



MEMORY POLITICS AND TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE



# Europeanisation and Memory Politics in the Western Balkans

*Edited by* Ana Milošević · Tamara Trošt

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# Memory Politics and Transitional Justice

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The interdisciplinary fields of Memory Studies and Transitional Justice have largely developed in parallel to one another despite both focusing on efforts of societies to confront and (re—)appropriate their past. While scholars working on memory have come mostly from historical, literary, sociological, or anthropological traditions, transitional justice has attracted primarily scholarship from political science and the law. This series bridges this divide: it promotes work that combines a deep understanding of the contexts that have allowed for injustice to occur with an analysis of how legacies of such injustice in political and historical memory influence contemporary projects of redress, acknowledgment, or new cycles of denial. The titles in the series are of interest not only to academics and students but also practitioners in the related fields.

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Editors

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During the preparation of the manuscript, we organised a mini symposium and a post-conference brainstorming session at the annual meeting of Memory Studies Association in Madrid (2019) and held a panel at the convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, & Eurasian Studies in Zagreb (2019). We express our deepest appreciation to scholars who participated in our panels and meetings and shared their insights, as this book is also part of a much larger conversation with memory activists and academic researchers from a broad range of disciplines.

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Lastly, we express our deep affection and regard for our families and children, who once again offered both patience and understanding as the book devoured time and intruded into family life.

# PRAISE FOR *EUROPEANISATION AND MEMORY POLITICS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS*

“This volume is an important contribution to debates about Europeanization. Through well researched case studies, it shows how European memory politics are appropriated and incorporated into local and national memory discourses. The contributions show how Europeanization has become a performance and is not transformative when it comes to memory politics. The insights of the chapters and coherent framework shed light not just on the Western Balkans, but contribute to a critical understanding of Europeanization more broadly.”

—Florian Bieber, *Jean Monnet Chair in the Europeanization of Southeastern Europe, Professor of Southeast European History and Politics, University of Graz, Austria*

“Europeanisation and Memory Politics in the Western Balkans is an impressive book. By presenting a set of highly readable case studies, Milošević and Trošt demonstrate how crucial the study of memory politics is for a better understanding of European politics more generally. The focus is squarely on the countries of the former Yugoslavia, but the analysis, conclusions and ideas apply to a much larger area. The book also provides us with a complex understanding of Europeanization and shows how far-reaching the political effects can be of something as seemingly apolitical as ‘memories’. The Western Balkans form a rich field of study in their own right on this topic, but, as readers of this book will realize, they provide us also with a sharp lens through which we might see certain

developments in the EU — and even elsewhere in the world — more clearly.”

—Peter Vermeersch, *Professor of Politics, Leuven International and European studies (LINES), KU Leuven, Belgium*

“This excellent and timely volume explores the processes and practices of Europeanisation on cultures of memory, sites of memory, and memory politics in South Eastern Europe. Through its interdisciplinary and innovative approach, the volume addresses truly transnational memory processes in the interplay between European institutions and memory entrepreneurs in new or prospective member states. Crucially, the chapters foreground the roles of local memory actors and elites in the promotion, actualization and sometimes appropriation of ‘Europeanized memories’ in the region, aspects that had received insufficient attention in the existing literature. This is a stimulating read and an important contribution to the research fields of memory politics, Europeanisation, and contemporary South Eastern Europe alike.”

—Tea Sindbaek, *Associate Professor at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen, Denmark*

“This book stands out for combining two fields that previously have not been combined: literature on Europeanisation and literature on Memory Politics. Especially the latter is still in its infancy and Milošević’s and Trošt’s contribution adds an important dimension to a still underdeveloped research area. The combination of the two different sets of literature is innovative and allows the different authors of this edited volume to ask new questions that so far have not been addressed in a systematic way.”

—Aline Sierp, *co-founder and Co-President, Memory Studies Association & Assistant Professor, Maastricht University, The Netherlands*

“Memory issues are abundant in contemporary European societies and take many shapes. As an in-depth analysis of the impact of EU norms of remembrance on a crucial but often forgotten region, the Western Balkans, this book brings the literature on Europeanization of memory politics to a new dimension. Unlike many studies focused on the East-West mnemonic divide, inspired empirical studies highlight the peculiarities of memory struggles in national contexts marked by the legacies of the Yugoslav wars, unresolved statehood issues and competing external influences. They provide a strong contribution to the study of the state and

non-state actors involved in memorialization processes in post-socialist Europe, with their specific political agendas and strategies of legitimization in national and transnational arenas. This ambitious volume paints a complex picture of the power asymmetries at the core of contemporary memory battles, which account for diverging interpretations of Europe's painful pasts."

—Laure Neumayer, *Assistant Professor, University Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne, France, author of The Criminalisation of Communism in the European Political Space after the Cold War*

"In this groundbreaking volume, Milošević and Trošt explain how dealing with the past is a functional prerequisite for EU membership. In the Western Balkans there is still no common understanding of the roots, consequences and outcome of not only the most recent ethnic wars led throughout the territory of former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, but also with regard to the Second World War and its aftermath. Theoretically innovative and empirically rich, this book offers a comprehensive and comparative study of how politicizing memory affects not only relations between neighboring states in the region, but also their efforts vested in the EU accession processes."

—Marko Kmezić, *Lecturer in Southeast European Studies at the University of Graz, Austria, author of EU Rule of Law Promotion: Judiciary Reform in the Western Balkans (Routledge, 2016), co-editor of Stagnation and Drift in the Western Balkans (Peter Lang, 2013) and The Europeanisation of the Western Balkans: A Failure of EU Conditionality? (Palgrave, 2019)*

"This dynamic collection of case studies on the Western Balkans builds upon the results of regional memory politics research over the past decade and adds a European level in analyzing transnational and supranational processes of memorialization. Comprehensive in its geographical scope and ambitious in its theoretical contributions to the field of memory studies, this volume is essential reading for scholars and policy makers seeking to understand bottom-up and top-down mnemonic strategies, actors, and relationships from the memory sites of Southeastern Europe to the institutions of the European Union."

—Vjeran Pavlaković, *Associate Professor of Cultural Studies at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Rijeka, Croatia*

“The Old Bridge in Mostar, a masterpiece of Ottoman architecture, stood for 427 years before it was destroyed in 1993 during the war in Bosnia and Hercegovina. There was no military purpose for this, the overt intention was to erase whatever there was to remind of the existence of the foe’s historic memory. Much in the same manner, with the intention not only to annihilate its inhabitants but also to rub out their material cultural memory, the ancient Adriatic city of Dubrovnik was bombarded mercilessly for many days. The warlord who committed this barbaric act later unbelievably said: ‘We shall rebuild it, even older and more beautiful’. Who wants to understand the logic and the political goals of such lunacy, which is an intrinsic feature of identity politics and conflicts, is well advised to study the eleven chapters of this book. Only on the basis of understanding the purpose of the wars against memory, one can also understand why attempts, also explained in this book, to impose top-down memory norms fostered by the EU more often than not produce additional conflicts.”

—Dušan Reljić, *SWP, German Institute for International and Security Affairs*

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## Conclusion

*Ana Milošević*

**Abstract** This chapter argues that the Europeanisation process in the field of memory politics has been more performative than fundamentally progressive. Summarising the findings of the ten empirical studies, this chapter suggests that the EU memory framework can be manipulated by elites and political parties in their endeavour to co-opt those aspects of Europeanisation process that fit their needs. In the Western Balkans, Europeanisation in the field of memory politics is an ongoing process enacted by state and non-state actors, political parties, institutions as well as like-minded individuals and groups. What characterizes these developments is not only the level of engagement these memory actors and entrepreneurs vest in the process, but also the multiplicity of interests they assign to Europeanisation—as way to challenge, reframe, reinterpret, support, oppose or rehabilitate certain views, narratives, values and meanings projected onto the past. The application of European memorial norms in the Western Balkans suggests that the past can serve as a useful commodity and effective tool to attain symbolic capital, political advantages and benefits on both national and transnational level. However,

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on the ground, historical narratives about the past remain fundamentally unchallenged by the process of Europeanisation.

**Keywords** European union · Memory politics · Europeanisation · Western balkans

Memory has acquired an important symbolic value in EU politics. However, a European memory, this book argues, exists only in plural. EU's memory politics is a product of continuous negotiation about what Europe was, what Europe is and what it aspires to become. It is shaped by historical experiences, identities and political interests of its member states. In this volume we asked what the positive and negative consequences are of alignment with EU memory politics or lack thereof. Across ten empirical chapters, we analysed the ways in which Europeanisation impacts memory politics and mnemonic practices in the region of Western Balkans, documenting it in cases still far from accession (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo) during the accession process (Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia) and after the EU accession (Slovenia, Croatia).

The chapters in this book when reviewed as a whole represent the first in-depth analysis of the impact Europeanisation of memory has on a region. As discussed in Chapter 1, there have been several attempts at comparative analysis of the impact of Europeanisation on Holocaust, heritage and memory, or criminalisation of communism, yet this volume provides unique insight on these processes in seven countries. In addition to being engaged in the EU Integration process and part of the same region, the countries of the Western Balkans have effectively shared past (in war and in peace) as members of another Union—Yugoslavia. Given the complexity of each case and the entanglement of histories and memories in the region, our analysis highlights the main issues involved in the alignment with EU memory politics treating the beginning on the EU Accession process as a 'critical juncture' in their national history. Thus, the value of our exercise is not only to gain further insight into the historical experiences of these countries, but to determine the extent to which our findings could assist and inform broader discussions on Europeanisation of memory.

Memory as politics is extremely malleable: the meanings and roles assigned to collective memory bend to the purposes and objectives of

a wide variety of actors on both the national and transnational level. Our volume observed memory politics both as a cognitive device and a political instrument providing individuals and institutions with power to pursue their distinct interests. In particular, we captured the interplay between Europeanisation and memory from top-down (led by the EU and imposed by external actors), the co-option and manipulation of the EU memory framework by elites and other memory entrepreneurs, as well as bottom-up (local and grassroots contestation of memory).

The findings suggest that the Europeanisation process in the field of memory politics has been more performative than fundamentally progressive. While the EU memory framework developed incrementally without ‘a grand design’, as the fruit of anniversaries and opportunities, now it represents the cornerstone of EU memory politics that delineates joint attitudes towards the past. Overall, the results reported in our empirical chapters suggest that EU memory framework can be manipulated by elites and political parties in their endeavour to co-opt those aspects of Europeanisation process that fit their needs. In the pre-accession process, countries selectively and tactfully ‘download’ the contents of EU memory framework to demonstrate their place in the European family of nations, but also to pursue symbolic and political objectives.

In the Western Balkans, Europeanisation in the field of memory politics is an ongoing process enacted by state and non-state actors, political parties, institutions, as well as like-minded individuals and groups. What characterises these developments is not only the level of engagement these memory actors and entrepreneurs vest in the process, but also the multiplicity of interests they assign to Europeanisation. What emerges from this volume is that mnemonic actors and entrepreneurs use Europeanisation of memory as way to challenge, reframe, reinterpret, support, oppose or rehabilitate certain views, narratives, values and meanings projected onto the past.

Broadly, Europeanisation of memory is applied as a tool to deal with and navigate through the past of the Second World War, co-existence in Yugoslavia, wars in the 1990s and their aftermath. On the one hand, broader processes of Europeanisation of memory provide rationale to groups and individuals to push forward marginalised narratives about the past and incorporate them into national or European memory politics. To Europeanise memory is perceived as an attempt at pacifying tensions, providing acknowledgement, making amends for and dealing with the past by bridging differences, embracing multi-perspectivity in telling one’s

one history, and, hence, inducing reconciliation. On the other hand, a Europeanised memory based on minimum common denominators creates a myriad of unintended consequences, as rewriting and reinterpreting of locally owned experiences through an external memory framework tends to erase, suppress or rewrite the specific context of what is otherwise locally grounded memory.

While a wide variety of actors interprets Europeanisation of memory differently and consequently assign to it different meanings and interests, our volume shows that only decision-makers (political elites, institutions and political parties) have the power to shape or reconfigure official memory politics. Their memory entrepreneurship supports or opposes Europeanisation of memory and often clashes with and is contested by non-state memory actors. In addition, the evidence suggests that Europeanisation of memory is not only selective and tactical but also a reversible process that can lead towards (un)dealing with the past and a reinterpretation of Europeanness. As new members project domestic discourses onto the transnational level, they might use the power asymmetry to pursue a pragmatic foreign policy towards non-members those who are (in)directly threatening their own views of the past. This suggests that once locally and regionally fought ‘memory wars’ tend to escalate into ‘European memory wars’. In this endeavour, the EU serves both as a memory arena and a political opportunity structure for the *uploading of domestic preferences*, that is, national narratives about the past. With this in mind, key findings from this volume are summarised below.

## UN-TRANSFORMATIVE EUROPEANISATION: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this summary of the findings from this volume it is clear that collective memory at national level is a unique experience that is context-dependent and intrinsically linked to the complexities of the time at which occurs. To politicise memory by ways of adding new layers to otherwise locally owned historical experiences is a process of extracting a suitable past to placate the needs and challenges of the present. The findings of this research suggest that there is a stark difference between Europeanisation as a normative reality and its on-the-ground effects. Countries, both members and acceding states, are navigating through that gap. Symbolic politics is actively used by all interested parties—EU, member states, candidate and potential candidate countries, to communicate stances,

viewpoints and expectations—beyond legally prescribed rules and conditions. As such, Europeanised memory can be actively manipulated for the sake of appearances, and for the attainment of symbolic and political gains.

Europeanisation of memory in the Western Balkans has been more performative than fundamentally progressive. In order to support their EU bid, countries of the Western Balkans use memory politics to display their Europeaness and hence their place in the family of European peoples. As discussed across chapters, the Europeanisation process shows evidence of manipulation and instrumentalisation of historical events by elites, intellectuals, political parties and institutions. Each country, drawing from its own specific historical background, sculpts a ‘usable past’ to reinforce and adduce the most dominant traits of their Europeaness by reinterpreting its own history. In Montenegro, as seen in Chapter 8 by Nikola Zečević, the process of distancing from Serbia necessitated changes to certain historical narratives, and the narrative of the First World War in particular. As elites needed to emphasise Montenegro’s Mediterranean and pro-European character, elements from Communist-era historiography that did not fit this narrative were accordingly adapted and reinterpreted, both in the public sphere by political elites and prominent historians, but in history textbooks as well.

However, the process of Europeanisation of national memory, from the pre-accession stage to EU membership, is not only a quest for one’s own Europeaness in history. Rather, Europeanisation of memory via Enlargement can be described as an amalgam of cosmopolitan and revisionist views of the past, that have the ability to reinforce pre-existent (ethno)national narratives of nation and state building. In the pre-accession phase in Croatia, Holocaust memorials were restored, new museums open and their exhibits reinterpreted to emulate cosmopolitan forms of remembrance. Memorials and commemorations at the place of memory were used as public display of ‘dealing with the past’ by fostering inclusive remembrance, respect for Holocaust and consequently endorsement of ‘European values’—rejection of anti-Semitism, xenophobia and racism. However, these expected effects of Europeanisation of memory tend to wear off after EU Accession. The post-accession is marked by an important decrease in political interest for and distancing from previously enacted symbolic politics. It is also about uploading one’s own nation and state foundational myths onto the transnational level.

Europeanisation of memory in the Western Balkans is not only performative and tactical as our findings suggest, but also a reversible

process. Europeanised memory, it would seem, fails to generate a long-term transformative impact on the ground and lacks sustainability. In Croatia, this is exemplified by the boycott of Holocaust commemorations by victims' groups and organisations. The analysis of the exhibitions presented in Jasenovac over the last fifty years (Chapter 5, by Alexandra Zaremba) shows how the adopted European Holocaust framework perpetuates an incomplete and contextually absent narrative of Jasenovac, in contrast with the proclaimed aim of dealing with the past and support to reconciliatory efforts. This reconfiguring of European memory obscures location-specific details, and it points out to the failure to fully address Croatia's involvement in the Second World War, the Holocaust, and crimes against Serbs, Jews, Roma and political prisoners. Chapter 3 by Taylor McConnell similarly shows how initial changes in Croatia's mnemonic landscape took place a result of 'dressing up' to appease the EU in the pre-accession phase. Once the effects of the pressure to achieve the strategic goal of EU membership wore off, the attempts to relativise the fascist past multiplied, especially in places where its consequences were most damaging—Jasenovac and Bleiburg. Following the EU Accession, the goals assigned to Europeanisation of memory shifted: conservative governments used it in ways that perpetuate nationalist and anti-reconciliatory narratives. Taken together, these results suggest that there is an association between the attainment of EU membership and reversal of the expected effects of Europeanisation of memory, leading towards more polarisation on the ground.

Downloading of the second pillar of the EU memory framework, its anti-totalitarian stance, serves memory entrepreneurs to reinterpret the struggle for liberation of Nazi-Fascism and consequently leads towards the rebuttal of Yugoslavia portraying it as a totalitarian state. Alignment with EU memory norms in this regard equally means alignment with dictatorial and totalitarian experiences of countries who were once behind the Iron Curtain. Not only does it suggest that the Yugoslav political system was totalitarian, but it depicts former anti-fascists and Yugoslav era communists as oppressors, and defeated ideologies of the Second World War as 'victims of communism'—of a 'Red Holocaust'. Although to a different degree, the tendency to narrate Yugoslavia through EU's anti-totalitarian narrative can be traced across the whole region. Slovenia, as the first Western Balkans' EU member state, endorsed the consolidation of an anti-totalitarian interpretation of its past in 2009. The Slovenian anti-totalitarian stance translated into national memory politics with the

construction of a monument to ‘Victims of All Wars’. The monument, in the centre of Ljubljana, illustrates this overarching interpretation of the national past. In the context of Serbia’s path towards EU membership, political elites, revisionist historians and non-state actors advocate for a clear cut with the communist past as an aspect of Serbia’s ‘return to Europe’. As discussed in Chapter 2 by Jelena Đureinović, the most relevant reference for legal and symbolic rehabilitation of the *četniks* and justification for revisionist tendencies within Serbia is precisely the anti-totalitarian paradigm that travels from the European Union to nation-states and back. As anti-totalitarian anti-fascists, the *četniks* are seen as both the ideal ancestors of the contemporary nation-state as well as the perfect companions of Serbia on its path towards the EU membership.

The downloading of Europeanised forms of remembrance is selective—meaning that memory actors and entrepreneurs canvas through the EU memory framework and choose narratives, views and values associated with the past that fit their ideas and interests on the national level. But downloading also works as a direct projection of the EU’s own memory framework to other countries. For instance, EP resolutions on the Srebrenica genocide directly in the adopted text invite the Western Balkan countries—and in particular Serbia—to acknowledge the wartime atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although not legally binding, and not part of the official requirement for the EU accession, the resolution exerts soft pressure on Serbia to deal with the past. In addition, the resolution also prescribes the required response: to adopt and assimilate similar resolution in the national parliament and subsequently in remembrance practices. While Srebrenica remains a singular historical experience of the Western Balkans that made it to the EU memory framework, it also shows that the EU and in particular EP can use soft laws to induce a desired outcome (dealing with the past, recognition and acknowledgement) beyond the EU Acquis.

Bosnia-Herzegovina is a crucial case to demonstrate how a Europeanised reconciliation frame can be imposed by the EU with the complicity of local non-political actors. Chapter 4, by Aline Cateux, draws on an extensive range of sources to analyse instrumentalisation of the *Stari Most* reconstruction in Mostar. It shows how the reconciliation frame imposed by the EU led to polarisation on the ground around the symbol of the city and reinterpretation of its native meanings. Reinterpretation and appropriation, through EU memory frame, is also visible in the case

of *Partizansko Groblje*. The findings suggest that the process of Europeanisation of memory in Mostar has reinforced rather than ‘bridged’ local divisions by relying on superficial assessments of different aspects of post-war Mostar and excluding the population from every process of reconstruction and reformulation of the city.

While elites might strategically use memory politics to politically signal commitment to the European project and its underlying values, Europeanised discourses of the past do not always resonate on the local, grassroots level. Europeanisation of memory can be perceived as forceful and alien independently from the on-the-ground level of support for the EU Integration. The case of Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina suggests that the engineered Europeanised past of the city, engineered by the EU and elites, is seen as appropriation of locally grounded memories of the anti-fascist struggle. It also erases the ‘unusable’ past, flattening differences between Yugoslavia and its cross-ethnic struggle for liberation, and the former communist countries elsewhere in Europe, with their own specific memories of the war and its aftermath.

Chapter 6, by Manca Bajec, shows how the clash between the top-down and bottom-up narratives of the past is being countered. The inability of identifying a unified narrative, and regional implementation of the politics of forgetting, is giving rise to the counter-memorial culture led and practised by artists, memory activists, various non-state actors, victims’ groups. In particular, the memorialisation of the events of the wars of the 1990s and Second World War are being addressed by artists, leading towards the conclusion that counter-monument-artwork is a representative form of dealing with the past. Through the mode of adapting the idea of the counter-monument as a practice of enabling discourse surrounding memory, the artworks and practices create a dialogue on what a shared Europeanised memory should not dismiss, and the process that it should involve.

The position of the artist undeniably remains that of a witness—speaking a language that is for the most part ‘cosmopolitan’, however not in the case of the histories and stories that remain mostly excluded from the Europeanised memory. The monument-artwork, by remaining outside of boundaries of official memory work, is capable of critically examining the problems that are not being addressed by the national and international bodies responsible, as is the case in Omarska or the remaining unresolved war crimes. Counter-monumental aesthetics which

are based on the premise of discourse and positioning of the viewer as the ‘carrier’ and interpreter, allow for a multi-directionality to exist.

Europeanisation of memory can occur on the fringes of memorial practices, as Zoran Vučkovic shows in Chapter 10. Prijedor is a very instructive case of how memory actors, through evocations of the Holocaust, appeal to international and local communities to see the common humanity in victims of the Bosnian war—and not just vessels for the inscription of a particular ethnic history. The main carriers of this process are non-state actors, victims’ groups, survivors and artists, that contest complicity between international capital and local nationalism in denying the victims their right to remember. The privatisation of the Omarska mine reduced all of the commemorative practices at the site to an issue of private property management, concealing the memory from the wider public.

Europeanised narratives manifest themselves in memory politics and practices, and can be challenged not only internally but also externally. In Chapter 7 by Naum Trajanovski, we observed (North) Macedonia’s EU accession process through the reinterpretation of the memorial scenery in Skopje: from contestation, via externally imposed corrective action, to consensus making. In EU relations with candidate countries, not only do the EU’s ideas of the common European past affect local memory practices, but power asymmetries also become more visible. In line with the previous research on this topic, our findings depict bilateral disputes over the past as fundamentally resilient to Europeanisation. Countries with EU membership play an important part in coercing the candidate countries to redress the matters of the past (e.g. historical injustices, border issues, protection of minorities). However, even when there is support for and high trust in the EU, the lack of clear mechanisms on how to deal with the past is seen as a weakness of the EU Accession process.

Analysing the grassroots’ understanding of the Europeanisation of memory, Chapter 11 by Abit Hoxha and Kenneth Andresen reports consensus among citizens on the need for Kosovo to deal with its troubled past before joining the European Union. Concerns and views of Albanian respondents and Serb respondents in Kosovo are similar, and do not differ neither in the way the conflict and dealing with the troubled past is perceived, nor vis-à-vis Europeanisation and European Integration process. The European sentiment in relation to dealing with the troubled past among respondents is somewhat divided between a shared

European identity and the feeling of the EU's inability to meet the grass-roots' expectations. These findings suggest that the right to memory, right to truth and restorative justice measures are proof of European values—much more than discourses about dialogue, tolerance and human rights. To Europeanise the memory of Kosovo would mean not only reconciling different ethno-national narratives about the past, but also establishing communication between male-dominating (a suffering hero) and female-suppressed (a suffering victim) narratives.

Gendered memories, however, can serve as a tool to oppose Europeanisation, as Chapter 9 by Dunja Obajdin and Slobodan Golušin shows on the process of adopting the Istanbul Convention in Croatia. Seen primarily as a means of marginalising LGBTQ+ people and women's rights, its 'western' origins were alternatively emphasised or de-emphasised, depending on how 'European' its opponents wanted to appear. An alliance between 'internal' and 'external' enemies was posited and framed as 'undemocratic' to discredit the EU. This case opens a debate on the success of translating 'dealing with the past' via courtrooms into a public discourse on war crimes and their place in nationalist narratives. Narratives of wartime heroism and suffering coupled with reluctance to extradite and prosecute war criminals to the Hague are perceived as injustice in the region and play a central role in the re-emergence of nationalism. Memory entrepreneurs therefore see the EU as an enemy that threatens the national foundational narrative and dismantles Croatian identity. In this process, the EU and LGBTQ+ people were used as symbols of foreign incursion on Croatian identity.

Finally, the EU memory framework characterised by its East-West dichotomy and lack of memory in relation to the Western Balkans history is not the only mnemonic frame of reference in the region. Russia too resonates in the sphere of memory politics and reflects positional strategies in the international political order. In Serbia, as argued in Chapter 2 by Jelena Đureinović, the heterogeneous nature of hegemonic narratives, namely the positive image of the *četniks*, is closely related to external mnemonic agents. Both the European Union and Russia constitute the dominant frames of reference. The international positionalities towards the West and East, respectively, together with the incompatible stances about the wars of the Yugoslav dissolution contribute to the deepening of the rift between different mnemonic communities.

It is apparent from the contributions of the chapters in this volume that the dual strategy of forgetting and remembering facilitates the use

of memory as a stand-in for other issues. Linking the top-down and bottom-up strategies of Europeanisation of memory builds a story that weaves the complex realities of the role of collective memory in politics and in the EU Integration process itself. The application of European memorial norms in the Western Balkans suggests that the past can serve as a useful commodity and effective tool to attain symbolic capital, political advantages and benefits, on both the national and transnational level. However, on the ground, historical narratives about the past remain fundamentally unchallenged by the process of Europeanisation.