's Republic under Soviet influence, and again a Polish city after the collapse of the Soviet Union. All these changes had a specific impact on people's everyday life, shaping the landscape of the city, the interior of houses, and people's own culture and worldview.



# 3

## Teaching Strategies that motivate students in learning history

Sometimes, students lack of motivation to approach history. This might lead to low school achievements and to lacking the curiosity and interest necessary to deepen the knowledge of history and to develop crucial competences to become responsible citizens in today's world. The conference will explore innovative methods and strategies for how to prompt students' motivation in learning history, countering this tendency.



# A UNIQUE **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** COURSE

High quality education, as recognised by the European Union, Council of Europe and UNESCO, needs teachers that can deal with complex classroom realities and adopt new methods and tools. One of the main tools today in Europe for schools and teachers to invest in this critical professional development is the Erasmus+ programme, which explicitly seeks to invest in teachers to deal with diversified groups of learners. In particular, through projects focused on student-centred and problem-based active learning, using multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches and through fostering critical thinking skills.

The EUROCLIO Annual Conference is a unique professional development course which has been addressing these learning outcomes for over two decades. The conference targets history, geography, heritage, and citizenship educators and education professionals from Poland, Europe, and the world.

Working forward from the member-led Helsingor Declaration and the EUROCLIO Manifesto, “Bringing History to Life” promotes educational approaches such as problem-based active learning, students-centered teaching, critical thinking, and teaching sensitive and controversial issues.

*“I came back from the conference **full of enthusiasm**, the head filled with **new ideas and new projects**. I am impatient to attend the next conference!”* – Participant of the 25th Annual Conference (2018)



## **AIMS OF THE CONFERENCE**

To engage in a dialogue between history, geography, heritage, and citizenship educators from across and beyond.

To share educational initiatives which help young people to better debate and formulate an opinion around key questions addressed at the conference.

To exchange innovative tools, methods and professional knowledge with all other educators in Europe and beyond to support teaching locally and in their own countries.

To disseminate and explore the implementation of innovative history teaching resources and guidelines produced by national and international NGOs and intergovernmental organisations.

To strengthen synergies between EUROCLIO and history and geography educators in Poland and across and beyond Europe, in order to strengthen the capacity building and professional development of local educators.

# EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Increased participation and dialogue within and between the European and Worldwide community of history, geography, heritage, and citizenship educators.
- Increased understanding of the role of history education in changing the world and the complex relationship between times, spaces, and identities in a historical context.
- Raised awareness of the connectedness between past and present through on-site learning, and reflection on the teaching of history across and beyond Europe.
- Improved (English) language competence through facilitated and engaged dialogues.
- Access to new partnerships, including schools and local, regional, national and international educational authorities and institutes in different fields and sectors.
- Access to innovative history education tools from across the world with a focus on motivating students to learning history.
- Conference report for wider dissemination, including educational resources, and academic papers.
- Recognition of developed competences in history education through lifelong learning in the international context.