

**Paz y valores europeos como posible modelo de integración y progreso
en un mundo global**

**Peace and European values as a potential model for integration and
progress in a global world**



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Los trabajos de investigación *Historia, memoria e integración europea desde el punto de vista de las relaciones transatlánticas de la UE* cuyos resultados se pueden ver en esta publicación han contado con el apoyo de la Junta de Extremadura, AEXCID, la Embajada de Italia en España, la Asamblea de Extremadura, la Diputación de Cáceres, la Diputación de Badajoz, la Universidad de Extremadura, Patrimonio Nacional y la red SEGEI (Socio Economic Governance and European Identity).



JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA

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Como todos sabemos por nuestra vida cotidiana, la paz es un desafío, un logro y una recompensa. Paradójicamente, mantener la paz plantea grandes dificultades. Alcanzar y mantener una convivencia pacífica exige grandes dosis de madurez. Europa había alcanzado históricamente la cima en la cultura y en la investigación. Sin embargo, dos veces durante el siglo pasado, conoció períodos de horror, que estallaron en medio de la indiferencia general. No creo que en estos momentos podamos permitirnos ser de nuevo indiferentes o pasivos. Creo humildemente que tenemos que echar las bases para la paz, para desarrollar las raíces de la paz, y no limitarnos simplemente a esperar que suceda. Cada uno de nosotros deberíamos comprometernos con el humilde empeño de dar prioridad a la paz, de luchar por la paz y de desarrollar la paz. La paz exige trabajo, la paz es un reto diario. El programa Erasmus está llamado a ser un instrumento en pro de la paz, haciendo una pequeña aportación preventiva.¹



Sofia Corradi – Mamma Erasmus
Premio Europeo Carlos V

As we all know from our daily lives, peace is a challenge, an achievement, and a reward. Paradoxically, sustaining peace presents serious difficulties. It requires great maturity to actually attain and maintain peaceful coexistence. Europe had historically attained the height of culture and research; and yet, twice in the last century, it has known periods of horror which exploded among general indifference. I don't believe that now we can possibly afford to be indifferent or passive again. I humbly believe that we need to lay the groundwork for peace; to develop the roots of peace, and not simply hope for it. Each of us should commit to the humble endeavour of prioritising peace, struggling for peace, and developing peace. Peace requires work, peace is a daily challenge. Erasmus is meant to be a working instrument of peace, a small pre-emptive contribution.²



Sofia Corradi – Mamma Erasmus
European Charles V Award

¹ Sofia Corradi – Mamma Erasmus. De su discurso en el Real Monasterio de Yuste con motivo de la ceremonia de entrega del Premio Europeo Carlos V (9 de mayo de 2016).

² Sofia Corradi – Mamma Erasmus. From her speech at the Royal Monastery of Yuste on the occasion of the European Carlos V Award ceremony (9 May 2016).

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La Fundación Academia Europea e Iberoamericana de Yuste

EU POLITICS OF MEMORY:

SHARED PAST, COMMON CHALLENGES, COMMON FUTURE

ANA MILOSEVIC, KU LEUVEN

Europe - it's our values.¹

*We are defined, among other things,
as people by what we choose to commemorate.²*

1. INTRODUCTION

How does the European Union relate to the past? The EU was born amid the ashes of the Second World War. When the European project was launched in the 1950s, the belief was that common future was the answer to overcoming the violence of the past. 'Never again' – was the response to gas chambers and concentration camps. The past was what Europe had left behind to embrace peace as a cornerstone of a better future. Yet, memories of the wars are fading out. Peace is still the EU's ultimate purpose, but alone it is not the sole driver of change for Europe of today.

Aiming at self-legitimation and identity-building, a growing number of EU symbolic policies ground the new narrative for Europe in shared memory and the promotion of shared values (Calligaro 2013; Neumayer 2015; Milošević 2017). On the first look, the EU as a community of shared memory seems incompatible with crimes against humanity, genocides, and millennial conflicts among European nations. The European nation-states among them remember differently the past and with it associated traumas. In particular, historical experiences of the Second World War not only shaped the post-1945 continent but are still deeply embedded in collective identities. This makes the relationship between the collective memories and nation-states almost symbiotic.

¹ Hans Gert Pöttering, the former president of the European parliament, 2014. Interview with the author

² Michael D. Higgins, the president of Ireland. Speech at the Unveiling of the 'Footsteps' statues, 14 October 2017

An overarching, EU politics of memory would need to transcend the boundaries of nation-states and override the tensions that derive from history. Shared memory is grounded in the need for unity and dependent upon reconciliation of collective memories. On a more practical level, shared memory for the EU would necessitate a consensus on the past in order to manage or overrule disagreements, fostering mutual recognition and understanding. As such, an EU Politics of memory would be instrumental not only for management of tensions and reconciliation, but also to ground the EU legitimacy and EU identity in history.

My argument is divided into two parts. First, I discuss what is the role given to the past in the overall process of EU Integration. I will argue that the EU's narrative has shifted over time becoming increasingly grounded in the 'shared past'. Second, I analyse how a common ground on the past is found, thus how EU member-states (MS) converge on shared interpretations of the past and how the latter are encoded in the EU politics of memory. Finally, I draw conclusions on political dimension of memory on EU level and its implications.

The analysis is based on elite interviews, policy recommendations, resolutions and decisions by the EU Council, European Commission and the European Parliament. Between 2013 and 2017, I interviewed more than 40 European political elites: presidents of the European parliament, former EU commissioners, former presidents and prime ministers of EU MS, as well as the members of the European Parliament (MEPs). In addition, I draw on evidence from non-participant observations of the commemorations organised in the European Parliament (2009-2017) and the visits to the House of European History, a museum of the EP (2017).

2. THE EU'S CHANGING NARRATIVE: FROM SHARED FUTURE TO SHARED PAST

In the early days of the EU, a common understanding of the past was not central for its narrative. On the contrary, its main core was a common understanding of the future. The Schuman Declaration, made by the French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman on 9th May 1950, is considered to be the starting point of the European Union. It illustrates the peace as a central idea behind the formation of the European Community of Steel and Coal (ECSC). Today, however, the Schuman narrative about peace no longer frames the future for the EU (Van Rompuy, 2012). Instead, the new narrative for Europe seems increasingly grounded in the past as a foundation of future in togetherness.

2.1. EU AS SYMBOL OF PEACE – DIFFERENT PASTS, COMMON FUTURE

The European Community began as a community of economic interest, based on reconciliation between France and Germany (see e.g. Deutsch 1963; Schaap 2008). The original narrative of

European integration drew upon the simple terms of the Schuman Declaration. The Declaration was relatively plain and, in the context of post-war European history, widely understood. The Second World War and the Holocaust are ‘the darkest hour of Europe’. Therefore, the foundation of a European federation was indispensable to the preservation of peace, dependent from reconciliation between former enemies (i.e. France and Germany) and made possible by pooling resources - so that “any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible” (Schuman Declaration, paragraph 5).

As such, the notion of “Franco-German *entente*” appeared to be “the very symbol of the victory of [that] age over history “ (Deutsch 1963, 93). Based on these terms, the expectation for the future was that the fusion of interests will enable establishment of a common economic system. The hope was that these processes can be “the leaven from which may grow a wider and deeper community between countries long opposed to one another by sanguinary divisions” (Schuman Declaration, paragraph 7).

The past and its hardships were not central even when, after decades of dictatorship, Greece (1981), Portugal and Spain (1986) joined the EU. After the death of the dictator Francisco Franco (1975) Spain faced a deep political and economic crisis. Spain’s EU Accession was dictated by a domestic demand to consolidate democracy and the rule of law, as well as the economic interests (the necessity of modernisation, the attraction of foreign investments) (see e.g. Royo & Manuel 2003). The position of the Community in relation to the membership of Spain was based exclusively on political reasons, namely the need for democratic reforms. The issues of past divisions in Spain, related to Franco’s regime, were not a topic in the EU negotiations. Dealing with the past, transitional justice or truth-telling were, at best, regarded as national matters, and not the issues that concerned the whole of Europe.

However, the end of the Cold war and the accession of the countries from Eastern Europe brought the past into the spotlight. In Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltics, the end of the Second world war was not seen a liberation – but as the beginning of another tyranny under Stalinist and communist regimes. For the EU15, the EU Accession of countries once behind the Iron Curtain was a sort of belated closure. It was a part of the historic process of ending the division of Europe and consolidating democracy, rule of law, human rights and freedoms across the continent.

On 1 May 2004 the EU enlarged from 15 to 25 Member States. For the Eastern members - EU accession, among other things, was their ‘return to Europe’, reclaiming of their rightful place in the family of European peoples. Yet, it was dependent on acknowledgement of “the historical debt owed to their part of the Continent” (Mink 2016, 52). The West needed to acknowledge their own historical experiences and victimhood under Stalinist and communist regimes. The post-communist states perceived the EU as an international stage for the affirmation of their own national identities after decades of tyranny (see e.g. Killingsworth et al. 2010; Perchoc 2015;

Milošević 2017, Chapter 6). Their 'return to Europe' was a symbolic reparation for victimhood after 1945.

Fundamentally, the West and the East have taken opposing paths after the Second World War that reunited only after the 1989. In post-communist Europe, the Schuman narrative - the traditional EU narrative of peace - had little, if any resonance. In 2004, the Eurobarometer survey showed that on average 1 of 3 respondents associated the EU with peace (EU15, 31%). In 2014 (EB 2014,79), ten years after the so-called big-bang enlargement³ that percentage dropped: only 1 of 4 respondents (EU28, 25%). The drop in these figures could also be attributed to the passing of time and fading of memories of the Second World War. It surprises - however - that even in post-conflict countries such as Croatia, these numbers were even lower. In 2014, only 17% of Croat respondents thought of the EU as a peace project (EB 2014,79).

The feelings of attachment to the EU values and identities posed another challenge for enlarged Europe. In 17 of the 25 EU member states, the proportion of those who only identified themselves with their nation increased beyond the margin of error (EB 2004, 10). Exclusive attachment to national identity increased by at least 10 percentage points in Poland, Cyprus, Slovenia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia in just one year (2003-2004). In these countries, the EU was associated mostly with freedom to travel, work and study (63%), while for some people EU meant also common European currency - Euro (40%) (EB 2004, 10).

The failure of the EU constitutional treaty (2005) marked a missed opportunity for the EU to transform. Importantly, it signaled that "Europe could no longer rely on this promise [of peace] alone to inspire citizens" (Van Rompuy, 2012). Over six decades the EU has contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights, for which it was also awarded the Nobel prize in 2012. Yet, the EU's role in creating the framework for continuing peace in Europe has been reserved to its neighborhood - brought starkly back into focus by the 1990s war in former Yugoslavia and the crisis in Ukraine in later stage. The peace and promotion of democracy are guiding principles of the EU membership criteria, reserved to the EU periphery and instrumental in the consolidation of the EU as an important global player. As such, the peace and with it associated stability and security are still the EU's ultimate objectives, but alone they are not a compelling driver of continued and deeper (or wider) integration.

2.2. EU AS A COMMUNITY OF SHARED DESTINY - SHARED MEMORY, COMMON FUTURE

Following the failure of constitutional treaty, the EU began facing legitimacy and identity crisis. Deep reflection on the future of the European Union prompted a shift in the EU's narrative⁴. The

³ Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

⁴ In 2013, the EU officially adopted the 'narrative' label for its 2013-2014 "A New Narrative for Europe" project (see e.g. Kaiser 2015, 2017).

objective of a new, encompassing narrative was to highlight that the EU is more than competitiveness, economy and growth, but also about cultural unity and common values in an interconnected world.

The European Union paved its path towards the future with the help of different programmes and strategies to pursue its own interests, and to respond to claims and issues raised by member states. One of the key instruments for bolstering a common identity both for the present and the future is the promotion of a shared European memory:

By remembering the past jointly, European citizens can contemplate the origins of the EU and the history of Europe. Drawing on this, people can then foster a stronger sense of community and belonging together and chart a course towards the kind of Europe in which they wish to live in the future (EC, 2013).

In the quest for a greater unity, the Plan D (2005) *for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate* – laid the foundations for the EU's return to the past. It put in place an agenda, through national governments, for a 25-country debate on Europe's future: the clear objective was to build a new political consensus about the right policies to equip Europe to meet the challenges of the 21st century (EC 2008). In its final recommendations (EC 2008, article 12) the Plan D explicitly advises that

the EU should prioritise creating and communicating *a new 'memory' about Europe*, to move away from the stereotypes associated with certain countries and history, so that all citizens can be valued, and we can understand each other better. (emphasis added)

This recommendation was in line with both the interests of the EU and demands made by post-communist member-states. New member-states demanded that their collective memory of communist victimhood should be integrated in the collective narrative of the EU. The pressure for memory adjustments on European level originated in the Council of Europe (CoE) already in 2006 when Central and Eastern Europeans and the Baltic states, demanded that communist and Stalinist regimes should be treated and judged equally as Nazism and Fascism (Milošević & Touquet 2018, Chapter 5). Therefore, the *new memory about Europe* responded to the demand for memory adjustments on EU level voiced by the post-communist member states (see e.g. Mink & Neumayer 2013; Mink 2016; Milošević & Touquet 2018, Chapter 5). But it was also instrumental in grounding EU's own legitimacy in history and fostering citizens' ownership over the EU through identification.

While the *Plan D* provided the direction for the future, the *Stockholm Programme* (2009) presented a framework for EU action. It illustrated the shift in EU's self-definition: from community of peace to community of shared values which are derived from the lessons learned in European history. As a result, a five-year plan was laid down with specific guidelines for justice and home affairs of the member states of the European Union for the years 2010 through 2014. The

Programme was based on a wide-ranging exchange of views among member states and met with a broad consensus. The Stockholm Programme (EC 2009, 12), underlines that:

the Union is an area of shared values, values which are incompatible with crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes, including crimes committed by totalitarian regimes. Each Member State has its own approach to this issue but, *in the interests of reconciliation, the memory of those crimes must be a collective memory, shared and promoted, where possible, by us all. The Union must play the role of facilitator.* (emphasis added)

What this quote shows is that European unity is seen as dependent on the existence of a common memory, which must be facilitated and promoted by the EU. The role taken by the EU is to manage and address the tensions deriving from the past. Another reason for the EU's renewed interest in the past is that bilateral issues among member states have proven problematic over time. Especially in the pre-accession period, potential member states are often pressured into addressing bilateral, historical issues usually with the EU neighbours. For many years, Greece disputed the name of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Macedonia is accused of "counterfeit of history and usurpation of Greece's national and historical heritage" (quote in Geddes & Taylor 2013,12). This decades-long dispute has been an important obstacle in the relations between the two countries and it led towards Greece's blockage of NATO and EU membership of Macedonia.

After the EU accession, however, new members states are no longer absorbers of rules to comply with. As EU members, countries upload their own interests, policy preferences, identities and historical experiences onto the EU level (Milošević 2017, Chapter 6). By reclaiming their European identity and membership status in the Union, new MS seek to pursue their national interests on the EU level. In doing so, the EU is sometimes dragged into politicised historical disputes, as the case of "the Monument crisis" illustrates. In 2007, Estonia decided to remove the *Monument to the Liberators of Tallinn* erected in 1947 to honor the wartime sacrifice of the Red Army veterans (see e.g. Roth 2009). Removal of the monument provoked riots in Tallin and Moscow leading to a crisis in diplomatic relations between Estonia and Russia. Despite initial reservations, the Union had no choice but to give support to its member state and provide symbolical acknowledgement of Estonia's historical experiences (see e.g. EP 2007).

The widening and deepening of the EU project have certainly showed that different perceptions of the past are seen as an obstacle to unity and long-term survival of the European project. The Union sought to meet its own interests and the demands risen by MS by offering an alternative approach to tensions that derive from historical experiences. By forging joint ethical and political attitudes towards the history of XX century, the EU set the basis for a politics of memory which defines what the EU stands for and aims to achieve.

3. EU POLITICS OF MEMORY: BETWEEN ETHICAL REMEMBERING AND MEMORY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In particular since 2009, through its institutions, the EU worked on creating an overarching reading of the past - an EU Politics of memory. The EU Politics of memory is based on the narrative of a shared European past of the XX century and it permeates the Union's cultural, educational and research programs (see Mälksoo 2009; Littoz-Monnet 2012; Calligaro 2015; Sierp 2014; this study). The aim with this approach is not to homogenise European history, but to find common ground on the past showing that European memories are entangled. This section of the chapter will discuss which actors are contributing to the EU politics of memory and what are its main characteristics.

3.1. MAIN ACTORS

How EU member states converge on common reading of the past and with what aim? These processes require the existence of a political culture open to consensus making. A culture that is conducive to a negotiation between underlying tensions, mutual acknowledgement, awareness raising, and harmonisation of relations. The EU, as a supranational political stage, provides the setting for a democratic, horizontal exchange among its actors. The mechanism by which a shared reading of the past is negotiated and established on the EU level is based on political consensus-making among the members of the group (EU).

Previously discussed the *Plan D* and the *Stockholm programme* illustrate that consensus-making on new memory, and thus direction for the future, originates at the very apex of the EU decision-making pyramid. Seen as an EU model for handling diverse and divisive pasts of its member states, the process is grounded in the framework for action created by the EU Council. The Council sets the general guidelines which are met with a broad consensus of all EU MS. Declarative, joint statements are further operationalised through the work of the EU Parliament and the Commission.

The European Parliament is the major political arena for the creation of the EU memory framework. The EU memory framework consists of a number of soft laws and decisions – that delineate shared attitudes towards the past among EU member-states (Chapter 5). In this process elected members of the European parliament (MEPs) act as “memory entrepreneurs” or those “who seek social recognition and political legitimacy of one (their own) interpretation or narrative of the past, engaged and concerned with maintaining and promoting active and visible social and political attention on their enterprise” (Jelin 2003, 33-34). By uploading national historical experiences onto the EU level, memory entrepreneurs seek acknowledgement, endorsement, recognition or alternatively the promotion of their own views and interests which are projected onto the past (Milošević 2017, Chapter 6). National memories that get integrated

into the EU memory framework, become situated in a broader historical context and get symbolic recognition (Milošević & Touquet 2018, Chapter 5). In the process, ideological tensions within the member states are pacified (see Mink 2016).

Especially after the EU Enlargement in 2004, the European Parliament has been the salient arena for the reconciliation of European histories and agreement seeking on what is considered to be *the minimum common denominator* of European past (Chapter 6). Broadly, the EP's non-legally binding soft laws (resolutions, decisions) revolve around three axes. First, the Holocaust as a negative template of the history of EU Integration is the fundament of memory framework grounded in rejection of anti-Semitism, xenophobia and racism (see e.g. Kucia 2016; Wæhrens 2011). Second axis is the EU's anti-totalitarianism which refutes all forms of totalitarian, autocratic, dictatorial forms of political regimes (while symbolically equalizing Nazism and Communism) (see e.g. Neumayer 2015, 2017). These documents frame the process of European integration as an answer to the suffering inflicted by Nazism, Fascism, Communist and Stalinist regimes. In addition, EP's memory resolutions demand, among other things, "a comprehensive reevaluation of European history" prescribing that:

Europe will be united only when it is capable to reach *a common point of view on its history*, recognize communism, Nazism and fascism as collective legacy and lead an honest and thorough debate on all totalitarian crimes of the last century.

(emphasis added) (EP 2009, recital H)

Finally, a number of EP resolutions deal with the past of non-EU countries (Dragović-Soso 2012). For instance, several resolutions deal with Turkey's attitudes towards the Armenian genocide (EP 2015) or symbolically honour the victims of the Holodomor, artificial famine in the Soviet Ukraine (EP 2008).

Besides the European Parliament that serves as a stage for transnational memory adjustments and consensus-making on the past, the European Commission plays equally important role. Among other, the Commission is active in transmitting and communicating the new memory to societies. In the process, the EU is by-passing national governments and addressing directly the non-state actors (e.g. either individual citizens or more often associations, educational institutions, museums). One example is the *Europe for Citizens Programme* which took off in 2007. This funding instrument is available to the member-states and EU aspirants. Explicitly, it supports emergence of a 'European demos' by financing initiatives to boost transnational solidarity, European citizenship and 'an active European Remembrance'. The Remembrance strand of this programme is illustrative of the decision-making process, contents and tools for dissemination of new memory for Europe.

For this programme, the EU legislators (Council and European Parliament) conferred the implementing powers to the Commission. More precisely, the Education, Audiovisual and

Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) manages programme's implementation.⁵ The two main objectives of this programme are: to contribute to citizens' understanding of the EU, its history and diversity; and secondly to raise awareness of remembrance, common history and values, and the aim of the EU (A3-EU Interview, 2017). The past should be interpreted through the prism of value-laden, ethical remembering. 'Shared European values' are derived from the EU treaties: freedom, democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, empowerment and protection of minorities, and cultural pluralism.

On a more practical level, the programme supports organisation of commemorations and implementation of projects that "reflect on major historical turning points in Europe's 20th century and on their meaning / consequences for Europe of today" (A3-EU Interview, 2017). These major historical events are seen as 'defining moments and reference points in recent European history' (Council, 2014). A closer look at the list of annual themes (2016-2020) proposed by the European Commission, shows that "priorities have been designed to stimulate debates on dates of European significance and topics having a strong resonance in present times" (EACEA 2017). But they also mirror the existing body of EU memory framework and the themes that cut through the resolutions created by the European Parliament over the last 20 years.⁶

3.2. ETHICAL REMEMBERING

The EU seeks to offer its own model of *ethical remembering* based on principles of reconciliation, democracy and human rights. Over the course of its existence, the EU has used remembrance as a tool in promotion of human rights and fighting of anti-Semitism, nationalism, racism, and xenophobia. The EU's own experience of overcoming the past and reconciling former warring parties serves often as a template - a *know-how* - to promote in the post-conflict neighborhood. In particular, the Franco-German model is in the origin of the EU's stance on post-conflict reconciliation (Touquet & Milošević 2018, Chapter 4). As a result, 'the politics of regret' (Olick 2007) is not only expected but encouraged and supported by the EU (i.e. apology, memorialisation) (Touquet & Milošević 2018, Chapter 4). This means that societies are expected to shift focus from one's own ethnic or national community, and confront their national past in an ethical manner, acknowledging the other and fostering mutual understanding. The role of politics is to pave the way for processes that will spill over to societies.

⁵ The DG Home Affairs of the European Commission is responsible for the development and political steering of the *Europe for Citizens programme*. It is responsible for managing the budget and defining of objectives, strategies and priority areas. Through comitology procedure, the DG Home Affairs refers also to both, the EU legislators and the Programme committee that deliver opinion on draft implementing measures before the Commission can adopt them.

⁶ For instance, the thematic priorities for 2018 are: 1918 as the end of the WWI – the rise of nation states and the failure to create a European cooperation and peaceful coexistence; 1938/1939 Beginning of WWII; 1948 Beginning of the Cold War; 1948 The Hague Congress and the integration of Europe; and 1968 Protest and civil rights movements, invasion to Czechoslovakia, student protests and the anti-Semitic campaign in Poland.

Yet, the EU politics of memory is more than an *ethical model of remembrance* and declarative politics reserved to the domains of human rights, symbolism, and interaction on the EU level among decision makers. It is promoted horizontally and vertically, to the member-states and potential members. In this sense, and especially in the framework of international relations, the EU politics of memory is significant also as a foreign policy tool. This is best visible in dealing with potential member-states. To use the same example, *the Europe for citizens programme* is one of these initiatives that explicitly promotes shared European past beyond the EU. Open to potential EU members, the programme also tackles their historical experiences, such as for example the beginning of the Yugoslav wars (1991) in the countries of the Western Balkans. Moreover, the European Parliament's resolutions, although not legally binding and thus not part of the EU *acquis communautaire*, are also forwarded to candidate countries. In relations with these countries the EU Politics of memory has the dimension of soft power. Potential members are compelled to comply with what are the dominant EU attitudes and ethical stances taken towards the past. In order to meet the EU expectations, these countries pursue the politics of symbolism. They seek to demonstrate their respect for European values, commitment to the process of Europeanisation and their belonging to the EU.

However, in a democratic arena such is the EU, the goals and objectives of its politics of memory are also being contested. One example of this disagreement is the permanent exhibition of the EP's museum, the *House of European History* (HEH) which is the embodiment of the Union's politics of memory. Officially opened in May 2017, the House of European History was an idea launched by Hans-Gert Pöttering, the former EP President. In 2007, Pöttering announced the plans for creation of the HEH "as a locus of European identity, a place where Europeans could gather and jointly build the future" (Interview 2014). Ten years after the announcement the Museum was inaugurated on May 6, 2017. The first empirical study (Milošević 2014) on the attitudes of the MEPs towards the House of European history points out that there was a strong disagreement on the need for such a museum. Across political spectrum, MEPs criticized the EP's political use of the past as an attempt to influence national narratives (Milošević 2014).

A visit to the museum (2017) reveals that great effort has been put in the crafting of a transnational narrative of the entangled memories of European MS and their neighbourhood. Through five floors of the permanent exhibition, the visitors travel through time and space: understanding first who we were (entrance) to opening choices to who we want to become (exit). A tree-sculpture that goes through all floors of the building is a centrepiece that connects various concepts of Europe, its past and its future.

The EP resolutions and salient memory markers such as Holocaust and anti-totalitarianism are central. Nazism and Communism are presented next to each other showcasing their similarities: the cult of leadership, their respective narratives and their victims. Despite an effort of the Academic team of the HEH to present the histories and experiences of all EU MS, many MEPs and external visitors criticised the exhibition. Several MEPs from Poland or Croatia interviewed in this study believe that the history of their countries is not represented sufficiently. Some of the

interviewed visitors from the Western Balkans, expressed their dissatisfaction with the simplistic interpretation of the Yugoslav wars⁷.

These examples of contestation show that reaching a consensus on what constitutes a minimum common denominator of entangled European histories is neither smooth nor tension-free process. The politics of memory is inherently selective. It carries the tension between what is remembered and what is forgotten, what is included and left out.

On the one hand, an overarching politics of memory is dependent on the readiness of member states to share the costs of the Europeanisation of memory by renouncing the nation-state's monopoly over the past. However, the interests of the EU and its member-states are not always compatible when it comes to reopening certain chapters of history. For instance, there is neither consensus nor the readiness to share costs for re-examination of the role of European countries in colonialism. As such, cost-sharing is an important factor that affects selectiveness of 'shared European memory', restricted only to the XX century.

On the other hand, the EU politics of memory is fundamentally the result of a political process - expected to spill over to European societies. Yet, it does not happen in a vacuum but on an international political stage. This means that it involves and affects countries beyond the EU. In countries with the prospect of joining the EU, the politics of memory serves to accomplish communitarian interests that are part of Europeanisation process. However, the reach and impact of these processes is very limited in countries with vague, or no perspective, of joining the Union. For instance, the EU's soft pressure on Turkey to recognize Armenian genocide produced little, if any, result. Russia, an important actor of entangled histories of the continent, is left out in this process and consequently unaffected by the memory adjustments at the EU level.

4. CONCLUSION

For the post-Second World War generation, Europe has always been the future. Today, with an unclear future and European unity challenged, the EU is turning to the past. This chapter argued that the European Union has its own politics of memory that seeks to transform the past from a source of tensions to a foundation of shared future. The result of these processes is crafted, yet selective, narrative of a common European past that ties and binds Europeans throughout the history.

For the EU, the politics of memory is instrumental in defining what a European Union stands for, believes in and aims to achieve. On the one hand, the EU offers an ethical model of

⁷ These observations and interviews were part of the study visit in which I participated in June 2017 during the European Remembrance Symposium of European Institutions dealing with the 20th-century History.

remembrance based on universal values and lessons derived from history. The EU's reading of the past seeks to understand the shared past and diverse experiences of European peoples that transcend traditional boundaries of the nation-state. On the other hand, present political concerns and dominant EU (and MS) interests are projected onto the past. Memory is employed to underpin political objectives and needs: to foster legitimacy and enhance citizens' belonging to a group. While it is rooted in the past, EU politics of memory is instrumental for the present (e.g. legitimacy-seeking, pacifying tensions) but also to the future – with which it creates a direct link (who we are no longer vs. who we want to become).

Yet, the EU politics of memory must be agreed upon and endorsed by all members of the group. When the EU and its MS interests converge and can be grounded in (joint) history, the mechanism by which these processes are initiated and implemented derives from consensus-making. The uploading of Eastern memories of the aftermath of the Second World War onto the EU level is one of the examples. Minorities (smaller in-group) projected their interests and sought the acknowledgement of the others. Following the same pattern, the EU politics of memory must accommodate narratives and identities of all future member states. Each subsequent Enlargement will put under stress the existing EU memory framework, which becomes a setting for uploading of nation-states' interests and views. This means that future member states will first need to comply with the dominant EU reading of the past, and after the Accession will be obliged to reassess and readjust it. If the ultimate objective of the EU politics of memory is to transform the past - a source of tensions - from hot to cold, these processes will – in the best-case scenario, periodically - re-activate disagreements on the past on even larger scale.

While the EU reassessment of the past so far has been instrumental for internal EU politics and foreign policies of MS, it is also producing unintended consequences. The EU Enlargement to the Western Balkans is one of the examples where EU politics of memory unintentionally encourages historical revisionism that flourished in the 1990s. With no regional consensus on the causes and the consequences of the dissolution of Yugoslavia and highly politicised ethno-national histories, convergence with the EU politics of memory is highly problematic. As they embark on the EU path, all former Yugoslav republics compete to promote their own readings of the 1990s and to project them onto the EU level.

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