

THIRD FORUM ON HISTORY EDUCATION

REINFORCING HISTORICAL AWARENESS and CULTURE through HIGHER EDUCATION

THREATS AND CHALLENGES

#HistoryAtHeart



PROGRAMME



*Aula Prodi
Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna
Piazza San Giovanni in Monte 2, Bologna – Italy*

 @CoE_History

 @OHECOE

 www.coe.int

CONTEXT

The Council of Europe is the oldest intergovernmental organisation in Europe and brings together 46 member States. History and history teaching have been an important focus of the Council of Europe's work on education since its inception¹.

In a time of democratic backsliding, at a moment when history is prone to distortion, including the denial of certain historical facts and political manipulation, it is crucial to provide platforms for open and productive discussions regarding the role of history in the 21st century. Moreover, we should strive to establish guidelines that help cultivate peaceful collective memories, rooted in a multiperspectival approach to history. The annual Forums for History Education provide platforms for public authorities from relevant ministries, teachers, curriculum developers, the academic community (including students and staff), learners, and civil society to exchange their perspectives and practices in history education and collaboratively develop guidelines for improving history education. The general objectives of the Forums include:

- serving as a central component of the intergovernmental programme on history education, drawing upon its extensive knowledge base and acquis;
- promoting dialogue and collaboration among various stakeholders focused on the theme of each Forum;
- sharing and disseminating best practices and insights from diverse aspects of European history.

The series of Forums is organised as follows:

- "Places of memories: Learning spaces for democracy" in Belgrade, November 2022;
- "History Education in the digital age" in Brussels, March 2023;
- "Reinforcing historical awareness and culture through higher education: threats and challenges" in Bologna, May 2024;

The series will conclude in 2025, as part of the 70th anniversary celebration of the Cultural Convention. This final Forum will present the various recommendations from the previous Forums and reaffirm the role of history in the construction of a Europe founded on principles of Democracy, Human Rights, and the Rule of Law.

This year's forum will focus on the threats and challenges facing the teaching of history in higher education institutions, which is often questioned or even cut in favour of other subjects that seem more closely linked to the immediate needs of the economy. The third Forum aims to explore certain areas in particular and will therefore focus on three key aspects:

- A. The role of higher education in history education and research in and for democratic societies**
- B. Identities, roles, and responsibilities of historians within higher education**
- C. The role of higher education in valuing historical culture for society**

Participants in the Forum will represent various stakeholders, including the Steering Committee of Education (CDEDU), doctorate and student organisations, higher education institutions and associations, historians specialising in training history teachers, and higher education professors and leaders.

The Forum's preparatory team, composed of the secretariat, experts and important organisations in the field ([Eurodoc](#), [European Students' Union](#), [International Association of Universities](#), [Magna Charta Observatory](#)), has developed a rich agenda which aims to facilitate insightful discussions and collaborations among diverse stakeholders with the goal of advancing history education, research, and promoting democratic values within societies.

¹ [Teaching History, Grounding Democracy – an exhibition on history education at the Council of Europe - Observatory on History Teaching in Europe \(coe.int\)](#)

DAY 1

WEDNESDAY, 15 MAY

17:00 – 17:30 **REGISTRATION**
in Aula Prodi

17:30 – 19:00 **WELCOME WORDS**

Chair: Aurora ALLINCAI, Head of the History Education Division and Executive Director of the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe, Council of Europe

Giovanni MOLARI, Rector, University of Bologna, Italy
Matjaz GRUDEN, Director for Democracy, Council of Europe

OPENING CONFERENCE ON INCLUSIVE HISTORY

History has always valued some narratives over others, with many experiences of minority communities having not been recorded at all. More and more, history is being questioned and contested, and these debates can create tensions, as well as in some people, a will to forget. To this end, what is the role and responsibility of higher education and public authorities, in promoting inclusivity in public history?

Jerome DE GROOT, Professor of Literature and Culture, University of Manchester, United Kingdom

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

20:00 **CONFERENCE DINNER**

Sala VIII Centenary, Rectorate, Via Zamboni 33

DAY 2

THURSDAY, 16 MAY

9:00 – 9:30 **OPENING REMARKS**

As an introduction to the forum's objectives, the opening session will question the use and misuse of history as a challenge for democracy, including the role of academic freedom, teaching, learning and research, while also acknowledging existing political reflections on academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

Moderator: Jean-Philippe RESTOUEIX, Head of Unit remembrance and Intergovernmental Programme on History Education, Council of Europe
Giuseppe RONSISVALLE, Professor and CDEDU Bureau Member
Raffaella CAMPANER, Vice Rector for International Relations, University of Bologna, Italy
Matjaz GRUDEN, Director for Democracy, Council of Europe

OVERVIEW OF THE AGENDA

9:30 – 11:00 **PLENARY SESSION 1 - The role of history education and research in and for democratic societies**

Higher education institutions have a central and unique role to play in supporting research and providing safe spaces for controversial debates. How indispensable is academic freedom in history education to foster robust historical research? How does higher education in history education play a role in promoting inclusivity, multiperspectivity, non-discrimination, adherence to the rule of law and respect for human rights in and for democratic societies?

Moderator: Iris KIMIZOGLU, Vice President of the European Students' Union (ESU)

Raul CÂRSTOCEA, Vice-Chair of the OHTe Scientific Advisory Council, Council of Europe, and member of the Barvalipe Academy, ERIAC European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture
David LOCK, Secretary General of the Magna Charta Observatory
Pii Maria SAUGMANN, Vice President of the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (Eurodoc)
Monika STEINEL, Deputy Secretary General of the European University Association (EUA)

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

11:00 – 11:30 COFFEE BREAK AND NETWORKING

11:30 – 12:30 **PLENARY SESSION 2 - Identities, roles and responsibilities of historians in higher education**

In today's academic landscape, it's crucial to strategize on how history is defended and promoted as a subject, emphasizing its unique methodologies and ethical considerations in understanding human experience. Public engagement, interdisciplinary debate and cross references between countries are key, as historians must challenge prevailing narratives and explore the "who," "what," and "why" across various geographical contexts - local, national, regional/Europe, and international. Documenting minority and marginalized histories is imperative for a more inclusive historical culture, sparking dialogue on history education's ever-changing landscape. What threats and challenges do historians in higher education face today, given the evolving nature of historical inquiry?

Arthur CHAPMAN, Professor of History Education, Institute of Education, University College London, United Kingdom
Gentiana SULA, Chairwoman of the Authority for Information on the Documents of the former State Security (AIDFSS), Albania

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

12:30 – 13:30 **GROUP DEBATES**

*As a follow up to the plenary session, small groups will debate the "**identities, roles and responsibilities of historians in higher education**".*

13:30 – 14:45 **LUNCH BREAK**

14:45 – 15:45 **PLENARY SESSION 3 - The role of higher education in valuing historical culture for society**

Educators and academics navigate pedagogical challenges and opportunities in utilising historical documents and texts in today's digital age. How can history education promote inclusive learning and instill historical thinking as a vital skill, alongside fostering citizenship education on fundamental rights and democratic values? What is the responsibility of public authorities and the role of higher education, both in research and training for teachers, in developing historical awareness and culture for society?

Moderator: Cristina DEMARIA, Professor of Philosophy and Theories of Languages and Rector's delegate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion of Alma Mater, University of Bologna, Italy

Peter ARONSSON, Rector, Linnaeus University, Sweden, and Board Member of the International Association of Universities (IAU)
Iris KIMIZOGLU, Vice President of the European Students' Union (ESU)
Susanne POPP, Honorary President, International Society of History Didactics (ISHD)
Paul Tiyambe ZELEZA, Senior Advisor for Strategic Initiatives at Howard University, USA

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

15:45 – 16:15 COFFEE BREAK AND NETWORKING

16:15 – 17:30 **GROUP DEBATES**

*As a follow up to the plenary session, small groups will debate the "**The role of higher education in valuing historical culture for society**".*

DAY 3 FRIDAY, 17 MAY

9:00 – 10:30 **FINAL SESSION: sustainability and future perspectives for history education in higher education**

For this last plenary session, group rapporteurs will share feedbacks from the debates about the threats and challenges history education is facing in higher education; and organisations in history education will share reactions on how to safeguard democracy through historical awareness and academic freedom.

Moderator: Jean-Philippe RESTOUEIX, Head of Unit remembrance and Intergovernmental Programme on History Education, Council of Europe

Group rapporteurs

Susanne POPP, Honorary President, International Society of History Didactics (ISHD)
Hilligje VAN'T LAND, Secretary General, International Association of Universities (IAU)

Speakers

Antoon DE BAETS, EuroClio Chair Emeritus for History, Ethics, and Human Rights at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands
Jakub GRODECKI, Project and Policy Manager (EURASHE)
Joanna WOJDON, Professor, Vice President of the International Federation for Public History (IFPH)

10:30 – 11:00 **COFFEE BREAK**

11:00 – 12:15 **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND NEXT STEPS**

The General Rapporteur will conclude the Forum with final remarks and insights, as well as providing valuable reflections on the key elements of evaluation discussed throughout our sessions, offering guidelines for the future, outlining actionable steps to advance our efforts in reinforcing historical awareness and culture through higher education.

General Rapporteur

Tony GALLAGHER, Professor Emeritus and Honorary Professor of Education, Queen's University Belfast, United Kingdom

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

12:00 – 13:30 **LUNCH BREAK**

14:00 – 15:00 **VISIT AND GUIDED TOUR OF THE PALAZZO POGGI MUSEUM**

Registration required