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Memory, Identity and the Supranational History Museum: The House of European History

Creating a Place for Reflection and Debate or Constructing a European Master Narrative?

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Gent, 9/8/2013

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Abstract

De bijdrage van musea voor nationale geschiedenis aan de consolidatie van de negentiende-eeuwse natiestaten is tegenwoordig een intrinsiek deel van de literatuur over geschiedschrijving en nationalisme. Historische musea hadden de essentiële rol de nationale meta-narratieven onder het publiek te verspreiden en zo de identificatie met de nieuwe staten te stimuleren. Veel geschiedenismusea hebben met de Nieuwe Museologie beweging in de jaren zeventig echter een meer reflectieve opvatting over geschiedenis in hun narratief geïntegreerd.

De *Memory Boom* zet geschiedenismusea weer in het midden van de samenleving. Geschiedenis wordt nu meer dan ooit gebruikt als reservoir van waaruit de hedendaagse identiteit wordt geconstrueerd. Het meerduidige concept van herinnering staat hierin centraal – aan de ene kant maakt het een meer democratische, gediversifieerde geschiedenisopvatting mogelijk, aan de andere kant betekent het een meer ahistorische, onmiddellijke en onkritische omgang met het verleden. Deze tweedeling is ook aanwezig in het Huis van de Europese Geschiedenis, dat opent in Brussel in 2015. Dit initiatief van het Europese Parlement is opgevat met de intentie om bij te dragen aan een Europese identiteit. De link met de herinneringspolitiek van de laatste twee decennia is dus niet ver te zoeken, aangezien de presentatie van geschiedenis wordt gebruikt om een hedendaagse politieke realiteit te legitimeren.

Het Academic Project Team, dat werkt aan de ontwikkeling van de permanente tentoonstelling, wil echter afzien van een essentialistische opvatting van geschiedenis en identiteit en net het concept van herinnering gebruiken om een meer gedifferentieerde, open interpretatie van de geschiedenis te bieden.

In deze thesis wordt de historische evolutie van de inzet van geschiedenis en geschiedenismusea voor politieke doeleinden geschetst. Het Huis van de Europese geschiedenis wordt in deze thematiek gecontextualiseerd. Uiteindelijk wordt het ontwerp van de vaste tentoonstelling geanalyseerd en wordt onderzocht op welke manier de HEH enerzijds een platform kan bieden voor debat of anderzijds wordt geïnstrumentaliseerd voor de creatie van een nieuw meta-narratief voor de Europese Unie.

Preface

Working at the House of European History (HEH) has been a fascinating and rewarding experience. In the final year of my Masters in History, I could not have asked for a more interesting and stimulating internship.

My traineeship at the European Parliament (EP) provided a rare opportunity to gain behind-the-scenes access to this otherwise rather impenetrable institution. I was able to observe the workings of European institutions from within, and more specifically examine their cultural politics through the eyes of a historian.

The most personally significant part of this traineeship was working with the Academic Project Team (APT) on the creation of the permanent exhibition of the HEH. This five-month internship gave me insight into the practices of museum work and the discipline of public history. The mix of historians and museologists from across Europe has offered me a unique and stimulating work experience.

The HEH is an ideal research topic for a young public historian, interested in how the past is represented in a museum context. This subject, with all of its controversies, is perfect to fully grasp the challenges public history faces today. In particular studying the institutionalisation of a collective European memory and the 'history politics' of the EU gave me the opportunity to apply my academic knowledge of theoretical and public history to a concrete case.

I am very grateful to Christine Dupont, Belgian historian at the APT, who helped me obtain this position and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her again. I also want to give thanks to Elke Pluijmen, Dutch museologist and member of the APT, who acted as my supervisor during the internship. We had many interesting discussions about the HEH and similar projects and the challenges they face.

I would also like to thank my academic supervisor, Dr. Berber Bevernage, who offered his enthusiastic support for this rather unconventional thesis, its subject not falling directly into his field. I appreciate his academic advice and the relaxed context he provided to discuss the development of my work.

I have decided to write my Masters thesis in English for a couple of reasons. The APT is a multinational team and the working language is mostly English. Additionally, the literature

consulted and analysed in this thesis was primarily English. But it was especially my wish to write a substantial academic paper in a language other than my native language, because of my plans to pursue my further studies abroad, that motivated me to write this thesis in English. Michael Laird has been kind enough to make suggestions concerning my writing style, for which I would like to thank him. My family and friends, in particular Anton Van Laer, with whom I discussed the topics addressed in this thesis, should certainly be recognised. Jenn Byrne, a fellow trainee at the EP, offered her generous help to proofread the final version of my text, for which I am very thankful.

Finally, I want to express my thanks to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for funding my attendance at the 2013 meeting of the National Council on Public History (NCPH) in Ottawa. It is the main organisation for connecting public historians worldwide and is active in the continual analysis of the discipline and its methods. Therefore, the fact that I was able to attend their conference was extremely beneficial for my further development as a public historian.

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List of used abbreviations

AC	Academic Committee
APT	Academic Project Team
CDU	Christliche Demokratische Union Deutschlands, Christian Democratic Union
DG COMM	Directorate-General of Communication
DG INLO	Directorate-General of Infrastructure and Logistics
DHM	Deutsches Historisches Museum, German Historical Museum
EC	European Commission
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
EUI	European University Institute
GPD	General de Producciones y Diseño
HEH	House of European History
ICOM	International Council of Museums
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MINOM	International Movement for a New Museology
NCPH	National Council on Public History

Introduction

It was only when I began working at the HEH, that I truly came to appreciate how much of a balancing act is involved in its creation. My interest in the HEH project was sparked when I learned that the European Union (EU) was to establish a museum similar in purpose to those museums commonly created by nation-states in the nineteenth-century. The EU is creating a museum which, through the presentation of a visual historical narrative, aims to stimulate identification with a political formation.

The project was initiated within the EP and launched by then-President Hans-Gert Pöttering. It was conceived as a locus *"for the European identity to go on being shaped by present and future citizens of the European Union"*.[1] Therefore, it seemed to me that the HEH could easily become an uncritical instrument in the implementation of European identity politics.

However, when talking to the members of the APT, responsible for the creation of the permanent exhibition, I came to see that for them, encouraging reflection and debate and incorporating conflicting views on history are central to this project.

Recent historiography has shown a great interest in the way the writing of history and visual historical narratives, like history museums, have been - and are still being - constructed in the light of contemporary needs. The fact that historiography and national history museums have contributed to the consolidation of the modern nation-states has been acknowledged and is now a significant research topic.

History museums, challenged by changing models in historiography, have gone through significant changes. With the New Museology movement, since the 1970's many museums have shed parts of their teleological nationalistic narrative. Hence, creating a nineteenth-century type history museum is now out of the question.

In the last two decades, memory has often been a central, albeit ambiguous concept in historical museums. On the one hand, the concept of memory has opened perspectives and shown its many virtues in the deconstruction of national master narratives. The so-called Memory Boom, spurring the 'explosion' of memory that had previously been uncovered by historiography, has changed history-writing and museums in many ways. Many institutions have become open to contesting and previously repressed memory. However, on the other

1 Committee of Experts, "Conceptual Basis for a House of European History," October 2008, 4.

hand memory can be a more immediate, uncritical and easily manipulated way of dealing with the past. With the Memory Boom, the construction of identity through the use of the past has also intensified. More than ever perhaps, people are looking at the past to form their identity in the present. This public demand has of course not gone unobserved by political institutions, who understand the societal potential of museums, something which has been revealed in the scholarship on national museums. Many countries in Europe have launched initiatives to re-examine their nation's historical identity. A new way of relating to the past has spurred the growth of a new type of history museum, a museum that tries to actively create a shared identity from history to the present.

After the Maastricht Treaty, the EU has also started to actively engage in memory politics. Interestingly, many national history museums had included a European perspective to contextualise and deconstruct their often teleological national narratives.

This European perspective is however not neutral, but is stimulated by the politically motivated cultural policies of the EU. In fact, one can see the similarities between the challenges the EU faces today and those the nation-states faced in the nineteenth century; it is a young political entity, working towards its consolidation. A shared past and a collective memory are perceived as necessary qualities in the creation of a stable state. And it seems that these qualities are exactly those that the EU is missing.

Many have criticised the EU for allegedly (mis)using culture and history to create a common identity. The HEH is not the first museum that has wanted to give a narrative on European History and these other initiatives have also been subjected to criticism. The APT, responsible for the development of the permanent exhibition of the HEH, is aware of the risks attached to a project like the HEH. The members of the APT want to incorporate the latest historical insights and museological concepts within this museum, and not be an 'apologia for the EU'. The concept of memory has been central to their approach towards this project.

This thesis, taking the position that the HEH, as an entirely new museum, has to position itself towards past and current historiographical, museal and societal trends, aims to analyse the most influential scholarship on these topics and thereby provide the general framework the APT needs to consider when creating the permanent exhibition for the HEH.

There appear to be three issues central to the context of the HEH – firstly the relationship between historiography and politics and the different ways of relating to the past, secondly

how these issues have affected historical museums and finally the cultural politics of the EU and the effect on the Europeanisation of history museums. These themes are of course affiliated; this nexus, or the way they are interconnected, is the main focus of this thesis.

In the first chapter, I will give a general introduction to the HEH as an initiative. As the development of the HEH is very much still in the project phase, in this chapter I will outline the main developments and players in the creation of the museum.

In the second chapter, I will discuss the relationship between history and the consolidation of political formations from the nineteenth century onwards. I will also discuss how a new way of relating to the past, with the emergence of memory in society and in historical discourse, has influenced the relationship between history and politics – and society at large.

Subsequently, in the third chapter, I will analyse how these changing paradigms have shaped historical museums in both the past and present. In particular I will examine how history museums contribute to the formation of a collective memory, thereby stimulating the emergence of a shared identity and social cohesion. I will compare national history museums before and after the 1970's, yet also including more recent initiatives.

Finally, I will analyse the difficulties the EU has experienced with the emergence of a European identity and examine how this has shaped its cultural policies. Also discussed will be the previous attempts to musealise the history of Europe, in particular the Musée de l'Europe project. In this fourth chapter, I will also examine how my case study, the HEH, functions in the context of the European 'history politics' and how it positions itself in relation to the old and more recent functioning of national history museums. I will also analyse the plan for the permanent exhibition and strive to answer the following question: *Can the HEH really become the place for conflicting views and debate that it aspires to be – and through which strategies? Or will it display a new master narrative for the EU, promoting the emergence of a European identity?*

The conceptual and historiographical framework and the analysis of the historical museums and their evolution is based on an in-depth study of the most significant scholarship on these topics. On the topic of the HEH itself, literature is rather limited. Moreover, the existing studies are very much based on external perspectives, as the HEH is still in the project phase. Since the HEH is institutionally organised under the auspices of the EP, only fairly restricted information is available to the public, or to researchers for that matter. For this reason, it has

been a significantly privileged opportunity for me to have been offered the possibility to undertake an internship with the APT.

As part of my internship, I was given access to the APT's working documents, which I have used as source material for this thesis. This offered me an insight into the principles and practice of the HEH and into the form and content of what will be the permanent exhibition. The practice of participative observation in my work with the APT and the communication with its members facilitated my understanding of the nature of the museum and the evolution of the HEH project.

1. Building a House of European History

In this first chapter I examine the HEH as a project of the EP and provide a detailed description of the initiative to set up a HEH. I will outline its conception, the evolution of the project and its institutional structure, thus providing good insights into the project. A more in-depth analysis of the historiographical and museological content of the HEH is to be found in the final chapter of this thesis, after the necessary historical and theoretical framework has been discussed.

The webpage of the HEH, the press releases and the official publications by the EP and the APT on the project serve as the most important literature sources for this thesis. Although studies concerning the HEH are still limited, a number of cultural critics, among them historians, have discussed the HEH in recent publications. These articles tend to be based on an outdated or at least limited understanding of the project.

Therefore, for my analysis of the HEH, my internship was of crucial importance, as it offered me a chance to take a look 'behind the scenes', providing me with direct access to internal information, including both the plans of the permanent exhibition and working documents which might not be made public in the future.

In the first subchapter, I describe how and by whom the project was initiated and what steps were consequently taken to realise the creation of the museum. I will also outline the institutional development and the main parties involved.

From the very beginning, the HEH has occupied a controversial position. In the second subchapter I will discuss the coverage the project has received in the press and reactions in political and heritage circles.

Finally I will introduce the APT, the team working on the development of the permanent exhibition of the HEH, and discuss its role in the creation of the museum.

1.1 A Project of the European Parliament

Christian Democratic Union (CDU) politician Hans-Gert Pöttering first proposed the creation of a HEH during his inaugural speech as the President of the EP on the 13th of February 2007. In Pöttering's eyes, the planned HEH should be "*a place where a memory of European history and the work of European unification is jointly cultivated*".[2]

The political motivation, the promoting of a European identity, was clearly implied in his speech. Pöttering suggested that the HEH be "*a locus for history and for the future where the concept of the European idea can continue to grow*".[3] Pöttering demonstrated enthusiasm for the institution and envisioned the HEH as a platform *"for the European identity to go on being shaped by present and future citizens of the European Union"*.[4]

In December 2007, the Bureau of the EP,[5] established a Committee of Experts, consisting of nine renowned historians and museologists from different European countries. The Committee of Experts was mandated to write the first conceptual plan for the museum. The committee was led by German historian Hans Walter Hütter, President of the Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Foundation in Bonn, which would to a certain extent function as a model for the HEH.

Illustration 1: The Committee of Experts presents the Conceptual Basis to the Bureau of the EP.

After many discussions during meetings in Brussels, on the 15th of September 2008, the Committee of Experts agreed upon a concept and published a document, entitled the Conceptual Basis for a House of European History. In the Conceptual Basis, a first proposal for the historical narrative of the museum was made and an institutional structure was outlined.[6]

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 The Bureau of the EP is a body made up of the President of the EP, the fourteen Vice-Presidents and five Quaestors.
6 The historical and museological proposals of the Conceptual Basis will be discussed in the last chapter.

In November 2008, professor Hütter and the other members of the Committee of Experts presented the document to the Bureau of the EP. In December, after a detailed review of the Conceptual Basis, the Bureau of the EP, unanimously approved the creation of a HEH.[7]

The Conceptual Basis outlined the museological principles and introduced a historical narrative for the museum's permanent exhibition, which will be discussed in the last chapter of this thesis. However, the Conceptual Basis also suggested an institutional and organisational structure for the future museum. It proposed that a permanent exhibition would become be the nucleus of the HEH, which alongside a program of temporary exhibitions, both within the HEH itself and travelling to other venues, would have to be developed. The museum would also organise events and workshops to actively engage visitors with the museum. Additionally, official publications and a substantial interactive and informative online offer would be available. The HEH will thus become a centre for exhibition, information and documentation.[8]

The advisability of an independent committee to safeguard the accuracy of the portrayal of history, was also pointed out in the Conceptual Basis. It was suggested to establish a high-level academic advisory board to supervise the project.[9] With this in mind, the Academic Committee (AC) was assembled, an expert board of eleven European historians and museum experts, some of them former members of the Committee of Experts. The AC is chaired by Polish historian Włodzimierz Borodziej and plays an advisory role. The AC seeks to ensure that the highest standards of professional historiography and museology are met.

Additionally, a Board of Trustees was established, consisting of prominent politicians and well-known public figures, from both the European and Belgian institutions. The Board is in charge of the general management of the project and is chaired by Hans-Gert Pöttering, who first proposed the establishment of the HEH. The composition and the functioning of the Board of Trustees and the AC were approved by the Bureau of the EP in February 2009.

In the Summer of 2009, the Bureau of the EP approved a number of operational procedures, which enabled the project to be launched. The responsibility of execution of the HEH project is borne by the Bureau of the Parliament. In September 2009 the Bureau decided to set up a contact group, the Bureau Liaison Group, chaired by EP Vice-President Martínez Martínez. It

7 "EP Bureau Decides to Set up a 'House of European History'," *Official Website of the European Parliament*, accessed August 11, 2012, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?language=en&type=IM-PRESS&reference=20081216IPR44855.

8 Committee of Experts, "Conceptual Basis for a House of European History," 7–9.

9 Ibid., 7.

is in charge of communication on the project and relationships with Belgian political circles.[10]
In June 2009, the museum's future location was determined. It was decided that the Eastman building, a former dental clinic sponsored by Kodak-inventor George Eastman, would house the new museum. This building, originating from the 1930's, is located in the Leopold Park, just behind the EP, in the European Quarter in Brussels.
In July 2009, an architectural tender was launched, resulting in the selection of the architectural group of the French architectural firm Atelier Chaix & Morel & Associés and JWSD from Germany, working together as a team. Their successful proposal was to build a large glass structure in the courtyard, that will rise up over the roof of the Eastman Building, enlarging the building and enabling it to showcase the substantial program of the HEH.

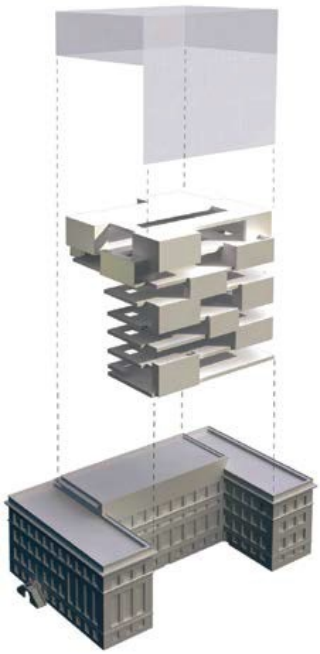

Illustration 2: Architectural design of the Eastman Building by AACMA-JSWD

In January 2011, the first members of the Academic Team, which would later be called the Academic Project Team, were recruited to start working on the permanent exhibition and all other museological aspects.
In the Spring of 2012, the construction works for the renovation and the extension of the Eastman Building were started. Subsequently, a design tender was launched, to select a company to create the exhibition design. In March 2013 a contract was signed with the winners of the tender, General de Producciones y Diseño (GPD), a company specialised in exhibition design, based in Seville and led by Czech exhibition maker Boris Micka.[11]
During the development phase, the project came under the supervision of the EP, more specifically its Secretariat. Yet, the institutional structure is quite complicated, especially since the composition of the APT, has changed repeatedly. When the project was initiated, the APT was working directly under the Secretariat-General of the EP. Harald Rømer, who had been the Secretary-General until 2009, and who had already been involved in the project, was appointed as a coordinator of the project. Klaus Welle, current Secretary-General is also directly involved with the HEH project.

10 "Project Aiming at the Foundation of a House of European History - State of Play. Background Briefing for the Committee on Culture and Education," July 3, 2011, 2, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/cult/dv/houseeuropeanhistorybriefing/houseeuropeanhistorybriefingen.pdf.
11 "General de Producciones y Diseño, S.A.," accessed July 7, 2013, http://www.gpdsa.es/.

In 2011 the APT was moved to the Directorate-General of Communication (DG COMM), working right under the Director-General. After a couple of months, it was subsequently relocated to one of the departments of DG COMM, the Directorate for Relations with Citizens.

Additionally, the Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics (DG INLO) is involved with the HEH, as it is in charge of managing the logistic side of the project. The supervision of the renovations to the Eastman Building and the determination of a fitting storage unit for the museum's collection is handled by DG INLO.

The estimated budget for the development of the museum is € 56,15 million. More than half of this sum, € 31 million, is to be spent on the renovation and the extension of the building. The budget for the development of the permanent and the first temporary exhibition was set at € 21,4 million (of which € 15,4 million goes to the development of the exhibition and a budget of € 6 million has been earmarked for multilingualism). Finally, € 3,75 million is dedicated to building up the HEH's collection.[12] The APT has stressed that this budget is rather moderate in comparison with similar projects.[13]

The European Commission (EC) offered to contribute to the funding of the running costs of the museum through the funding the wage and personal costs of the museum educators. This proposal has however been declined by the EP, as it is concerned that the EC would have too much influence on the visitors of the HEH. In July 2013 it was confirmed that the EC will contribute € 800.000 annually towards the running costs of the museum.

Initially, the summer of 2014 was set as the opening date of the museum. However, it quickly became clear that it would not be possible to meet this goal, due to issues with the building. Therefore, the fall of 2015 has been set as a new opening date. This new time frame for developing the permanent exhibition remains rather strict for the APT considering that the time elapsing from the first brainstorming sessions to the actual opening is less than four years. It has not yet been decided what institutional structure the museum will have once it is opened. Although the Conceptual Basis specified that the HEH should become a completely independent institution, it is possible that the museum will continue to function under the mandate of the European institutions.

12 "The House of European History," *Official Website of the European Parliament*, accessed December 5, 2013, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/visiting/en/visits/historyhouse.html.

13 Taja Vovk van Gaal and Christine Dupont, "The House of European History," in *EuNaMus Report No. 9 - Entering the Minefields: The Creation of New History Museums in Europe*, vol. 83, Linköping Electronic Conference Proceedings (presented at the European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen, Brussels: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012), 46.

1.2 A Controversial Initiative

From its very conception, the HEH has been a controversial project. Even within the EP, the project has been put under scrutiny. Members of European Parliament were critical of the fact that the project was ratified by the Bureau of the EP, rather than being presented to the Parliament itself for approval.

The polemics have concentrated on various aspects of the project. One major point of critique has been the high cost of the project, especially against the backdrop of the current economic crisis, where funds for culture are being cut all over Europe because of austerity measures. Although the budget to create the museum is fairly typical by current museum standards, the spending of EU money on this project has been severely criticised.

In April 2012, Martin Callanan, a member of the British Conservative Party, Member of European Parliament (MEP) and chairman of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group, said: *"The European Parliament should not be in the business of running museums. Even in good times, the money would be a waste, but during these hard times it is scandalous."*[14]

Martha Andreasen, MEP and representative of the Euro-sceptic UK Independent Party, has also voiced strong criticism. She stated that *"It defies both belief and logic that in this age of austerity MEP's have the vast sums of money to fund this grossly narcissistic project."*[15]

British Euro-sceptic politicians have unsurprisingly been the harshest critics of the project and British newspapers picked up these critiques. The criticism intensified when in April 2011, the Daily Telegraph claimed to have been given access to documents stating that the initial estimation of the budget had increased significantly, alleging that the € 56 million had risen up to just over € 130 million. The estimated running costs of the museum were also said to have increased by 80 percent.[16] Officials of the EP later stated that this information was false and

14 "A £7m TV Channel in 22 Languages and the Second World War Airbrushed from European History at a £44m Museum... Eurocrats Are Spending Like Never Before," *Mail Online*, accessed December 1, 2013, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2131277/7m-TV-channel-WWII-airbrushed-European-history--eurocrats-spending-like-before.html.

15 Bruno Waterfield, "'House of European History' Cost Estimates Double to £137 Million," *Telegraph.co.uk*, April 3, 2011, sec. worldnews, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/8424826/House-of-European-History-cost-estimates-double-to-137-million.html.

16 Ibid.

that the Daily Telegraph had misread the budget documents.[17]

Of course, not all of the critique has been money-related. Also, the planned renovations to the Eastman Building, the future site of the museum, have evoked protests from heritage organisations. *Europa Nostra's* Belgian representation denounced the intent to enlarge the building with a large glass structure. The organisation actively tried to halt these drastic changes to the Eastman building, which for them holds an intrinsic historical and cultural value, even though the Eastman site is not on the Belgian list of protected buildings. The Leopold Park itself, a green oasis in the European quarter, has been listed as a protected area. *Europa Nostra Belgium* argued that because the plans radically alter the proportions of the Eastman building, as a consequence, the skyline and the integrity of the entire Leopold Park would be compromised.[18]

A meeting in January 2013 between Pöttering, the APT and the heritage NGO's based in Brussels, gave civil society representatives the opportunity to express their concerns.[19] Even though *Europa Nostra* was still concerned about the architectural plans, they said to understand the merits the creation of a HEH could bring in promoting the knowledge and respect for Europe's culture and history and decided to stop contesting the renovation.[20]

Illustration 3: Meeting President Pöttering, the APT and the local heritage NGO's.

The fact that the APT has been working behind closed doors has also been criticised. This lack of public debate is not desired by the members of APT, but is imposed upon them, by certain restrictions on the releasing of information. The communication policy of an organ of the EP is subject to very strict regulations. Additionally, Dutch historians Pieter Huistra and Marijn Molema observed in the Internationale Spectator in July 2012 that an enduring public debate could eventually prevent the actual construction of the museum, as happened with similar

17 "Eurosceptics Cry Foul as EU 'History House' Costs Soar," *EurActiv.com*, accessed July 7, 2013, http://www.euractiv.com/culture/eurosceptics-cry-foul-eu-history-news-503858.

18 "The Voice of Cultural Heritage in Europe - ENewsletter November 2012," 8, accessed May 12, 2013, http://www.europanostra.org/UPLOADS/FILS/2012_11_ENewsletter.pdf.

19 "The House of European History in Dialogue with Europa Nostra," *The Voice of Cultural Heritage in Europe*, accessed October 6, 2013, http://www.europanostra.org/news/317/.

20 Ibid.

projects in the Netherlands and France.[21] They state that is was probably the example of the Haus der Geschichte in Bonn, which was developed largely behind the scenes and became a big success after its opening, that urged that the HEH project be kept out of the spotlight during the development process. Additionally, Huistra and Molema argue that restraining from discussing the content of the museum in the public arena, contributes to the academic independence of the work of the APT, as politicians cannot get so involved.[22]

Now that the actual creation of the museum is under less scrutiny, communication about HEH is slowly filtering out to the wider public. The HEH now has an – albeit limited - online presence, having launched its own webpage, hosted on the website of the EP.[23] Also the document, "Building a House of European History", introducing the museum to its future visitors, has recently been published.[24]

The lack of communication concerning the HEH has of course not prevented criticism on the content of museum. Both the possibility and necessity to build one museum to cover the complexities of European history have been questioned. Historians and museologists have been sceptical of the political implications of the initiative. The troublesome combination of politics and history and in particular the influence of EU officials on the historical account has proven to be the an issue of major concern.

Michel Draguet, Director-General of the Belgian Royal Museum of Arts and History, has called the HEH an artificial project that speaks to a political agenda, to *"a project of obsolete propaganda with no resonance in the expectations of the public".*[25]

A blog post by the British think thank Civitas, also called the Institute for the Study of Civil Society, has proclaimed that by seeking to use history education as a way to stimulate a European identity, *"some of the intertwined, and discordant, threads that make up the history of Europe will inevitably be diluted, distorted, even erased altogether."*[26] Additionally, it expressed that the HEH could *"achieve nothing but a disingenuous paradox, aiming to tell*

21 Pieter A. Huistra and Marijn Molema, "In de Steigers: Het Huis Voor de Europese Geschiedenis," *Internationale Spectator* 66, no. 6 (June 2012): 313.

22 Ibid., 315.

23 "The House of European History."

24 "Building a House of European History" (Luxembourg: Publications Office the European Union, 2013).

25 Michel Draguet, "Welcome Address," in *EuNaMus Report No. 9 - Entering the Minefields: The Creation of New History Museums in Europe*, vol. 83, Linköping Electronic Conference Proceedings (presented at the European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen, Brussels: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012), 16–17.

26 "Rewriting History," *Civitas*, August 10, 2012, http://www.civitas.org.uk/wordpress/2011/04/07/rewriting-history/.

the history of all the 27 states, but in fact relating no history at all."[27]

Frank Furedi, professor of sociology at University of Kent, said that the HEH would become the museum of the 'Lowest Common Denominator', as *"Instead of the real Europe with its age-old rivalries and disputed achievements we are likely to get an institution devoted to the celebration of empty values like 'diversity', 'difference' and 'sustainability'."*[28]

27 Ibid.
28 Waterfield, "'House of European History' Cost Estimates Double to £137 Million."

1.3 Creating a Museum – the Academic Project Team

In the Conceptual Basis, it was determined that for the development of the museological content of the HEH an independent team of professional historians and museologists had to be assembled.[29] The first members of the APT were hired in January 2011. The APT grew at a steady pace, as new members were regularly added to the team. As of July 2013 the APT consists of 26 members.

The APT is responsible for the creation of the permanent exhibition, the first temporal exhibition and all other museological aspects of the HEH.[30] After the museum's opening, a primarily new staff will be hired to work in the museum.

The APT is led by Slovenian historian Taja Vovk van Gaal, former director of the City Museum of Ljubljana and subsequently Head of Support of Cultural Cooperation at the European Cultural Foundation in Amsterdam. Vovk Van Gaal is responsible for the general management of the project. The curators and assistant curators, who are all historians and museologists, constitute a very important part of the APT, because they are responsible for the development of the content of the permanent exhibition. They are led by head curator Andrea Mork, who formerly was with the Haus der Geschichte in Bonn. The group of curators is diverse in gender and age, but more importantly also in national heritage. The members of the APT come from fifteen different European countries. This diversity should prevent the history of Europe from being told from an overly North-Western European perspective, or at least encourage a debate between conflicting ideas.[31]

Illustration 4: The Members of the Academic Project Team.

In a number of ways, the creation of the HEH is a unique project. It is unusual for a major

29 Committee of Experts, "Conceptual Basis for a House of European History," 7.

30 A list with the members of the Academic Project Team, the Academic Committee and the Board of Trustees can be found in the appendices.

31 Vovk van Gaal and Dupont, "The House of European History," 47.

museum like the HEH to be established *ex nihilo*, not dependent upon any particular history or collection. While most historical museums have a substantial collection, which nowadays they typically attempt to disseminate through digitalisation, the HEH does not yet have a collection of its own. However, it is the transnational scope of the project which makes it unique. The fact that the content of the museum is being developed by a truly multinational team is very rare.

At the beginning of 2011, the first members of the APT set out the mission and 'principles' of the museum. It was decided that some distance would be taken from Conceptual Basis and that it would be perceived as a non-binding guideline rather than a fixed plan to be fully implemented. The team had brainstorming sessions, questioning what they believed really constituted the history of Europe and what events and processes should make up the core themes of the permanent exhibition. The curators started with the development of the historical narrative, mostly working within their own specialisation. During this process, 'briefs', a sort of museal scenario, were used as a platform to collect information on the historical narrative and its visualisation, in particular the so-called 'assets' (2D and 3D objects, audiovisual material, quotes and so on), which would illustrate the presented historical account.

At the beginning of March 2013, when I joined the team, the historical narrative had been more or less determined. More compact versions of the briefs, called scripts, were being prepared for the exhibition designers. The GPD company started working on the interpretation of the narrative into a visual exhibition.

When I started the internship, the priority was to find objects, both through purchase and loan, to be displayed in the permanent exhibition. At an early stage in the project it was decided that most objects would be on loan, from museums from all over Europe. In this way the HEH would be exhibiting those objects which normally never leave the storage units and encourage a practice of loaning. Additionally, it would enable the HEH to avoid copying existing national collections.[32]

During the process of writing the briefs, certain possible assets were already identified and a 'wish list' was assembled. At this stage however, it was not yet determined whether the objects were actually available for loan. In the months following March 2013, the curators went on so-called missions, visiting 293 museums in a total of 37 countries, in order to get familiar

32 Academic Project Team, *Collection Management Policy of the HEH,* May 2013.

with their collections and to discuss the possibility of arranging loans with the curators and museum directors.

In the general budget, € 1 million was foreseen to be spent on the collection in 2013. Since it is still too early in the process to use this amount for the costs attached to loans, the money of 2013 has to be spent on acquiring objects for the HEH's own collection.

2. Memory and Identity – The Past as a Reservoir for Social Cohesion

The first chapter provided the reader with a primarily factual description of the HEH. In this second chapter, a different approach will be taken, as it will offer the historical and theoretical framework relevant to the troublesome combination of history and politics. In this chapter I will analyse what I consider to be the first essential contextualisation of the HEH: the theoretical framework central to my thesis – the link between history, politics and identity and the recent role of memory in this equation.

In the first subchapter I will examine the link between nineteenth-century history-writing and nation-building. Postmodernism and the representational turn have exposed how official historiography was essentially a *construction,* rather than a *reconstruction* of the past. Some influential publications have reflected on the nation-building project of - primarily - nineteenth-century historiography. The subject of many historical studies has thus moved from the past itself, to the relationship we have to the past, our *dealing* with the past. These new developments will be discussed in the first subchapter, as well as the scholarship on the manner in which historians have contributed to the consolidation of the nation-states. Additionally, the potential of history to stimulate a shared, national identity and social cohesion as analysed by the so-called 'theorists of nationalism', will be discussed. For this subchapter, the scholarship of Berger, Lorenz, Anderson, Hobsbawm and Ranger is of paramount importance.

After the spatial categories of modernist historiography were severely challenged, the modernist understanding of historical time was also questioned. This caused a significant change in our relationship with history, specifically in our conception of historical time, with the emergence of the presentist historicity regime in the 1990's. These developments and their causes are discussed in the second subchapter, referring to the work of Hartog, Nora, Lorenz and others.

Finally, the emergence of memory in historiography and society will be dealt with – a result of both the relativism linked with postmodern ideas and the emergence of the presentist

historicity regime. Memory brought on the one hand a more reflective perspective in history-writing – as it forced us to be more conscious of our understanding of historical time and as it is persistent in the narrating of a more diversified historiography. On the other hand, memory is increasingly being appropriated by political entities to legitimise current political formations. The lesser historically factual conceptions of history are instrumentalised in the heritage industry. The writings of Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, Jay Winter, Aleida Assmann, David Lowenthal and others constitute the basis for this subchapter.

2.1 Postmodernism, Historiography and Nineteenth-Century Nation-Building

Postmodern thought's impact on historiography from the 1960's onwards deprived historians of many of the modernist certainties forming the basis of their profession for a long time. One of the most important concepts that was especially deemed problematised by postmodernism, was the concept of objectivity. Objectivity in the historical discipline has been characterised as 'that noble dream' by Peter Novick.[33] Although the possibility of a real objective history had been questioned previously among historians, the extent to which it was challenged in the second half of the twentieth century was unprecedented.

Specifically the postmodern focus on the semanticist side of history-writing unveiled buried assumptions within historiography. French philosopher Jacques Derrida's semiotic analysis of historiography and his theory of deconstruction examined the relationship between history-writing and historical reality. He famously stated that there is nothing outside of the text, "*Il n'y a pas de hors texte",*[34] meaning that the context is an integral part of the text. This challenged the positivist belief that the conscientious study of a historical source would eventually lead to the truth.

The focus on language and representation of post-structuralist theory exposed the constructed and biased nature of historiography, negating the epistemological truth claim that up until then had dominated the profession. These philosophical insights caused a stir in the historical profession. The questioning of the possibility of objectivity was very problematic for the historical discipline, grounded on a strict truth paradigm. Therefore it caused a philosophical dilemma and brought forward a high degree of relativism.

American historian Hayden White, a pioneer in the narrative turn, defined history-writing as an art form, a literary genre. He claimed that historiography mirrors literature to such an extent, for its dependence on narrative structure for meaning, that the existence of an objective historiographical account would be impossible.[35] White argued that the idea that language

33 Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
34 Jacques Derrida, *De La Grammatologie* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1967), 158–159.
35 Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (JHU Press, 1975).

could be a neutral medium was obsolete, but instead of falling into relativism, he looked for ways for historiography to still be meaningful. For White, this is possible by *embracing* historiography's narrative side. Nevertheless, others felt restricted by the postmodern turn in historiography. A high degree of relativism emerged in the historical discipline, some historians, such as British historiographer Keith Jenkins, questioned the need of history-writing altogether, as indicated in his emblematic quote, "*Why bother with history?"*.[36]

Many historians did not know how to deal with postmodern insights, as they did not see how to integrate these concerns into their work. Some subsequently felt incapable of writing historiographical works. The idea that objectivity was unachievable seemed to imply that any historical account would be as good or as true.

Both the revealing of the constructed nature of historiography and the relativism that was paired with it, urged the creation of a history of historiography. The idea that studying the past would only generate a biased account, made many historians examine historiography and our relationship with history rather than the past itself.

A great deal of this interest focused on the way historiography and nation-building were intertwined. This is not surprising considering that the nation-state was the primary context in which history had been written up until then. In fact, it was largely the inherent link between historiography and nation-building during the previous 150 years and the consequences of a modernist truth paradigm combined with nationalism, that caused a representational dilemma. The relationship between history and politics and in particular the relationship between historiography and nation-building now became the main focus.

Historiography was established as a discipline at the beginning of the nineteenth century. An *interest* in history of course existed long before that time, particularly in the Romantic period. It was the so-called Historical School in Germany however, which set a new standard for historical research and turned historiography into a scientific discipline. Leopold van Ranke, one of the founders of the Historical School, developed the principles of the epistemological and methodological truth claim*, "based on its source critical methods and its archival foundation".*[37] Although Chris Lorenz points out that the diffusionist Euro-centric picture of

36 Keith Jenkins, "Why Bother with History," in *At the Limits of History. Essays on Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2009).

37 Chris Lorenz, "Unstuck in Time. Or: The Sudden Presence of the Past," in *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, ed. Jay M. Winter, Frank Van Vree, and Karin Tilmans (Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 71.

the spread of academic history only from within the Historical School has been questioned, Leopold von Ranke's far-reaching influence on the discipline is widely acknowledged.[38]

Leopold von Ranke was a convinced positivist; he envisioned historiography as the science to reconstruct history *wie es eigentlich gewesen,* as it actually happened.[39] The way to achieve this goal was through the rigour of the method. The thinking of the Historical School was deeply influenced by the work of the German philosopher Hegel, as Berger and Lorenz, indisputable authorities on this subject, point out: "*For Hegel, the state was the objective and conscious (für sich) institutional embodiment of a Volk alias a nation"*.[40] Following the view of Hegel, for von Ranke and his followers, the nation-state was the only logical subject of historical research.

Through the rigorous study of textual sources, the positivist historians wanted to reconstruct a true, supra-partisan story of past events, which would mean leaving religious and political affiliations within the national arena behind. Interestingly, it was precisely through the Hegelian identification of nation-formation with history itself, that nineteenth-century historians could see their history as objective.[41] For them, the nation-state was thus the natural spatial framework.

The new discipline was institutionalised within the nation-state, to which it attached entirely, also financially.[42] The source material for history-writing was to be found in the newly established national archives. Historians were influenced by the politics of their patrons, stimulating them to write the history of the nations. History-writing was a political project, its goal was the consolidation of the nation-state. The nationalist historiography needed to cement the idea of the nation as an essential community.[43] Ancient roots of the young nation-states were evoked and history was interpreted in a teleological way, to legitimise the present political order and elite. Von Ranke's heirs were recruited to tell or create the histories, which were later, by the theorists of nationalism, called master narratives of the young nation-states. The education of national history was perceived to be essential for nation-building and for

38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., 73.
40 Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz, "National Narratives and Their 'Others': Ethnicity, Class, Religion and the Gendering of National Histories," *Storia Della Storiografia* 2006, no. 50 (2006): 60.
41 Lorenz, "Unstuck in Time. Or: The Sudden Presence of the Past," 73.
42 Berger and Lorenz, "National Narratives and Their 'Others': Ethnicity, Class, Religion and the Gendering of National Histories," 60.
43 Jan Ifversen and Christoffer Kølvraa, "Myth and History Politics in European Integration - The Myth of the Fathers," 2011, 1.

'responsible citizenship'.[44]

Also well into the twentieth century, the nation-state continued to be the unquestioned focus of historical research. After the establishment of the state, the goal was no longer the construction of the nation-state, but its defence *"against socialist, communist and Catholic internationalism in the modern era."*[45]

Today it is generally accepted that the history-writing considered as 'objective', by Leopold von Ranke and his follower was anything but that. It took until the second half of the twentieth century, with the so-called spatial turn, for the constructed character of this biased research category to be fully exposed.

Prominent in the positivist, modernist historiographical tradition is the opposition between history on the one hand and memory or myth on the other. Also in the work of the early theorists in the memory field, such as Halbwachs and Nora, this binary opposition of memory and history has been cultivated.[46]

Today, the strict distinction between history and memory is considered to be very problematic. Halbwachs and Nora are generally considered to be influenced respectively by a belief in positivism, and thus in the objectivity of professional historiography, and by a nostalgic, conservative feeling.[47]

It is useful to make an analytical distinction, because memory is *in se* subjective and history still tries to give an objective account of what happened. Nevertheless, a strict distinction between the two, where history equals ratio and truth and memory equals myth seems now, in an era where postmodernism has shattered the ideal of an objective history, no longer valid.

Central to the discourse of Leopold von Ranke and his followers was the aim of debunking the myths that had been put forward in the Romantic period, through the method of philological source criticism.[48] Critical analysis has however exposed how nineteenth-century historians were in fact eager to *construct* myths rather than debunk them: new myths were invented to found the nation-states in a distant past. Additionally nineteenth-century historians

44 Berger and Lorenz, "National Narratives and Their 'Others': Ethnicity, Class, Religion and the Gendering of National Histories," 61.

45 Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan, and Kevin Passmore, "Preface," in *Writing National Histories: Western Europe Since 1800*, ed. Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan, and Kevin Passmore (London: Routledge, 1999), XV.

46 Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* no. 26 (April 1, 1989): 8.

47 Lorenz, "Unstuck in Time. Or: The Sudden Presence of the Past," 83.

48 Stefan Berger, "On the Role of Myths and History in the Construction of National Identity in Modern Europe," *European History Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (July 2009): 490.

would often rewrite medieval and early-modern myths and attempt to find a scientific basis for them.[49]

These myths constituted an inherent part of historiography and therefore a strict distinction between history and myths seems undesirable. Stefan Berger argues that concepts like myth and history are in fact so interlinked that a direct delineation is highly problematic.[50] Former President of the American Historical Association William H. McNeill has even characterised the nineteenth-century historiography as 'mythistory'.[51]

The highly influential book *The Invention of Tradition* by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger exposes how many traditions which appear to be very old, are in fact quite recent in origin and sometimes even fabricated.[52] Invented traditions are defined as *"'a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past."*[53]

Hobsbawm and Ranger observe that the crucial element of these invented traditions is that they are *"emotionally and symbolically charged signs of club membership rather than the statutes and objects of the club.",*[54] and they use history as an instrument to stimulate identification to a group, as the 'cement' of group cohesion.[55]

This is in tune with the well-known concept of *imagined communities,* developed by political scientist Benedict Anderson. Anderson defines the nation as an imagined political community. It is *imagined* because a nation is intrinsically too big, or has too many members, to form a real community, yet in the minds of the citizens, this entity exists.[56]

National imagined communities were needed at the beginning of the nineteenth century as the Enlightenment and the French Revolution had destroyed the legitimacy of both divine and dynastic ordering of society.[57]

49 Ibid., 493.
50 Ibid., 491.
51 William H. McNeill, "Mythistory, or Truth, Myth, History, and Historians," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 1 (February 1, 1986): 1–10.
52 E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition*, Canto Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 2012), 1.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid., 12.
55 Ibid., 11.
56 Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 1991), 6.
57 Ibid.

It is now thus well established that in the search of newly emerged nation-states for a sense of national identification and unity, history played an enormous role. The following often quoted statement of Hobsbawm describes the relationship between nation-building and historiography in a graphic yet illuminating way: *"Historians are to nationalism what poppy-growers in Pakistan are to the heroin-addicts: we supply the essential raw material."*[58]

58 E.J. Hobsbawm and David J. Kertzer, "Ethnicity and Nationalism in Europe Today," *Anthropology Today* 8, no. 1 (February 1992): 3–8.

2.2 Presentist Historicity Regime

The spatial turn – spurring reflection on the dominant spatial categories in historical research - exposed the nationalist aspect of history-writing. However, the events of the 20th century were not only challenging to the spatial research categories – also the notions of *time,* which had been dominant in modernist historiography, were now questioned.

Nineteenth-century historiography was based on the modernist belief in historical progress. For Leopold van Ranke and his heirs, it was once again Hegel who supplied them with their temporal notions. Hegel's teleological view of history, conceived as a process of continuous progression towards the realisation of the *Volk,* was highly influential for the early historians.[59] For the historians, this interpretation of history was useful for providing a historical argument, a scientific apologia for the emerging of the nation-states.

With the loss of many lives and the impact of the war behind the front, the First World War had already challenged the nineteenth-century conception of history as continuous progress. It was however the realisation of the horrors of the Second World War, interpreted by many as a consequence of nationalism, that resulted in the discourse of continuous progress no longer being accepted by the majority of historians.

These changed temporal perceptions did not only negate the modernist conception of time, but also obliged historians to acknowledge that, just as with their spatial notions, their temporal ideas are constructed, rather than naturally given. Chris Lorenz and Stefan Berger have characterised the temporal turn as the final turn in history-writing.[60] It implies that historians have to 'denaturalise' their temporal notions and have to justify them in the form of arguments.

François Hartog's analysis of a changing perception of historical time has been very influential, offering a very interesting and useful tool to compare different ways of experiencing the past. Hartog built on the work of intellectual historian Reinhardt Koselleck, who developed the concepts of *space of experience* and *horizon of expectation.* These meta-historical categories provide an analytical tool to describe how in different times, the temporal perceptions of the past, the present and the future are related. Koselleck argued that, with the

59 Berger and Lorenz, "National Narratives and Their 'Others': Ethnicity, Class, Religion and the Gendering of National Histories," 75.
60 Ibid., 59.

event of the French revolution, the distance between these two concepts was enlarged, giving birth to a historical consciousness.[61]

Hartog developed the concept of *regimes d'historicité.* A historicity regime has its own specific characteristic way of thinking and writing about the past, but also of *experiencing* the past. Hartog's definition of this concept clearly indicates this dual meaning. *"The regime of historicity […] could be understood in two ways. In a restricted sense, as the way in which a society considers its past and deals with it. In a broader sense, the 'regime of historicity' designates the 'method of self-awareness in a human community'."*[62]

With the concept of the regime of historicity, Hartog provides us with an instrument for comparing different forms of relating to time, or "*ways of being in time"*.[63] In Western historical thinking, Hartog distinguishes between three subsequent dominant historicity regimes. The first historicity regime, the classical historicity regime, is prevalent until the French revolution. The past functioned as an exemplum, an example for present and future and time was conceived in a cyclical way.[64]

The French Revolution drastically changed our conception of the past, and enlarged our horizon of expectation, as indicated by Koselleck. In the modern historicity regime, the perception of past and future is marked by a belief in continuous progress. The teleological modern historicity regime is entirely orientated towards the future; the past is conceived as historical and irreversible.[65]

In the presentist historicity regime, neither a belief in the past nor in the future is valid. The past is not over but lives on in the present. The future is unpredictable and disconnected from the present. Hartog illustrates presentism's inherent insecurity as follows: *"The past is knocking at the door, the future at the window and the present discovers that it has no floor to stand on."*[66]

Many historians perceive the collapse of the Soviet Union as the main reason for the switch to the presentist historicity regime. This event is estimated to be the most significant factor in the change towards a different perception of historical time. German scholar Aleida Assmann, one

61 Reinhardt Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (Columbia University Press, 1985).
62 François Hartog, "Time and Heritage," *Museum International* 57, no. 3 (2005): 8.
63 Ibid.
64 Lorenz, "Unstuck in Time. Or: The Sudden Presence of the Past," 75.
65 Ibid., 76.
66 François Hartog, "Time, History and the Writing of History: The Order of Time," in *History-Making*, ed. Rolf Thorstendal and Irmline Veit-Brause, n.d., 110.

of the most important contributors to the Memory Studies field, argues, that with the end of the Cold War, *"the future has lost much of its power to integrate"*.[67] As Lorenz points out, the fact that the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the sudden end of the Cold War, had not been predicted by any historian, challenged the position of the historian as the interpreter of the past and as the intermediator towards the present and the future.[68] A feeling of rupture is central to the presentist historicity regime, as a link between the past, present and future has been lost.

The catastrophic events of the twentieth century had already challenged the optimistic belief in continuous progress, and thereby the modern historicity regime. It was only at the end of the twentieth century however, with the great collapse of the future, that also the belief in the pastness of the past, an inherent part of the discipline's temporal assumptions, lost its evidential quality.[69]

The idea that the past is never 'over and done with', but is actually able to haunt the present is especially inherent in the presentist historicity regime. American historian Peter Fritzsche noted that the Balkan Wars questioned the temporal notions of modernist historiography, because it became clear that ghosts from the past could live on to haunt the present.[70]

Nora's and Hartog's analysis of presentism did not confront the catastrophic or traumatic past explicitly in their analysis of presentism. The emergence of the memory of historical trauma is however central to the presentist historicity regime. Chris Lorenz has pointed out that they are missing these important characteristics, praising Runia, Kansteiner, Chakrabarty, Bevernage, and Rosenfeld for acknowledging the importance of the historical wounds and a haunting past for the emergence of the presentist historicity regime.[71] Now the importance of trauma in memory studies is well established and the victim motive takes a central place in historical accounts.

Jay Winter, American historian at Yale University, stresses the significance of the timing for this upsurge in traumatic memory. After the Second World War, countries were in need of reconstruction, the resistance narrative was the dominant one, while the victim narrative was

67 Aleida Assmann, "Europe: A Community of Memory?," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* no. 40 (Spring 2007): 11.
68 Lorenz, "Unstuck in Time. Or: The Sudden Presence of the Past," 76.
69 Ibid., 68.
70 Peter Fritzsche, "The Case of Modern Memory," *The Journal of Modern History* 73, no. 1 (March 1, 2001): 92.
71 Lorenz, "Unstuck in Time. Or: The Sudden Presence of the Past," 80.

not at all desirable.[72] Assmann analyses how in the 1980's, the resistance narratives and the defensive strategies to forget one's own guilt began to crumble. *"After a period of extremely stylized and standardized images of the past, many European nations were finally confronting conflicting, painful and shameful memories."*[73]

Finally, as Jay Winter points out, it is not a coincidence that the recognition of post-traumatic stress disorder took place around the same time, as its formal recognition as a mental disorder occurred in 1980 and it received increasing attention in the 1980's and 1990's.[74] People who suffer from this disorder, are stuck in the past and continuously relive traumatic events. In this sense, it is remarkably similar to memory, which is also marked by a reliving of the past in the present. Just as with memory, trauma is ahistorical, present below the surface in a haunting way, ready to resurface at any time.

Another temporal assumption of the positivist historians, was the idea that a distance in time from the studied subject was fundamental in historical research, contrary to the previous idea of historians as contemporary eyewitnesses. There was a need for *'hot history to cool down',* to be able to study the long-term effects of historic events. Another, more important reason was the idea that distance in time would allow historians to avoid any kind of partisanship on their part.[75] This idea was also very prominent in the opening address of the first issue of the *Revue Historique* in 1876, which is generally considered as the birth of the historical discipline in France. It advised future collaborators to avoid contemporary controversies, so the objects would be 'cooled down'.[76]

With the realisation that a real objectivity was not possible, the passage of time was no longer deemed necessary to fade partisanship. Moreover, the presentist historicity regime turns contemporary events *immediately* into history. Hartog recalls the instantaneous museification of the Berlin Wall after its destruction as the best example for our 'musified gaze'.[77]

72 Jay M. Winter, "The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the "Memory Boom in Contemporary Historical Studies," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute* no. 27 (2000).
73 Assmann, "Europe: A Community of Memory?," 16.
74 Winter, "The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the "Memory Boom in Contemporary Historical Studies."
75 Berger and Lorenz, "National Narratives and Their 'Others': Ethnicity, Class, Religion and the Gendering of National Histories," 59.
76 François Hartog and Jacques Revel, "Note de conjoncture historiographique," in *Les usages politiques du passé*, ed. François Hartog and Jacques Revel (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2001), 13.
77 Hartog, "Time and Heritage," 14.

2.3 Contesting Memory and Collective Memory as a Vehicle for Identity

Closely connected to the emergence of presentism, is the rise of memory in historical discourse and in society. The conditions of the new historicity regime necessitates reflection on both the spatial and temporal frames of representation in historiography *and* on the discipline's political entanglements.[78] The emergence of memory thus contributed to a growing awareness of the constructed nature of subjectivity. Historians were forced to reflect on their own seemingly natural conceptions of time. In the nineteenth and a big part of the twentieth century, history and memory were jointly conceived in the national narratives. However, the representational turn had produced a new sensitivity towards class, race and gender. This resulted into a diversification of the spectrum of historiography, and even led to the emergence of sub-disciplines such as Black History and Women's History. It is with the dissemination of the histories that had previously been repressed, that sub-national perspectives emerged.

Both Nora and Hartog argue that the transfer from the modern to the presentist historicity regime is connected to the demise of the nation-state.[79] It is not surprising that is has been precisely memory, that has undermined the national histories. The emerging of memory brought a lot of new stories to the surface, that were in fact contesting the master narratives which had until the second half of the twentieth century been dominant. So rather than a conceptual critique on the modernist temporal ideas, the rise of the presentist historicity regime in the first place constituted a new reality – where memory is the new key concept, many even speak even of a 'Memory Boom'.

French Historian Pierre Nora was the first scholar to signal and theorise the growing importance of memory. Nora edited the substantial series, entitled *Lieux de mémoire*, published from 1984 to 1992. This seven-volume series contains contributions from more than one hundred leading French scholars, constructing an inventory about memory in the French national context. The series was very influential and it inspired similar publications in other

78 Lorenz, “Unstuck in Time. Or: The Sudden Presence of the Past,” 69–70.

79 .Berger and Lorenz, “National Narratives and Their ‘Others’: Ethnicity, Class, Religion and the Gendering of National Histories,” 62.

countries, including Germany, Italy and Russia.

In the introduction to the *Lieux de mémoire* series, Pierre Nora comments on the reasons of the upsurge in memory. Nora states there has been a rupture in our relationship to the past and that nowadays we are depending on 'places of memory' to establish a connection to our past.

Rather than giving a precise date, Nora links the phenomenon to changes in nineteenth-century society, above all the disappearance of peasant culture, that have lead to the dissolution of the so-called '*milieux de mémoires*'. Our lives used to be filled with "*the warmth of tradition, in the silence of the custom, in the repetition of the ancestral."*[80] However, societies that for a long time had assured the conservation and transmission of certain traditions and values do not function as such any longer.[81]

According to Nora, in contemporary society we no longer have such a relationship to the past, and this loss, perhaps paradoxically, awakened a historiographical consciousness. In this context, a historical sensibility emerged, institutionalised with the birth of modern historiography. For Nora, "*Memory is life, borne by living societies, founded in its name. It remains on permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer."*[82]

Characteristic for - and according to Nora the most tangible sign of - the split of history and memory is the recent interest in the history of historiography.[83] Although Nora has been criticised for being motivated by a conservative, nostalgic and even nationalist sentiment, his contribution to the field of *Memory Studies* is profound.

Some scholars have pointed out that the emergence of memory was also triggered by different factors. American historian Jay Winter, who pioneered the concept of a Memory Boom, argues that the reasons for the emergence of memory are eclectic; each of the incitements to reflect on memory have their own inner logic and are multiplicative rather than additive.[84]

For instance, Winter states that advancements in audiovisual techniques providing the

80 Nora, "Between Memory and History," 7.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid., 8.
83 Ibid., 9.
84 Winter, "The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the "Memory Boom in Contemporary Historical Studies."

Memory Boom with the necessary medium, were crucial. Yet, for Winter, it was especially the rise in university-trained people which led to a growing demand for cultural commodities, that was an essential factor.[85] Winter cites economic historian Alan Milward, who stressed the financial dimension of the Memory Boom. Milward pointed out that the Memory Boom has happened partly because both the public and the state have the disposable income to pay for it. He has called the media the 'hypermarket outlet' for the consumption of memory.[86]

Now that the future had lost its power to integrate, people were increasingly turning to the past to form their present identities.[87] The scholarship of the theorists of nationalism had exposed the capacity of a communal past to form a shared identity. It is thus not surprising that the role of collective memory in the creation of a shared identity and social cohesion became a very hotly debated subject in politics. In fact next to memory, identity quickly became the other key concept in the social sciences of the 1990's.

The concept of *collective* memory was first developed by sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in 1925. In *The Social Framework of Memory,* Halbwachs argued against Sigmund Freud, stating that memory was an intrinsically *social* phenomenon.[88] He insisted that no memory could be possible outside shared social frames. The analysis of Halbwachs became very influential, even if the scholarly boom of the concept of collective memory did not happen until the late 1980's.

In the presentist historicity regime, different groups were looking at the past to stimulate either their cohesion or their acknowledgement. Their interpretation of history is deeply influenced by contemporary causes and needs, it *"clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes."*[89] Different groups make use of the premises of the presentist historicity regime to enlist the past for their present causes, to selectively use the past as a resource of the present.

The realisation that official historiography had for a long time silenced many voices, created a platform for these voices to be heard. The Memory Boom thus has a 'democratic side': it created a space for stories that were repressed by the master narratives of the nation-states.

85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Assmann, "Europe: A Community of Memory?," 11.
88 Maurice Halbwachs, *Les Cadres Sociaux de La Mémoire*, Travaux de L'année Sociologique (Paris: Alcan, 1923).
89 David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1998), XV.

The histories of people who possessed "*reserves of memory but little or no historical capital"*,[90] were now integrated into the historical narrative. The rise of memory in historical discourse meant the inclusion of the stories of those individuals, whose experiences were not mentioned in the institutionalised memory of the state. As the master narratives and their accounts of national heroes are negated, the perspective of the victim and the witness emerged. The switch of historicity regime, now convinced of the presentness of the past, means that their claims are still valid for the present, providing them with entitlement, recognition and even compensation. The temporal notions of the presentist historicity regime enable unheard voices from the past to demand their place in historical accounts and demand recognition of the repercussions in the present. A significant example is the *Madres de Cinco Mayo,* who purposefully use the conditions of the presentist time regime, to address past injustice in the present, as Berber Bevernage and Koen Aerts have observed.[91]

Aleida Assmann has pointed out that this emancipatory process developed both in post-colonial countries as well as within the nation-states themselves, through a process of *"interior decolonization"*.[92]

Significant is the fact that a lot of the memory that rose to the surface is characterised by trauma. This is in no way wondrous, given that the Memory Boom focuses on those people who were in the past in a subjugated position. Significantly, the memory of the Holocaust was a defining factor in the emergence of memory as an important topic in cultural studies, or, in the words of Pierre Nora, "*Whoever says memory, says Shoah*."[93] The memory of the Holocaust, called the 'Ur'memory, is still the primary, archetypical topic in memory studies.

The field of oral history, which had developed a theory and practice for the interviewing of people about the past, played a crucial role in the appearance of these testimonies. The advancements in technology provided the necessary conditions for the new methodology, first in the development of audiovisual techniques, while now the possibilities of the internet and social media have revolutionised their scope. In fact, many initiatives are now *crowdsourcing memory,* asking a large group of people to give their personal account of history and communicate their personal memories on online platforms. A notable example is *The*

90 Nora, "Between Memory and History," 7.
91 Berber Bevernage and Koen Aerts, "Haunting Pasts: Time and Historicity as Constructed by the Argentine Madres de Plaza de Mayo and Radical Flemish Nationalists," *Social History* 34, no. 4 (n.d.): 391–408.
92 Assmann, "Europe: A Community of Memory?," 11.
93 Nora, Cited in Winter, "The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the "Memory Boom" in Contemporary Historical Studies.".

Singapore Memory Project, which collected over 200.000 'memories' of Singapore's individual people and associations on an online platform. A volunteer group called the *Memory Corps* assists people in the documenting of the memory if needed.[94]

The *Europeana* project, on the other hand, is active in the crowdsourcing of *European* memory. *Europeana* started as an initiative to digitalise the collections of libraries, archives and museums across Europe, but has recently also launched collecting initiatives. The 1914-1918 is the most developed project: since 2011, twenty-five so-called Road Shows have been held across Europe, to collect personal stories, memories and objects related to the Great War, at the front, but also behind the front lines.[95]

Steffie de Jong observes that what Jan Assmann has called communicative memory (i.e. the everyday communication between members of a memorial community) has been transferred to the sphere of what he named cultural memory, a ritualised memory.[96]

Contrary to the idea of a 'haunting past', presentism is to the same extent marked by a feeling of loss of the past. The deconstruction of the master narratives of the nation, the fragmented nature of memory and finally, the feeling of the acceleration of time all contribute to the fact that presentism is inherently insecure of itself and its relation to the past. This fear manifests itself in the idea that everything has to be preserved and archived for the future.[97] A fear of forgetting instils people with a sense of duty to testify about the experiences lived as a witness of historical events. Enormous archives are being formed, and technological advancements make the past more accessible than ever. Yet, the practice of storing next to *everything* does not tackle the problem of fragmentation. It produces an all-encompassing, but in no way methodological, memory of the past.[98] Yet, as I will argue, these diverging memories were quickly enlisted in official narratives of collective memory.

The valourisation of memory has advanced the breakdown of the grand narratives and the associated fragmentation is a fundamental concern of both historians and governments, who are trying to define the historical identity of the nation. The postmodern idea that no account

94 "Singapore Memory," accessed May 6, 2013, http://www.singaporememory.sg/clusters.
95 "Europeana 1914-1918 Roadshow," *Faro*, accessed March 1, 2013, http://www.faronet.be/kalender/europeana-1914-1918-roadshow.
96 Steffi de Jong, "Is This Us? The Construction of European Woman/Man in the Exhibition It's Our History!," *Culture Unbound* 3, no. 24 (2011): 374.
97 Hartog, "Time and Heritage," 12.
98 Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche, "Introduction: Noises of the Past," in *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture*, ed. Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (University of Illinois Press, 2002), 1.

of history could be really objective resulted in a high degree of relativism; memory is essentially a construction and it produces fragmented accounts of history.

The concept of *collective* memory then is in a sense a way to deal with the relativism – since it replaced the monolithic national histories with a much more varied, but still inclusive account of history. Many have argued that the 1990's are marked by a 'Back to the Nation' movement. Such claims should however be nuanced, as many groups were forming their identity through the contemporary enlisting of the past. Rather than being the only one, the national identity surge is the *dominant one,* thanks to its institutional power.

With the acknowledgement of exactly how important the existence of a collective memory is in the feeling of belonging to a certain group, it is not surprising that the nation-states were turning their attention more than ever to history in their policies.

The *domesticating of the past*, to use Lowenthal's apt phrasing, was indeed mostly done by the nation-states, memory continues to be institutionalised in places where public remembrance is practiced. Jay Winter's definition of public remembrance shows that it cannot escape its political framework, "*State-sponsored commemoration is a politically sanctioned and politically funded rite of remembering in public, adjusted to a publicly or politically approved narrative."*[99]

Emblematic for the current commemorative society is the rise of the importance of heritage in the cultural discourse of the nation-states and in their practice. Heritage is not something new, in fact the birth of the modern heritage discourse took place in the 18th century.[100] Yet even though heritage has historical roots, Hartog indicated that the *"contemporary surge of heritage is distinguished from earlier movements by the rapidity of its expansions, the multiplicity of its expressions and its highly presentist nature."*[101] It has even grown to *"a scale that reaches the limit of what could be 'everything is heritage'."*[102]

This aspect is very much connected to the perception of rupture and acceleration of the past in the presentist historicity regime. As Hartog analyses, *"Heritage has never thrived on continuity but on the contrary from ruptures and questioning the order of time, with the*

99 Winter, "The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the "Memory Boom in Contemporary Historical Studies."

100 David C. Harvey, "The History of Heritage," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian J. Graham and Peter Howard (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2008), 25.

101 Hartog, "Time and Heritage," 16.

102 Ibid., 12.

interplay of absence and presence, visibility and invisibility that has marked and guided the incessant and ever-changing ways of producing semaphore"[103]

In the presentist historicity regime, heritage is more significant than ever. David Lowenthal, one of the leading figures in the heritage debate, characterises the omnipresence of heritage as follows: *"All at once heritage is everywhere – in the news, in the movies, in the marketplace – in everything from galaxies to genes. It is the chief focus of patriotism and a prime lure of tourism."*[104] Moreover, Lowenthal indicates the two main players in the heritage field: the tourism industry, looking at heritage from an economical perspective and the nation-state, wanting to appropriate heritage for political reasons. This last aspect is even more emphatically states in the following assertion *"To neglect heritage is a cardinal sin, to invoke it a national duty."*[105]

Heritage can however be manipulated easily, as it is a *"dynamic and negotiable process, subject to contestation and malleable to the needs of societies and cultures in the present."*[106]

The current relationship of the nation-states with history is very much marked by the presentist nature of current historicity regime, characterised by an *immediate* understanding of history, as is illustrated by numerous memorials. The governments of the nation-states feel threatened by the loss of the master narratives, European integration and globalisation, immigration and multicultural societies. Some governmental officials fear that the nations have lost their roots and turn towards the past – which is presented in a presentist way - to 'reconstruct' a national identity.

The case of the Netherlands is representative of the general processes in many European countries. Research revealed that general knowledge of Dutch history was poor amongst students. Changes to the schooling system, with less emphasis on informing the pupils about the national history, had created a generation without an encompassing knowledge of Dutch history and little affinity with the history of the Netherlands.

In 2004, the idea of the necessity to define a historical canon emerged. A *cultural* canon denotes all those intellectual and artistic representations that form the frame of reference of a shared culture; the Western canon has been one of the most influential of its kind, although it

103Ibid., 15.
104Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, XIII.
105Ibid.
106Sarah McDowell, "Heritage, Memory and Identity," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian J. Graham and Peter Howard (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2008), 50.

has been challenged since the 1960's, by critical postmodern thought. The *historical* canon is thus the historical equivalent of a cultural canon. In the Netherlands, the establishing of a historical canon was deemed necessary to fight the deficit of shared cultural identity.[107]

A special committee, led by Frits van Oostrom, was assembled to define which events and processes had defined Dutch history. In October 2006 the *Canon of Dutch History* was presented, a list of fifty topics, compiled to single out the most important events and phenomena in Dutch history, in a chronological way.[108] In 2008, the revised version was established by the Dutch government and introduced to the school curriculum by most primary schools.

Simultaneously, in 2007, the Wetenschappelijk Raad voor Wetenschapsbeleid published a report, "Identificatie met Nederland" suggesting measures to enhance the connection of Dutch citizens with the Netherlands, in a study of what constitutes the identity of a Dutchman. Princess Maxima's sceptical reaction that over the years, she had not met one single Dutchman but a multiplicity of Dutchmen, was met with intense criticism.[109]

Nonetheless, the *Canon of Dutch History* was not without controversy in the Netherlands, especially in those regions which felt underrepresented in the *Canon*. They reacted by creating their own, regional historical canons.[110] Some critics have also commented that the Dutch canon puts forward a much too positive account of Dutch History. Historian Chris van der Heijden has recently published *Het Zwart Canon,* the Black Canon, speaking of the dark sides in Dutch history.[111]

Also the Danish governments have set up the initiatives to define the nation's historical canon. The link with the new historicity regime is clear: the historical canons do not investigate the past in a critical or analytical way, but instead look for an immediate *experiencing* of the past. Significantly, the website of the Dutch Canon has been named *entoen.nu* (andthen.now). The past is relevant only for its relation to the present – to form the present identity and to contribute to the national cohesion.

As indicated, the case of the Netherlands is representative of several European countries, such

107Huistra and Molema, "In de Steigers: Het Huis Voor de Europese Geschiedenis," 314.
108"entoen.nu - De Canon van Nederland," accessed January 4, 2013, http://www.entoen.nu/en.
109"Máxima Houdt Toespraak over Nederlandse Identiteit (2007)," *Nederlandse Omroep Stichting*, accessed July 15, 2013, http://nos.nl/koningshuis/video/261135-maxima-houdt-toespraak-over-nederlandse-identiteit-2007.html.
110"Regiocanons.nl," accessed July 3, 2013, http://www.regiocanons.nl/.
111Chris van der Heijden, *Zwarte Canon. Over de Schaduwzijde van de Geschiedenis* (Atlas Contact, 2013).

as Denmark, Poland and Austria, where the general feeling that a framework for a national identity had to be defined and that can defend national cultural histories and traditions, threatened by globalisation and immigration.

Thus, it seems that no less than in the nineteenth century, states are involved with what Ifversen and Kølvraa have called *history politics*, offering a temporal meaning to the national community, by the practising *of history* – whether this is in schools, in museums, through monuments or any other commemorative practices.[112]

112Jan Ifversen and Christoffer Kølvraa, "Myth and History Politics in European Integration - The Myth of the Fathers," 2011, 1.

3. National History Museums in Past and Present

Recent scholarship on the nation-building aspect of nineteenth and twentieth-century history-writing, has put national museums at the centre of academic interest. Their close ties with the state makes the national museums the main locus to represent the dominant institutional and symbolic memory. This third chapter will reflect on the function national museums have had within the nation-states, from their emergence in the early nineteenth century to our present day.

In this thesis I explore the function of *history* museums. It is however important to note, that what we call a national history museum today, would in the nineteenth century have been called a national museum, as distinct institutions called *history* museums did not exist. Yet, in many of the national museums, which had mostly ethnographic, archaeological and artistic collections, the approach was definitely historical. Even in the national art galleries and the natural history museums, which also emerged in the nineteenth century, the historicist approach was dominant.[113] Later, many of the national museums with a distinct historical approach have been renamed to national history museums, to distinguish them from other types of national museum, such as art museums. Therefore, in this thesis the museums with a historical approach have been called *national history museums,* as has been done by Ilaria Porciani, even if this designation might be slightly problematic.[114]

It has proven to be rather difficult to give one definition for national museums, especially because of their wide variety. Yet, the EuNaMus research project has developed a broadly adequate definition for national museums: *"those institutions, collections, and displays claiming, negotiating, articulating and representing dominant national values, myths and realities. They are [...] historic and contemporary processes of institutionalized negotiations of what values will constitute the basis for national communities and for dynamic state-formations."*[115]

113Peter Aronsson, "National Museums Negotiating National Identity," in *National Identity and Hegemonic Memory* (presented at the 21st International Congress of Historical Science, Amsterdam, 2010), 3.

114Ilaria Porciani, "Nations on Display: History Museums in Europe," in *Setting the Standards: Institutions, Networks and Communities of National Historiography*, ed. Ilaria Porciani and Jo Tollebeek (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 134.

115Peter Aronsson and Gabriella Elgenius, "Making National Museums in Europe - A Comparative Approach," in *EuNaMus Report No. 1 - Building National Museums in Europe 1750-2010*, vol. 64, Linköping Electronic

Given current interest in the representation of the past and related identity-formation, it is not surprising that research on the topic of national history museums has boomed. The European Science Foundation's research program *Representations of the Past: The Writing of National Histories in Europe*, which ran between 2003 and 2008, promoted research on the representation of national histories from a comparative, transnational perspective. This led to a range of books, which discuss the ways in which national histories were represented in the nineteenth and twentieth century, edited by notable historians such as Stefan Berger, Chris Lorenz, Ilaria Porciani, Jo Tollebeek and others.[116]

The EuNaMus project was another very interesting initiative, because the programme focussed on museums specifically. For this three-year research project, funded under the seventh Framework Programme of the EC, a series of conferences was organised, bringing together scholars and museum professionals from across Europe. The conference reports, which are freely accessible online, have built up an impressive scholarship on European national museums, facilitating for the first time a far-reaching comparative, transnational approach.[117] I attended their final conference, entitled *The Cultural Force of National Museums: Debating National Museums, History and European Cohesion*, in Budapest in December 2012.

Being institutions with a long lifespan and a stabilising function, national history museums can be considered a conservative force. History museums however also represent current historical scholarship. One could even say that history museums do not represent history itself, they instead showcase the way we interpret history, the collection of interpretations of the past at a certain time and at a specific place.

Luis Gerardo Morales Moreno, Mexican historian and museologist, indeed argues that *"history museums represent historiography, that is, not only the events that happened but also the narratives and communicational practices (rites, objectivized grammar, scenarios*)."[118]

Therefore, history museums do not only represent the past, but reflect certain paradigms in

Conference Proceedings (presented at the European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen, Bologna: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2011), 5.

116"Representations of the Past: The Writing of National Histories in Europe," *European Science Foundation*, accessed April 4, 2013, http://www.uni-leipzig.de/zhsesf/.

117"Publications," *European National Museums - EuNaMus*, accessed April 4, 2013, http://www.eunamus.eu/outcomes.html.

118Luis Gerardo Morales Moreno, "The Crisis of History Museums," vol. 35, ICOFOM Study Series (presented at the Museology - A Field of Knowledge. Museology and History, Córdoba, Argentina, 2006), 84.

historical thinking as well. In particular, altering historicity regimes, or dominant perceptions of historical time, have a significant impact on museal representation. National history museums have implemented significant changes in the second half of the twentieth century, incorporating new views towards national history and its representation.

In this chapter I will link the characteristic features of the national history museums with the historiography of their time, and in particular with their particular perception of time. I have conceived this chapter in a comparative way, distinguishing national history museums from the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century on the one hand, those from the second half of the twentieth century, followed by the post-Memory Boom era, on the other. This third chapter attempts to examine specifically how national museums have approached national identity and social cohesion in the past and present.

In the first subchapter I will examine why museums are important instruments in imposing order on society. I will also look at *history* museums specifically, in this respect. For this subchapter the work of Michel Foucault, Douglas Crimp and Tony Bennett are of special importance.

In the second subchapter I will give a short overview of the emergence of national history museums in Europe and examine how their collections were created. I will analyse in what ways the national history museums have contributed to the consolidation and legitimacy of the modern nation-state. For this subchapter, the work of Porciani and Anderson is paramount.

Finally, I shall examine how history museums have changed when they internalised the new insights in historiography. The postmodern turn in the 1960's and 1970's and the New Museology movement transformed many museums into more reflective institutions, radically redirected towards the visitor. From the 1990's onwards, the emergence of memory had a great impact on history museums, making them incorporate previously silent voices and devoting increasing space to conflicting memories, thereby deconstructing a previously teleological story. Conversely, revelations of a more contemporary *reliving* of the past, can itself be easily manipulated. This was quickly appreciated by many nation-states, as it enabled a rather essentialist interpretation of history, motivated from the present. For this third subchapter, the scholarship of Max Ross, Wolfram Kaiser and Steffi de Jong was of the highest importance.

3.1 Museum as Powerful Agents

After the dissolution of the *Ancien Régime*, the new states that emerged needed public institutions engaging with the organisation of modern society. American art historian Douglas Crimp has argued that Foucault's analysis of the prison, the asylum and the hospital as places of confinement, as core institutions in the articulation of power, should be applied to the art museum as well.[119] In "Of other Spaces", Michel Foucault indeed called the museum a *heterotopia*, a space that attempts to represent, convert and invent cultural structure.[120]

Australian sociologist Tony Bennett was one of the first scholars to analyse the creation and nature of the modern, public museum. He indicated that Crimp's claim was too restricted, for Crimp only considered the art museum, while this category emerged among a much wider range of museal institutions.[121] Additionally, Bennett observed that Crimp's analysis of an art museum as a place of confinement is somewhat curious, as it seems to imply that art had previously been free and accessible, before it was set behind closed doors and pushed into a certain narrative.[122]

In fact, for Bennett, it is exactly the *opening up* of museums, which characterises them as modern institutions. The previously restricted and socially exclusive cultural spheres became public; at the beginning of the nineteenth century, objects were transferred from private domains to public arenas.[123]

While avoiding reducing the complex factors involved to a single issue, Bennett does acknowledge the role of public museums in the organisation of modern society. In fact, Bennett draws a parallel with Foucault's analysis of the incarceration system. Bennett states that even if prisons and museums are very different in nature, they were both created to manage problems with order, transforming general norms of societal behaviour.[124] Significantly, Bennett has defined museums as instruments to "*organize a voluntarily self-regulating citizenry".*[125]After Bennett, many have internalised his concept of the organisational intention of the public museum.

119Douglas Crimp, *On the Museumas Ruins* (MIT Press, 1993), 48.
120Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (April 1, 1986): 26.
121Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (Routledge, 1995), 59.
122Ibid.
123Ibid., 61.
124Ibid., 62.
125Ibid., 63.

Museums are considered to be particularly interesting because of their *performative* power, both *describing* a certain condition and *recreating* it.[126] Jay Winter defines the performative as an act that *"rehearses and recharges the emotion which gave the initial memory or story imbedded in it its sticking power, its resistance to erasure or oblivion."*[127] Rob van der Laarse, Dutch historian and heritage specialist, has described museal installations as performative *décors.*[128]

Van der Laarse characterised history museums specifically as *theatres of memory.*[129] German historian Michael Werner defines history museums as places of conservation and representation of the past, with a political mission for the present and the future.[130] Historical museums are the loci where the institutionalised memory of the state is represented and by doing this, they make clear aspirations for the state's present and future constellation. As Fiona McLean suggests, museums are probably the most fertile heritage arena in which to stimulate the forging of an identity.[131] History museums have been, and still are, extremely important institutions for the task of interpreting and communicating of historical knowledge and conveying it to the public. They reach a bigger audience than any history books or academic publications.[132] Yet, it is especially the ability of history museums to make the past tangible and to trigger an emotional response that makes them such influential institutions.

Museums are always biased, not only due to their political mandate but by their very nature. Ilaria Porciani points out that the fact that a museum communicates through objects and images, which are *in se* not likely to highlight historical nuances. Additionally, it encourages visitors to approach the narrative in an emotional way rather than a critical one.[133] This observation suggests that the representation of the 'historical truth' in museums is very hard to achieve; even more than in historiography itself, the constructed character of the history presented in museums is evident.

126Jay M. Winter, "The Performance of the Past: Memory, History, Identity," in *Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe*, ed. Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree, and Jay M. Winter (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 11.

127Ibid., 12.

128Rob van der Laarse, "Erfgoed En de Constructie van Vroeger," in *Bezeten van Vroeger. Erfgoed, Identiteit En Musealisering* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 2005), 17.

129Ibid.

130Michael Werner, "Deux nouvelles mises en scène de la nation allemande. Les expériences du Deutsches Historisches Museum (Berlin) et du Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Bonn)," in *Les usages politiques du passé*, ed. François Hartog and Jacques Revel (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 2001), 77.

131Fiona McLean, "Museums and the Representation of Identity," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Brian J. Graham and Peter Howard (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2008), 283.

132Porciani, "Nations on Display: History Museums in Europe," 132.

133Ibid., 131.

3.2 Nineteenth-Century History Museums - Legitimisation and Consolidation

As we have seen in the second chapter, in the nineteenth century historians provided the nation-states with a scientific apologia. Given our understanding of the contribution of national histories to the consolidation of the nation-state in the nineteenth century, national history museums are particularly interesting institutions because they have played a crucial role in the public reception of the national master narratives. They were therefore essential instruments in the consolidation of *imagined communities*. Understanding the performative quality of museums, it is not surprising that national history museums have been a primary instrument in the legitimisation and consolidation of the young nation-states and that national history museums were created with frenzy across Europe. In fact, Ilaria Porciani, historian at the Università di Bologna and specialist in the museal representation of the nation-state has called national history museums the "*crucial workshops for the construction of the historical master narratives"*.[134]

Emergence of National History Museums

At the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, the first national history museums appeared. In a way these museums retained the traditions of the antiquarians, who had already been collecting objects earlier in the eighteenth century. However, something significant had changed, as there was now an authentic concern with history, as an historicist attribution was given to the collections.[135]

Ilaria Porciani connects the appearance of the first national history museum with revolutionary France. In Paris, profound changes were made to the existent military museums. Collections of weapons from the *Ancien Régime* were reinterpreted as national collections from 1794 onwards. They were presented in what under Napoleon would become the Musée de l'Artillerie.[136]

Soon a second type of national history museum emerged, which Porciani has called the

134Ibid., 132.
135Ibid., 136.
136Ibid., 134.

Kulturnation museum. It represented the founding myths and origins of the nation, stressing its distant past and continuity to the present.[137] The Musée des Monuments français, founded in 1795 to secure the preservation of monuments, promoted the idea that there were roots and continuity of distinct Frenchness.[138]

At the return of monarchy, with the Bourbon Restoration, the Musée des Monuments français was closed down in 1816, because it focused on the period of the Middle Ages rather than on monarchic France. However, a new museum to represent the nation's past, the Musée de Cluny, was established just a couple of years later. Here, objects were shown in their context of use, providing the audience with a visual story of the life of France's past. Porciani argues that this museum was the visual counterpart to the historical novel.[139]

The French model of the *Kulturnation* museum was quickly adopted by the other nation-states. In the young Helvetic Republic, a similar museum opened in 1798. In Bulgaria, a national history museum was created immediately after independence. Also in Greece, only a couple of decades after the independence, a national museum was founded. Historian Peter Aronsson noted that national history museums were established in Pest, Hungary (1807), Graz, Austria (1811), Prague, Czechoslovakia (1818), Copenhagen, Denmark (1819) and Saint-Petersburg, Russia (1817 and 1821).[140]

In some states, like Finland and Norway, national history museums were founded even before state sovereignty was a fact and were used as an argument for the necessity of sovereignty.[141] Here, the initiatives of private individuals and associations were decisive, as it was often aristocrats and great landowners who played a critical role.[142]

It can be said that the urge to found national history museums was a pan-European phenomenon. By the end of the nineteenth century, the national history museum was a common in feature in almost every European capital. In the decades after 1870, national history museums sprouted throughout the world; a global boom occurred due to colonialism and the rise in international relations.[143]

Even if national history museums were emerging all over Europe, their scope and character differed significantly, depending on the national context. Swedish historian Peter Aronsson

137Ibid.
138Ibid.
139Ibid., 135.
140Aronsson, “National Museums Negotiating National Identity,” 2.
141Ibid.
142Porciani, “Nations on Display: History Museums in Europe,” 135.
143Aronsson, “National Museums Negotiating National Identity,” 2.

summarises the main factors which determined the nature of the museums: the character of the events connected with the establishment of an independent state; the relationship between the state and the nation, the space for academic and civil influence in the negotiations and finally the challenges faced from external and internal enemies.[144]

National history museums were very much dictated by their national context, in particular by the agents shaping the national museums and the societal groups that contributed to the collections. Still, most of the national history museums had many common characteristics, and this thesis is not the place to give the full scope of the history of national history museums, but rather to focus on their aims. Indeed, even though national history museums were very depending on the differing national contexts, they were fairly similar in their goals.

For what Purpose and in what Manner were National History Museums founded?

The breakthrough of empiricism, the emergence of the public sphere, the expanding of culturalisation and secularisation were all necessary conditions for the reception and authority of museums.[145] At the same time they were also the reason for their necessity. The national historical museums were a necessary instrument in the consolidation of the nation-state. The radical break in society, with the end of the *Ancien Régime*, meant that countries were now based on national citizenship instead of an absolutist ruling. In other words, the new nation-states were to a certain extent dependant on public support or at least public identification with the nation-state.

As Morales Moreno points out, rather than transmitting scientific and aesthetic models, a museum operates as a space of sociability. National history museums were thus founded to build modern national sociabilities, by symbolising the unity of the state.[146] They were conceived to contribute to the consolidation of new hegemonic identities,[147] by displaying what Aronsson has called *orchestrated hegemony*'.[148]

National history museums were crucial for the formation of these new imagined communities. Aronsson has argued that the European nation-states *moulded themselves* through the museums, as they benchmarked their achievements there.[149] It is now generally acknowledged

144Ibid.
145Ibid., 3 and 5.
146Morales Moreno, "The Crisis of History Museums," 84.
147Aronsson, "National Museums Negotiating National Identity," 1.
148Ibid., 3.
149Peter Aronsson, "Reflections on Policy Relevance and Research in EuNaMus, 'European National Museums: Identity Politics, Uses of the Past and the European Citizen'," in *EuNaMus Report No. 9 - Entering the*

that the process of curating is an unavoidably, even intentionally, biased practice. Objects are taking out of their original circulation and the museums places them in a different logic, where they are assigned a unique or typical value, that represents a certain phenomenon or event.[150]

A large percentage of the collections of national history museums were donated by groups and associations, who wanted to prove their commitment to the newly established nation-states. They provided the museums with objects, through gifts, endowments and collecting endeavours.[151] But it was mostly the appropriation of the old cultural capital and its redefinition to national heritage, that constituted the collections. Royal collections, for instance, were reinterpreted *"as national rather than dynastic legacy."*[152] The material basis for the new museums was thus made available through the transformation of earlier royal, aristocratic and scientific collections.[153] In many cases, ecclesiastical collections were also redefined as national heritage.[154]

The historical narratives promoted by nineteenth-century historiographers and those presented in national history museums were quite similar. The temporal assumptions of the positivists were also reflected in the museums. The national history museums presented a chronological story, deeply influenced by the logic of historicity and the idea of historical development. The belief in continuous progress and evolution were prominent.[155]

The teleological narrative that was inherent in nineteenth-century historiography was thus also dominant in the historical museums. Described as 'backtelling' by Tony Bennett, it was an integral part of the nineteenth-century museums' narrative machinery.[156] In a museum or an exhibition, the spatial component also plays a key role. Visitors are guided along a prescribed path, rather than being encouraged to discover their own route. This determines the order in which the historical narrative is perceived, and contribution to the conveying of a very linear, modernist interpretation of history.[157]

Minefields: The Creation of New History Museums in Europe, vol. 83, Linköping Electronic Conference Proceedings (presented at the European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen, Brussels: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012), 26.

150 Aronsson, "National Museums Negotiating National Identity," 4.

151 Ibid., 1.

152 Ibid., 2.

153 Ibid., 1.

154 It was of course very dependent on the country, Porciani indicates that in France and Italy the building of a museal national narrative was done more through the artistic heritage.

155 Aronsson, "National Museums Negotiating National Identity," 3.

156 Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 179–181.

157 Christine Cadot, "Can Museums Help Build a European Memory? The Example of the Musée de l'Europe in Brussels and in the Light of the 'New World' Museums' Experience," *International Journal of Politics,*

It was crucial that a link to a nation's early roots was made, in order to make an argument for the nation-state as a essentialist community, based on the continuity of its roots in the present. It has now been acknowledged that in nineteenth-century positivist history, myths were an inherent part of their narratives, this was however even more the case in the national history museums. While history as a professional discipline only considered political history, in museums a much wider scope of enquiry was undertaken.[158] The mythical side prevailed especially in the museums, as national myths and heroic figures were a central part of their narrative. Museums were supposed to aid in the visualisation of these national mythologies.

More than in historical writing, the museum's emotional appeal was of central concern. They profoundly affected the visitor emotions, which was crucial for the emergence of a *historical sensibility.*[159] When coming into contact with authentic historical objects – visitors could feel the sensation which Johan Huizinga has described as the 'historical sensation' which is evoked by the feeling of an immediate contact to the past.[160]

In museums, often the emotional response was evoked by the uniqueness of the objects, which gave it the status of a sacred relic. Yet Tollebeek and Verschaffel have observed that for Huizinga it was mostly relatively insignificant objects that evoke this sentiment.[161]This is what differentiates the historical museum from the art museum, which depends on the aesthetic appeal of the exhibited objects.

For the emotional response, the feeling of *experiencing the past,* was crucial. It is thus interesting to note that museums have always had a very different logic, than what was inherent in the positivist, hermeneutic historiographical approach. In fact, to a certain extent, they have always been quite close to our current way of relating to the past, in our attempts to *relive* it. Yet, it is important to emphasise that in the nineteenth-century museum, the temporal ideas of the modern historicity regime were dominant. Also the 'everyday' objects were contextualised, historicised and put into a logic of linear, historical progress.

Culture and Society 23, no. 2 (April 2012): 131.

158Aronsson, “National Museums Negotiating National Identity,” 3.

159Porciani, “Nations on Display: History Museums in Europe,” 134.

160F. R. Ankersmit, *De Historische ervaring: rede* (Historische Uitgeverij, 1993), 11.

161F. R. Ankersmit, *De Historische ervaring: rede* (Historische Uitgeverij, 1993), 13.

3.2 National History Museums from the 1970's Onwards

Even though, as Morales Moreno observed, history museums cannot be rewritten as fast as history books, and therefore "*the gap between contemporary historiography and history museums is becoming broader*",[162] a significant change was apparent in the museological presentations of history museums from the 1970's onwards.

Well into the twentieth century, the nineteenth-century museum model continued to be dominant. In 1934, the Conférence international d'experts pour l'etude des problèmes de muséographie générale was held in Madrid. It was organised by the International Museum Office, the main international organisation for museums before ICOM was founded in 1946. The conference re-affirmed the traditional, fundamental values of the classic, nineteenth-century museum, as are described in the last subchapter.[163]

In the late 1960's and in the 1970's however, the situation began to change; many museum professionals now refuted the old construct of history museums. They wanted museums to open up, to reach more diverse audiences and shed their exclusive and elitist nature by focussing on the visitor rather than on their collections and by changing the function of the curators.[164] Heritage specialist Fiona McLean argued that *"the museum has shifted from the continuity of 'Tradition' to facing its responsibilities in an era of 'Translation'."*[165] Museologist Max Ross, following sociologist Bauman, called this a passage from the museum professional as a *legislator* to an *interpreter* of culture.[166] In general, the authoritative position of the curator as custodian of history and culture was deliberately diminished and museums were actively looking for ways to engage with society.

The movement that brought these new trends together has been called 'New Museology'. In 1971, at ICOM's General Conference in Paris, an active role for museums and responsiveness to questions in society was propagated, the first resolution agreed upon being "The Museum in the Service of Man".[167] In 1985, the International Council of Museums launched MINOM,

162Morales Moreno, "The Crisis of History Museums," 84.
163Peter van Mensch, "Nieuwe Museologie. Identiteit of Erfgoed?," in *Bezeten van Vroeger. Erfgoed, Identiteit En Musealisering* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 2005), 176.
164Max Ross, "Interpreting the New Museology," *Museum and Society* 2, no. 2 (July 2004): 84.
165McLean, "Museums and the Representation of Identity," 284.
166Ross, "Interpreting the New Museology," 85.
167"Grenoble 1971," *ICOM - International Council of Museums*, accessed January 5, 2013,

or the International Movement for a new Museology, to promote these practices throughout the world.[168]

The publication of *The New Museology* in 1989, edited by British art historian Peter Vergo, quickly became a standard work for innovative museum practice.[169] The rise of the New Museology movement was accompanied by new guidelines for the museological profession and the establishment of museology as a scientific discipline.[170]

Ross's research, based on interviews with a dozen museum curators and directors, reveals that the changed economic reality was an important stimulus for this new public outreach. The emerging consumer market for culture and the growing economic pressure, obliging museums to address visitor expectations and encourage visitor numbers (and thus revenue), were decisive factors in a new professional visitor-centred discourse.[171]

This situation should, however, not be reduced to exclusively economic considerations. The scholarship exposing the powerful role of museums as actors in society, urged museum professionals to take up what they felt was their social responsibility.[172] The critical study of the ideological purposes of the museum stimulated museums to reach out to society. The New Museology movement introduced revolutionary, completely new museum concepts, such as the community museum, the eco-museum and different types of grass-root projects.

Many 'traditional' museums have however also been transformed, including history museums. Museums, which for a long time had been exclusive and socially divisive institutions, now tried to reach out to society. They wanted to step back from their elitist sphere and create a more democratic climate. In their narratives, there was included a wider social range of material culture and it was attempted to no longer only represent the histories of the ruling classes, but also represent history *from below*.[173]

The paradigm shift in historiography had led to a crisis of representation in history museums. Museum professionals were now looking to adopt new insights in academia into their visual

http://icom.museum/the-governance/general-assembly/resolutions-adopted-by-icoms-general-assemblies-1946-to-date/grenoble-1971/.

168"MINOM-ICOM International Movement for a New Museology," January 5, 2013, http://www.minom-icom.net/.

169Peter Vergo, *The New Museology* (Reaktion Books, 1989).

170van Mensch, "Nieuwe Museologie. Identiteit of Erfgoed?," 177.

171Ross, "Interpreting the New Museology," 86.

172Ibid., 85–86.

173Ibid., 85.

narrative. An important trend was the taking of a more reflective stance towards the museal representation of history, or the emergence of a "*climate of institutional reflexivity"*.[174]

Nigel Briggs, exhibition designer at the National Museum of American History, part of the prestigious Smithsonian Institute, pointed out that it is precisely the balanced presentation of contrasting or even conflicting stories which makes the whole story compelling to the visitor.[175]

In national history museums, their functioning as institutions engaged in the building of the nation-state was deemed problematic. The realisation that the nation-state as a research category was not naturally given, but indeed a matter of choice, had a major impact. Therefore, the reflexivity brought in due to the rise of New Museology meant mostly a deconstruction of the nationalist narrative as the only possible one.

The dominant feeling was that the monolithic vision of history had to be replaced by a 'plurality of pasts'.[176] In ethnographic museums for example, post-colonial critiques were incorporated into the displays. As Kerstin Poehls notes, the incorporation of mobility - and immigration narratives - into museal display has also been one of the most prominent ways to introduce a form of self-reflexivity to the spatial construction of national history museums. It has the ability to show that borders are political decisions, rather than set geographical boundaries.[177]

Yet, some of the relativism in postmodern philosophy also slipped into the historical museum. History museums became not only more reflexive in the choices they make, but also communicated more openly about these choices. With the transparency about the museum's agenda and the open discussion of the constructed character of historiography and its museal representation, some museums were transformed into 'meta-museums'. With the influence of postmodern thought, the modernist museum paradigm was questioned. It was now perceived that no museum had the right to formulate a *"complete and closed vision of the past".*[178]

174Ibid., 84.

175Nigel Briggs, "Reaching a Broader Audience," *The Public Historian* 22, no. 3 (July 1, 2000): 102.

176Ross, "Interpreting the New Museology," 85.

177Stefan Krankenhagen and Kerstin Poehls, "Exhibiting Europe" (presented at the 22nd General Conference of ICOM, Shangai, 2010), 6.

178Robert Kostro, "The Light If History: Through the Lens of a Polish Museum," in *EuNaMus Report No. 9 - Entering the Minefields: The Creation of New History Museums in Europe*, vol. 83, Linköping Electronic Conference Proceedings (presented at the European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen, Brussels: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012), 78.

In some *postmodern* museums, curators no longer wished to take a stance and present one interpretation of history, but rather sough to present a wide range of different, equally possible interpretations of the past. The national history museum of Switzerland is in this respect often evoked as the most successful example of the post-national, postmodern museum. The permanent exhibition recalls history as a construct, and does not bring a historical narrative, 'as it actually happened', but rather presents a multitude of interpretations, combined with rather conceptual statements about memory and historiography. Significant is that part of the permanent display, is an exhibition about migration, called *Niemand war schon immer da.* It presents both immigration and emigration history in Switzerland and attempts to negate the naturalness of nation-states and citizenship.[179]

Although this approach is appealing to many museum professionals, it can easily provoke a quite negative response from the public, left surprised or even angry. Susan Crane, a historian specialised in collective memory and historical consciousness, said this negative reception is caused by a phenomenon she has called "*distortion in the museum"*,[180] which happens when the public's expectations are not being met. Yet, she argued that this distortion, even when it is experienced in negative way by the audience, can still have the effect the museum professionals are looking for: make the audience reflect about certain categories and stereotypes and show them that historiography is something which is constructed *after* the historical fact. Crane argues that it is extremely important that it is done with sensitivity, because it is the role of the museum as a memory institution which is at stake.[181]

At the annual meeting of the National Council on Public History in April this year, the editor of *The Public Historian,* Randy Bergstrom addressed a very interesting issue. He asked the audience to identify the 'threshold concepts' in the field of public history. This model, developed by education specialists Jan Meyer and Ray Land, addresses the core set of ideas, which one must master to become an expert in a certain discipline. They are so fundamental, that they become a *habit of mind* to those within the discipline, which makes it difficult to explain to students and people not involved in the field, especially because concerns 'troublesome knowledge', challenging natural assumptions.

Bergstrom's proposal to find out what exactly constitute the threshold concepts for a public

179"Landesmuseum Zürich," accessed April 4, 2013, http://www.slmnet.ch/d/zuerich/index.php.

180Susan A. Crane, "Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum," *History and Theory* 36, no. 4 (December 1, 1997): 45.

181Ibid.

dealing with history, stimulated a lively discussion, including on the NCPH's blog *History @ Work,* where it evoked much debate.[182] It appeared that professional public historians have internalised the insights of post-structuralist theory and that they are very much aware of the constructed character of their historical accounts and the problematic side of objectivity. Yet many visitors have not accepted these threshold concepts and still come to historical museums to learn 'what actually happened'.

National History Museums and the Presentist Historicity Regime

The entrance of museums into the mass-market field, already evident in the 1970's and 1980's, was increasingly apparent by the 1990's. Porciani observes that the strict distinction Tony Bennett made in *The Birth of the Museum* between the fair and the museum, respectively a commercial enterprise and an educational institution, seems no longer valid in the present day.[183] Cultural activity has become a commodity and, as Lowenthal has observed, heritage and tourism are inherently intertwined.[184]

The 1990's were marked with a more radical turn towards the visitor than in the previous decades. The visitor experience had now become the main priority for many museums. Yet, it was especially the growing importance of memory which effected the content of exhibitions and museum.

Nigel Briggs stated that to engage a more diverse and bigger audience, it was necessary to come up with radically new exhibition models. He believed that the traditional museum model was only successful with those people, who already had a real interest in the exhibited subject.[185] Briggs claimed that it was only by connecting the exhibited stories with the visitors *own* experiences, that one could really involve them with the exhibition. Museums were now aiming to help the visitor recognise his or her own (hi)story[186]

The starting point became the questions and interests of the public, rather than the elite perspective of the curator. This is undoubtedly a further development of the insights in the *New Museology* movement. Yet, another issue has been added to the equation, which is

182Randy Bergstrom, "In Search of Public History's 'Threshold Concepts'," http://publichistorycommons.org/public-history-threshold-concepts/, *History @ Work*, July 7, 2013.
183Porciani, "Nations on Display: History Museums in Europe," 132.
184Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, 87.
185Briggs, "Reaching a Broader Audience," 96.
186Ibid.

connected with the emergence of the presentist history regime and in particular with the Memory Boom. History museums, and especially historical exhibitions are adapting their narratives to the prevailing historicity regime. People now want to engage with history in an immediate manner. Rather than achieving this by presenting objects of 'sacred' character, visitors are now often immersed in the reliving and experiencing of reconstructed historical events.[187] One of the most emblematic examples is undoubtedly the reconstructed air-raid shelter from WW2, where visitors can experience the 'reality ' which is offered in the Imperial War Museum in London.[188]

At the beginning of the 1990's, with the emergence of the presentist historicity regime, memory became not only a key subject in historiographical writing but also in the history museum. The introduction of memory in the museums is to some extent a way to get *beyond* some of the difficult issues attached to the dilemma's museums faced, such as relativism or *distortion.*

Another essential way to actively make the link between past and present is through what German historian Wolfram Kaiser, affiliated with the university of Portsmouth, has called the *biographical approach*. In the modern historicity regime, portrayals of great heroic figures engaged people with the past in the national history museums, but now the stories of average people, especially eyewitnesses, are to establish a personal connection to the past.

Thomas Thiemeyer, who has examined and compared the representation of World War I and the Second World War in twelve significant Western-European museums, observes a shift from what he has called the 'Personalisierung' of history – in the form of the stories of great men – to a 'Personifizierung' of history – in the form of stories of acting or suffering by previously unacknowledged individuals.[189] Heroic narratives are replaced by the stories of individuals.

Kaiser has called the rapid growth of the inclusion of eyewitnesses in historical exhibitions the emergence of the *"eye-witness industry".*[190] The turn away from heroism and the history of the victor could be made by the introduction of the victim into the narrative. The figure of

187Porciani, "Nations on Display: History Museums in Europe," 130.
188Ibid.
189Thomas Thiemeyer, *Fortsetzung Des Krieges Mit Anderen Mitteln. Die Beiden Wetlkriege Im Museum* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2010), 146.
190Wolfram Kaiser, "Narrating Contemporary European History," *European Cultural Foundation Narratives*, n.d., 2, http://www.ecflabs.org/resource/narratives-europe/narrating-contemporary-european-history.

the victim first appeared in museums dealing with the Second World War and the Holocaust in particular.[191] This is not surprising, considering that the memory of the Holocaust was the first major subject of the Memory Boom.

Reference to witnesses in museum displays is part of a postmodern turn in museology. To avoid the construction of master narratives, museum curators refrain from emphasising one story as an authoritative narration of the past. Kaiser argues with Konrad Jarausch that through the introduction of memory, a narrative pluralism or tolerance can be introduced in the museological narrative.[192]

"Everyone can find some part of a usable past",[193] this statement by Erik Barton Christiansen, historian with the University of Maryland, highlights the link between these museums and relativism evoked by postmodern thought. With these strategies, museums sacrifice a coherent narrative and indicate the ahistorical, constructed side of this phenomenon.[194] By doing this, they hope to gain the approval of diverse audiences.

Memory is in a sense a solution to the representational crisis in history museums. Stating that the historical narrative which is proposed is just *one* story, a construction, can provoke a feeling of disorientation among the museum visitors. Memory however, can provide an answer to this, telling a history in an engaging manner but still stressing that it is only one way to experience the past. Narrative tolerance gives equal value to all different memories of the past, although there are of course limits to this tolerance, in particular those memories which deny the Holocaust are excluded.

Finally, the turn towards the visitor can be noticed by the trend to attempt to engage visitors with the museum's content – whether through the museum's website, interactive devices or even social networks. Connected to this is the more radical way to include divergent memories in the museum, through the strategy of what Kaiser has called *participative narrating.*[195] Here, the visitors themselves are offered the chance to contribute, offering their personal interpretation or experiencing of the past. It is in particular through the development of technology and the increase of interactive displays in museums and online platforms that

191de Jong, "Is This Us? The Construction of European Woman/Man in the Exhibition It's Our History!," 370.
192Kaiser, "Narrating Contemporary European History," 2.
193Erik Barton Christiansen, "History Limited: The Hidden Politics of Postwar Popular Histories" (University of Maryland, 2009), 367.
194Ibid., 376.
195Kaiser, "Narrating Contemporary European History," 5.

the public is offered 'democratic' participation in the 'creation' of the past. This strategy can stimulate visitors to reflect on the constructed character of the past and its spatial categories.

Back to the Nation – Identity Frenzy

The scholarship on the importance of the past for communities in their imagining of the present and future realities, has of course not been overlooked political entities looking for legitimacy. The use of witnesses is especially taken into account, because of the potential to make a direct emotional appeal to the visitors of history museums and because it encourages them to identify with an otherwise perhaps abstract history.

PhD candidate Steffi de Jong has characterised witnesses as powerful didactic means – their potential implies that they are usually meticulously selected by the curators.[196] The interest of the public in history, has made the political implications of history museums more relevant than ever. The nation-states are namely more and more aware of the potential of inclusive national history museums. In fact, the linear progress (as described above) to a post-national context for history museums is contradicted by many examples, where national museums use the newest strategies to create an identification with the nation.[197] Many incorporate the trend to establish an immediate relationship to the past, but do not integrate a reflexive approach.

After the Second World War, the need for national sentiment in the post-colonial nation-states, spurred another global boom in national history museums.[198] The second locus where the idea of a post-national museum landscape is challenged, is in the national history museums that emerged in Eastern Europe, after the fall of the Soviet Union. After the collapse of the USSR, displays with Marxist and pro-Soviet discourse were replaced by nationalist interpretations of the past.[199] While in Western Europe, the national construction of the past had been gradually adapting to the new standard of historical scholarship, this was not the case in the Eastern European countries. In fact, some initiatives were even engaged in the re-establishing of old national myths. Porciani observes that the museal narratives often explicitly promoted the nation's innocence, with the most famous and controversial example being the Terror Háza, or

196de Jong, “Is This Us? The Construction of European Woman/Man in the Exhibition It’s Our History!,” 374.
197Aronsson, “National Museums Negotiating National Identity,” 6.
198Ibid., 2.
199Porciani, “Nations on Display: History Museums in Europe,” 132.

House of Terror, in Budapest.[200] The Hungarians present their role as the victims of *foreign* oppression and domination. these narratives do not confront the complexities connected to guilt and collaboration.[201]

Also in regions striving to become independent nation-states, such as Catalonia and Scotland, historical museums have been founded, that are very close to the nineteenth-century museum model.[202]

But it is mostly in the demands for establishment of 'canon museums' in many Western-European countries that this paradox manifests itself. I use the term *canon museum* to refer to all museum initiatives that want to provide the public with a historical canon, a summary of the most important historical events and the cultural identity of the nation. These museums thus want to represent what is believed to be essential to the nation's history, culture and identity. Even though many countries, such as Sweden and the United Kingdom, now offer multiperspectival and multicultural interpretations of the past, the upsurge of these canon museums is remarkable.[203]

According to many, the current weak economic position of the nation-states is believed to be a consequence of globalisation and European integration in particular. It invokes people to look back nostalgically to the past. But also the loss of homogeneous societies, as globalisation and immigration have produced multicultural nations, challenging to the definition of a specific national heritage, leaves many countries struggling to define their own, distinct identity.

A national identity is still believed to be necessary to foster cohesion and integration. History museums are believed to be appropriate for this function and accordingly, in many countries initiatives to set up new museums have been launched. German historians Gottfried Korff and Martin Roth have characterised these new historical museums as 'identity factories'.[204]

In 2009, French President Nicholas Sarkozy announced his intention to create a national history museum, which would present French history as a whole and thereby reinforce national identity. The museum would offer a response to contemporary French society, marked by immigration and multiculturalism.[205] Historians in France denounced the plan to

200Ibid.
201Assmann, "Europe: A Community of Memory?," 16.
202Porciani, "Nations on Display: History Museums in Europe," 146.
203Aronsson, "National Museums Negotiating National Identity," 6.
204Gottfried Korff and Martin Roth, *Das Historische Museum. Labor, Schaubühne, Identitätsfabrik*, 1993.
205Porciani, "Nations on Display: History Museums in Europe."

set up this museum, allegedly driven by 'neo-nationalism', perverting history and making a mockery out of the nation's past.[206] In 2013, the plan to set up the museum was terminated by new President François Hollande.

But also in the Netherlands, historically known for its tolerance and openness to controversial thinkers, the call for a clearly defined Dutch identity is persistent. In 2006, a proposition to set up a National Historical Museum was made by Socialist Party President Jan Marijnissen and Maxime Verhagen, leader of Christian Democrat group in the Dutch Parliament. Marijnissen and Verhagen connected problems in contemporary Dutch society with a lack of historical consciousness.[207]

The aforementioned museums have been highly contested. That most of them, such as the initiatives in France and the Netherlands were never actually built, demonstrates their controversial nature. As Ilaria Porciani points out, historians question the necessity for these national history museums. Many historians no longer believe that a single coherent narrative can represent complicated questions, which require debate rather than the emotional embracing of an essentialist truth. Museums argue through images and objects, trigger an emotional reaction and are, for them, not the ideal medium to renegotiate and debate the meaning of national identity.[208]

Among historians and museologists, there seems to be a consensus that the canon museums are driven by populist right-wing political parties. The emphasis of Sarkozy on 'national identity', for instance, was even denounced by French historians as a *perversion* of history, re-narrated to fit his right-wing ideological purposes.[209]

The canon museums are often interpreted as a response to a growing transnational interpretation of history itself. MEP Paliadeli and her parliamentary assistant Kopellou have suggested that this current tendency may be part of a reluctant stance towards the promotion of an overarching European identity.[210]

206Angelique Chrisafis, "French Historians Rally Against Nicholas Sarkozy's 'Legacy' Museum," *The Guardian*, October 11, 2010, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/10/nicolas-sarkozy-museum-protest.

207Huistra and Molema, "In de Steigers: Het Huis Voor de Europese Geschiedenis," 313.

208Porciani, "Nations on Display: History Museums in Europe," 131.

209Chrisafis, "French Historians Rally Against Nicholas Sarkozy's 'Legacy' Museum."

210Chrysoula Paliadeli and Marianthi Kopellou, "The Role of National Museums in the European Integration," in *EuNaMus Report No. 9 - Entering the Minefields: The Creation of New History Museums in Europe*, vol. 83, Linköping Electronic Conference Proceedings (presented at the European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen, Brussels: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012), 35.

4. The European Union, Identity Politics and History Museums

The subject matter addressed in this thesis, including identity formation through history, the building of a desired collective memory and the appropriation of heritage, has been of primary importance in studies on the cultural politics of the EU in general and specifically when concerned with the European museal field.

For many national museums, the primary approach to deconstructing or at least contextualising their close relationship to the nation-state has been by including a more transnational perspective. This is of course in line with the general trend in historiography to look beyond the nation-state and include comparative and transnational approaches. In European national history museums transnationalising their conceptualisation has most often resulted in offering a European perspective. This practice is in general greeted with enthusiasm by museum professionals, because it is believed to combat the essentialist nationalist bias of their museums. This approach was also highly valued at the final EuNaMus conference I attended in Budapest. The idea, that a European perspective has to be adopted to provide a more inclusive way of remembering, was central to the discourse of the museum professionals attending the conference.[211] The European project is often valued in a very positive way, as the EU is associated with tolerance, freedom and collaboration, presented as 'universal' values.

However, as I will argue in this chapter, Europeanising the narration of history is by no means an innocent, politically free cultural practice. In fact, the ways in which the EU is represented in museums and exhibitions is very similar to what is practised in the canon museums, or even to the nation-building museums of the nineteenth century. The motto of the EU, *United in Diversity,* suggests an approach that values regional and national differences. Nevertheless, a lot of effort is put into identifying what is distinctly *European*, an almost essential quality, that all European nations share.

The last two themes expose how national history museums have offered legitimising historical accounts, thereby contributing to the consolidation of the nation-states. The EU is also a

211Kaiser, “Narrating Contemporary European History,” 1.

political entity looking for legitimisation and consolidation. The EU has been struggling with a so-called identity deficit and is now looking at culture and history to establish a shared European identity. Therefore, it is not surprising that there has been an increasing number of initiatives to *"exhibit Europe"* in museums and exhibitions.[212]

As described in the last chapter, history museums have changed significantly since the 1970's, becoming more reflective and critical of their own role in society. The emergence of the presentist historicity regime and the importance of memory, which arose in the 1990's, has on the one hand shown itself as a drive to make museums even more reflective – as they are now also challenging their temporal notions and include a wide variety of diverging, contesting memories – while on the other hand it stimulates a rather ahistorical, essentialist interpretation of a distinct historical identity. I will look at how these tensions have been played out in the context of history museums focusing on the history of Europe, in particular in the HEH.

In the first subchapter, I will examine the relationship of the European institutions with culture, and analyse the changing cultural competences and policies from the start of the European integration process to the present day. This subchapter relies in particular on the works of Littoz-Monnet, Véronique Charléty and Cris Shore. The book *Building Europe*, published in 2000 by anthropologist Cris Shore, is an anthropological interpretation of the European integration process. His findings, based on ethnographic fieldwork among the EU elites, expose how culture is and has been used as a tool for forging a sense of cohesion.

In the second subchapter I will discuss the topic of European identity (deficit) specifically. I will examine which issues have impeded the forging of a European identity. I will also give an overview of the changing European identity discourse. For this subchapter, the scholarship of Lowenthal, Kølvraa and Ifversen is of primordial importance.

In the third subchapter, firstly the parallel between the lacking of a European collective memory and the failing of the emergence of a European identity will be explored. I will also analyse how changing discourse on European identity has influenced the perceptions about European history. In particular, the difficulties experienced when attempting to identify a shared narrative for Europe will be discussed. Finally, I will show what narrative has been put forward by the European institutions. For this subchapter, the work of David Lowenthal, Monica Sassatelli and Nancy Partner was of great assistance.

212This phrasing was developed by the research project Exhibiting *Europe.*

In the fourth subchapter, I will give a short overview of the different museums and exhibitions that have sought to represent European history. I will focus specifically on the different strategies, connected to the effect of the Memory Boom on representational practices in history, that are used to engage the public with European history. The exhibition entitled *It's our history! 50 years of European Adventure,* developed by Musée de l'Europe, will be discussed in detail. For this subchapter, the research conducted by the *Exhibiting Europe* programme with contributions from Kerstin Poehls, Steffi de Jong, Wolfram Kaiser and Stefan Krankenhagen was of critical importance. The research project *Exhibiting Europe* analyses all initiatives that have attempted to exhibit a distinctly European narrative in permanent and temporary exhibitions. The monograph *Europa Ausstellen* is the first comprehensive publication which discusses the way the history of Europe has been represented in the museum. The work of Camille Mazé, Christine Cadot and Véronique Charléty is also referred to in this subchapter.

Finally, in the fifth subchapter, I will return to my case study, the HEH. I will discuss its position as an instrument in the identity politics of the EU. I will examine the manner in which the portrayal of the historical narrative has been influenced by the European politics, by discussing the working relationship between the APT and European politicians. I will also discuss how the APT positions itself in relation to the past and present trends on history museums, in an examination of what the APT describes as 'the principles' of the museum. In my analysis of the plans for the permanent exhibition, I will specify which historical issues the museum will cover and in what way the historiographical account will be represented. Finally, I will consider whether the HEH will really succeed in the incorporation of new trends and insights in historiography, becoming a place for debate, or if it will become a museum, constructing a master narrative of Europe. For this subchapter, the principal sources are the briefs and the scripts, written versions of the permanent exhibition, supplemented by my findings through the method of participatory observation. Unfortunately, I am not allowed to include any images of the exhibition design, as this falls under the copyright of the EP and is not be be distributed, since the design is still preliminary and very confidential. I did include some sketches of the space and exhibition design, taken from “Building a House of European History”, the first document presenting the HEH to a broader public. Those who are curious about the actual visualisation of the historical narrative, will have to wait until the museum's opening in 2015...

4.1 Cultural Politics of the European Institutions

The emergence of a shared, European identity, is now considered to be necessary to foster a sense of belonging to Europe and for the success of the European project altogether. Cris Shore argues that from the beginning, the founders of European integration envisioned a federalist Europe. Yet, the idea that an effort had to be made to ensure a Europeanisation at the level of the citizens was not yet present. Public support for the European integration process was not a priority for the elite carriers of the integration. European integration was conceived as a political and economic project.[213] The belief at the time was that with legal and economic integration, social integration would follow by itself. As Cris Shore, following political scientist Ernst B. Haas, has pointed out, this idea was based on a neo-functionalist interpretation of integration. The lack of common culture, of European consciousness was not problematised, since a spillover effect was expected, a cultural integration as a by-product of the building of a European integrated legal and economic community.[214]

French politician Jean Monnet envisioned that the establishment of the European state would be realised through the effect of the small, incremental but successive and steady transfers of capacities of the nation-states to the European level. It was believed that the authority of the nation-states would disappear over time, as they would become incapable of independent action.[215] This dirigist strategy would carry with it economic benefits, and be able to avoid any direct confrontations with the nation-states. It was believed that the prosperity, that followed with the success of the integration process itself, would fuel and legitimise further political unification.[216] [217]

It was generally believed that this shift would also occur in the cultural field, and people would begin to transfer also their cultural loyalties form the national to the European level.[218] Additionally, before the Second World War, culture had traditionally been a strictly national matter. As a result, it would have been very difficult to make culture a part of the European

213Cris Shore, *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration* (Routledge, 2000), 42.
214Ibid., 18.
215Ibid., 42.
216Ibid., 18.
217Since the economic crisis in 2008 this is of course no longer sustainable, because the economic benefit of being a member of the EU is not **generally perceived** among the people in Europe.

218Shore, *Building Europe*, 44.

transnational jurisdiction from the beginning.[219]

The Rome Treaty, which led to the founding of the European Economic Community in January 1958, made no reference to a specific competence of the institutions in the cultural sector. Therefore, culture did not lie within the range of competence of the EEC.[220] Nevertheless, some activity in the field of culture on the European level did exist. However, since no European treaty had formally introduced culture as an official competence, justifying European action in the cultural field was a tricky endeavour.[221] Cultural investment was usually justified in economical terms, defining culture as a financially beneficial.

The Council of Europe, founded in 1949 and functioning as an entirely separate body from the European institutions, played a pioneering role in the incorporation of culture in the activities of the European institutions.[222] It legally based its actions upon the European Cultural Convention, a treaty signed in 1954 which had established culture as a "*new intervention category*". The Council of Europe actively promoted a European spirit, set up a European prize for museums and influenced the work of the Commission.[223]

It was only in the 1970's that the idea, that a feeling of belonging to a shared culture was to be fostered, grew. It came to be believed that the lack of a European identity would mean a lack of legitimacy on the part of the European institutions. Increasingly, the European integration project was portrayed in cultural terms. Significantly, in 1973 the "Declaration of European Identity" was adopted at the Copenhagen Summit.[224] This declaration stated that culture is a fundamental element of European identity.[225]

The EC first clearly intervened in the cultural sector in 1977, with the *Communication on community Action in the Cultural Sector,* which aimed to ensure free trade in the cultural sector.[226]

219Véronique Charléty, "L'invention Du Musée de l'Europe. Contribution à L'analyse Des Politiques Symboliques Européenes," *Regards Sociologiques* no. 27/28 (2004): 150.

220Annabelle Littoz-Monnet, "Europeanising Institutional Memory or Supranationalising Domestic Memory Struggles?," *Foundation Pierre Du Bois - Papiers D'actualité / Current Affairs in Perspective* no. 2 (July 2012): 3.

221Ibid., 1.

222Charléty, "L'invention Du Musée de l'Europe. Contribution à L'analyse Des Politiques Symboliques Européenes," 150.

223Ibid., 151.

224"Declaration on European Identity (Copenhagen, 14 December 1973)," *Bulletin of the European Communitites* (December 1973).

225Ibid.

226Littoz-Monnet, "Europeanising Institutional Memory or Supranationalising Domestic Memory Struggles?," 2.

In the 1980's the belief in the necessity of a European citizenship become dominant. It was the first time that the idiosyncratic behaviour and thoughts of average people was considered to be central to the success of the European project.[227] Significant for this development were the 1985 'Adonnino Reports on a People's Europe', written by an ad hoc committee. They suggested the introduction of symbols of Europe, to which people could relate, such as the European flag and a European anthem, for which the 'Ode to Joy' from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony could be appropriated. Some of these symbols had already been a part of the narrative put forward by the Council of Europe, but had not been a part of the discourse of the official European institutions. The suggested measures were adopted shortly after the Adonnino Reports were published.[228]

Yet, even during the early eighties, only a limited number of genuine attempts were made at fostering cultural issues on a European level.[229] From 1987, community action in the cultural sector became more structured. Regular meetings of cultural committees ensured the continuity of the handling cultural issues on European level, even without a formal authority to do so.[230]

In 1992, the Treaty of Maastricht was signed, establishing the EU in its current form. Finally, European interest in the cultural field was formally established, giving European cultural activity a legal basis. Article 128 (now Article155), also called the Culture Article was introduced to "*bring Europe's common cultural heritage to the fore*".[231]

As Littoz-Monnet has noted, to a certain extent, the Maastricht Treaty worked transversely. Although culture became a formal competence of the EU, the national autonomy was now safeguarded through the principle of subsidiarity. This is an organising principle of decentralisation that prescribes that a matter ought to be handled by the least centralised authority. In EU law it signifies that the European institutions may only act where actions of individual countries are insufficient. In any case, even after 1992 the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the EC had a marginal share of the general budget.[232]

227Shore, *Building Europe*, 42.
228Littoz-Monnet, "Europeanising Institutional Memory or Supranationalising Domestic Memory Struggles?," 2.
229Ibid.
230Ibid.
231CEC (1992) Treaty on European Union signed at Maastricht on 7 February, Luxembourg: OOPEC. Cited in: Paliadeli and Kopellou, "The Role of National Museums in the European Integration," 34.
232Littoz-Monnet, "Europeanising Institutional Memory or Supranationalising Domestic Memory Struggles?," 1.

Nevertheless, in the years following the Maastricht Treaty, many European support programs for the promotion of a European cultural heritage have been introduced. They have now been replaced by a more coherent framework, the Culture Programme, which was adopted in 2000 and is run by the EC.[233] In 2007, the EC developed the Agenda for Culture, bringing together the EC's action in the cultural field and its main objective being the promotion of social cohesion. This initiative aims to encourage the significance of culture in the fulfilment of broader policy objectives.[234]

233Ibid., 3.
234Ibid.

4.2 European Identity Discourse

The belief that a European identity would emerge by itself has proven to be mistaken. Even after the mentioned growing cultural competences of the EU, the existence of a real European identity is still in doubt. In fact, the emergence of a European identity has been an issue of constant struggle for the European institutions. The response to the European economic crisis, which started in 2008, has clearly exposed that many people still identify with the nation-state, rather than with the EU. Also the statistical data of the Eurobarometer, a survey taken twice a year by the EC to measure public opinion on the European institutions, confirms that most people in Europe consider themselves primary as national citizens and only secondly as Europeans, if at all.[235]

Recently, even overt Euro-sceptic voices have become increasingly popular, as demonstrated by the growing popularity of the United Kingdom Independence Party, which takes up almost one out of seven of the UK seats in the EP.[236] Also the rise of an - albeit more moderate - Euro-critical party in Germany is emblematic for the Euro-sceptic trend. The polls for the elections for the EP in 2014 predict that the share of Euro-sceptic MEP's could be significant.[237]

Nowadays, in stark contrast with the dirigist approach which marked the beginning years of the European integration process, it is generally believed that the EU needs the existence of a shared European identity in order to succeed. The EU has developed into a strong union with clear ambitions of conducting identity politics.[238]

The promoting of a European identity is however by no means an easy task. It is because of the very nature of the EU, that the establishing of a shared European identity has proven to be problematic. The identification with nation-states rather than with the EU is the most significant obstacle for the creation of a strong European identity. But there are many other

235Paliadeli and Kopellou, "The Role of National Museums in the European Integration," 35.

236The United Kingdom has always had a problematic relationship with the European institutions, but the popularity of the UKIP has been consistently rising over the last couple of years.

237Simon Hix and Christophe Crombez, "The European Parliament Elections in 2014 Are About More Than Protest Votes," *The Guardian*, June 3, 2013, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/03/2014-european-elections-shape-eu.

238Ifversen and Kølvraa, "Myth and History Politics in European Integration - The Myth of the Fathers," 2011, 1.

reasons why the EU has struggled with this issue. One is the common perception of an overly bureaucratic and unapproachable Brussels. Also the EU's long-lasting undemocratic nature – the EP was founded only in 1979 and certain undemocratic qualities within the EU persist - proves to be a major obstacle in the formation of a sense of European belonging. The lack of European mass media was not solved by the unsuccessful attempts to create a European television channel.[239] Also the fact that the organisation of education still takes place at the national level have impeded the formation of a real European society. Finally, the linguistic and cultural diversity of the many countries create difficulties in forming one hegemonic European identity. The different languages, the disparities of size, resources and power of the different nation-states and enduring cultural discord encourage continuing identification with the nation-state.[240] However, as argued in the next subchapter, it is especially *history itself* which has obstructed the forming of a European identity.

Sociologist Monica Sassatelli examined the changing discourse of the European institutions on the topic of European Identity. Sassatelli observes that, even though a Europeanisation on a public level was not a priority in the early times of the European integration process and a formal competences of the EU in the cultural field was lacking, a definition of a European identity was present in official discourse. European identity was defined in a essentialist way, looking for the common roots of a European identity, mirroring a technocratic interpretation of history.[241]

Since the 1990's however, a new conception of European identity was developed.[242] To a certain extent this mirrors the double effect Maastricht Treaty, stressing unity, but on the other hand also safeguard diversity. As a motto for the EU, *United in Diversity* was introduced in 2000 and has become the leading message in European identity discourse.

This discourse has a dual nature of the two different messages intrinsic in this motto. The emphasis on diversity, on the one hand, brings the plurality, the cultural variety of the European continent to the fore. It is a more open, dynamic interpretation of European

239Shore, *Building Europe*, 18.

240David Lowenthal, "Heritage and History. Partners and Rivals in Europe," in *Bezeten van Vroeger. Erfgoed, Identiteit En Musealisering* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 2005), 33–37.

241Monica Sassatelli, "Narratives of European Cultural Identity," in *Identifying with Europe. Reflections on a Historical Canon for Europe*, ed. Ineke van Hamersveld and Arthur Sonnen (Amsterdam: EUNIC Netherlands, 2009), 182.

242Ibid.

culture.[243] Of course the danger of this approach is that could eventually overemphasise the differences in Europe and therefore many denounce the diversity message in the motto. One can of course also question how 'diverse' the *United in Diversity* discourse actually is. The European institutions discourse on identity is much more focussing on unity rather than diversity in Europe. This interpretation of European identity also refers to *oneness*, a consensus of shared values.[244] Many initiatives attempt to identify what is shared by all of Europe, what unites the continent and by doing this gives it a universal appeal. The metaphor of a 'mosaic' of European cultures implies that the diverse cultures are only invested with meaning when put in a bigger, European perspective. In fact, national diversity is only celebrated within a context that emphasises the way these national specificities fit into the European picture. Moreover, many national cultural icons are completely re-interpreted as icons for a unified European history.[245]

243Roel During, ed., *Cultural Heritage and Identity Politics* (Wageningen: Wageningen Academic Publishers, 2011), 4.
244Ibid., 3.
245Shore, *Building Europe*, 54.

4.3 Developing a Narrative for Europe

As argued in this thesis, history is often thought of as the primary vehicle to contribute to the emergence of a shared identity. As we have seen in the second chapter, especially in times of crisis the need of heritage becomes of pressing importance. It is then not surprising that, with Euro-scepticism rising, the EU is looking towards the past to tackle its identity deficit. In particular because, in the case of Europe, it seems to be exactly history and memory which are the obstacles for the emergence of a European identity.

Steffi de Jong observes that it has become a truism in European politics and EU-friendly scholarship that a shared past is as important for the feeling of belonging to a post-national community, such as the EU, as it was to the nation-states.[246] Jacques le Goff observed that *"a Europe without its history would be a sorry orphan*.[247]

A real Europeanisation of history and especially a forging of a European collective memory has proven to be extremely challenging. This is in the first place because the transnational European memory competes with a variety of national memory constellations.[248] In most European countries, the history of the individual nation is still by far the prevailing narrative. The belief in a specific national historical identity and a national cultural legacy, under the name of national heritage, is strong.[249] The EU does not have the same resources as the nation-states had in the nineteenth century. The teaching of history is still part of education at the national level and it is always the national narrative that is dominant. Also in historical research at university level, the spatial category of the nation-state is still prevalent.

Yet, the identification with national history is definitely not the only obstacle. It is difficult to identify events or phenomena which are shared by all or the majority of European citizens. Aleida Assmann has observed that for the European Institutions there is not so much disagreement about the guiding values for the future – the basic rights of democratic civil society – as there is for the identifying of common points of reference in the past.[250]

The fact that the history of the European continent is marked by internal conflict, war and

246de Jong, "Is This Us? The Construction of European Woman/Man in the Exhibition It's Our History!," 372.
247Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe*, The Making of Europe (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), IX.
248Assmann, "Europe: A Community of Memory?," 14.
249Paliadeli and Kopellou, "The Role of National Museums in the European Integration," 33.
250Assmann, "Europe: A Community of Memory?," 12.

bloodshed is a strong factor which prevents the emergence of memory of a united Europe. It thus seems to be mostly history itself which has blocked a shared European memory. The memory of the Second World War and the memory of the Holocaust, probably the most divisive memory for Europe, since the war divided the European continent into a condition of enemies and allies, is still the main theme in accounts of recent European history.

How life was experienced in the second half of the twentieth century also varied greatly across the continent. The experience of citizens was very dominated by the specific national context. Certainly, the divisions of post-war Europe has made the recent history of the continent a very different experience for East and West Europeans. As we are now living in a *"post–Holocaust memorial culture which has ruled out forgetting",*[251] to use the phrase of Steffi de Jong, it is likely that the memory of these diverging and even divisive memories has discouraged a real Europeanisation of our past. Still the wish exists to find Europe its own historical narrative, which supplants or at least be added to the national histories.

A number of historians have provided European politicians with supporting material in their search for a European history. This was partly evoked by the transnational turn in historiography; when looking for spatial frameworks beyond the nation-state, many historians started to write *European* histories. This is a sensible strategy, as the contacts, conflicts and alliances between the nation-states have been particularly strong on the European continent.

It is however important to note that the developing of a historical narrative on European history was strongly supported from within the European institutions. As Shore and others have pointed out, the Europeanisation of historiography was financed by European funding, for instance through the granting of Jean Monnet chairs, financially supporting the teaching of European integration.[252]

Also the establishment of the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence in 1976, was supported by the European institutions to stimulate the research of recent European history. Significantly, the EUI is also the custodian of the archives of the European institutions.

Cris Shore has observed that in fact a strikingly large number of the publications on the history of Europe and especially on the European integration process, have been produced by writers who are strongly connected to the European institutions, either as recipients of EU

251de Jong, "Is This Us? The Construction of European Woman/Man in the Exhibition It's Our History!," 372.
252Shore, *Building Europe*, 57.

funding or as former or even current employees, which produces a particularly EU-friendly scholarship.[253]

As discussed earlier in this thesis, the work of historians in the nineteenth century creating the master narratives of the nation-states, was supported by the newly established nations, an interesting parallel with the historiographical work in the EU as new political formation.

European politicians have attempted to actively promote the commonality of Europe's past and were often assisted by academic and professionals from the heritage sector.[254] Ján Figel, European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth stated that *"the preservation, appreciation and promotion of cultural heritage is one the best means we have available to promote a sense of belonging to Europe"*.[255]

The development of the discourse of the European institutions on European history and heritage unsurprisingly mirrored the development of the perceptions on European identity. Monica Sassetelli observed that the earliest attempts to define a shared history of Europe, just as in the official identity discourse, looked for the common roots of the European culture, often assigned to the Greco-Roman civilisations. Also the Judeo-Christian roots of the European civilisation was one of the returning motives in history-writing of Europe. Finally, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment were also often put forward as the core of modern Europe.[256]

With the change in the discourse on European identity, and the bringing in of diversity, also in the historical discourse, diversity was more emphasised. However, even if now there is more attention for national and regional plurality, the extremely rich and diverse European cultural tradition is most often reinterpreted as a common European good; the fragmented European history is narrated as a 'united European collective memory'.

It is interesting to note the fact that the European integration process *itself*, for such a long time dominated by economic and political motives, is now reinterpreted as a heritage project.[257] The founding of the European Heritage Label in 2010 is granted to draw attention to Europe's history, common values or cultural heritage, particularly to the building of Europe,

253Ibid., 28.
254de Jong, "Is This Us? The Construction of European Woman/Man in the Exhibition It's Our History!," 372.
255Commissioner Figel expressed this in his speech at the Europa Nostra Awards Ceremony in Madrid, on the 27th of June 2006.
256Sassatelli, "Narratives of European Cultural Identity," 24.
257Krankenhagen and Poehls, "Exhibiting Europe," 2.

the period of European integration.[258]

Between 2010 and 2012, the European Cultural Foundation ran the programme *Narratives for Europe,* which invites thinkers and activists from all over Europe to articulate and debate new narratives for the history of Europe.[259] One of the most prominent recent initiatives, attempting to define a narrative for Europe, *New Narrative for Europe,* was launched in April 2013 by EC President Barroso, *"inviting its citizens, in particular artists, intellectuals, and scientists to engage with and contribute to a reflection on the European 'story'."*[260]

In her presentation at the inaugural conference of the International Network of Theory of History in July 2013, Nancy Partner approached these initiatives from the viewpoint of narrative theory. Partner argues that both the impossibility to defining events that are 'true for all Europeans' and the discourse of the EU, appropriating values such as peace, tolerance and diversity, which are too abstract and amorphous, generates a historiography void of any story. Partner thus asserts that the narratives proposed by these initiatives, are void of any narrative, of plot, of protagonists or any other narrative elements.[261]A long history of Europe does not seem to be possible – at least not in the narrative form we usually write histories.

In fact, most of the more recent initiatives to define a shared history for Europe, actually focus on the history of the European integration process, rather than attempting to give a comprehensive history of the European continent. This is not surprising since the narrating of a temporally broader history of Europe would be more divisive rather than unifying.

Some histories even start the historical account just after the Second World War, taking this point in time as a 'point zero'. This is problematic, not only because it gives a rather short account of history without contextualisation, but also because historical research has established that in fact many post-war developments are a continuation of pre-war situations.

Yet, many narratives also discuss the history of the war, and focus especially on the dictatorships and their human cost. In fact, Aleida Assmann has argued that the memory of the Holocaust has become the main reference point for a collective memory for Europe.[262]

Also, the memory of the Soviet dictatorship is an important factor in European memory, which is then often juxtaposed to a democratic, free West. The similarities between the horrors caused by Nazism and Stalinism are often professed, like in the controversial Terror Haza in

258"What Is the Heritage Label?," *Official Website of the European Commission*, March 3, 2013.
259"Narratives for Europe," *ECF Labs*, accessed July 3, 2013, http://www.ecflabs.org/narratives.
260"A New Narrative for Europe," *Official Website of the European Commission*, July 31, 2013.
261Nancy Partner, "Europe: The Non-Protagonist and the Anti-Plot of History," 2013, 9.
262Assmann, "Europe: A Community of Memory?," 13.

Budapest. Traumatic, divisive events are actually turned into a vehicle for social cohesion. The memory of catastrophic times should stimulate international collaboration and tolerance. In fact many historical accounts reinterpret the European integration process as a peace project, the European institutions finally ending centuries of conflict and wars on the European continent.[263] Even if in the early years of the European integration project, it was not a drive for peace that was predominant and the elite forging the European integration was mainly motivated by economic concerns, the 'peace narrative' has become the most important narratives in the EU's own interpretation of its history.[264]

In my experiences as an trainee, I have observed that the general sentiment in the EP is the idea that one is working on a sort of heroic project, for the greater good, defending universal values. The 'universal' values which the European institutions claim to represent, especially the historical evaluation of the EU as a 'peace process', are so emphatically positive, that the active creation of a community, even if it is imagined, almost become a moral imperative. The search for elements and historical events that could contribute to the emergence of a European imagined community is therefore actively pursued.

The role of the European institutions in the bringing of peace to the European continent was confirmed with the winning of the Nobel Peace Prize by the EU in 2012. The speeches by the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy and EC President, at the reception of the Nobel Peace Prize, emphasise the role of the European Institutions in the bringing of peace to the European continent.[265]

Until June 2013 the Solidarność Esplanade in front of the EP displayed the exhibition entitled *Out of the abyss: how Europeans built peace together - A Nobel Prize recognizing 60 years of making peace in our continent.* The set of pictures clearly advocates the contribution of the EU in the linear, teleological path towards peace on the European continent.

263Wolfram Kaiser, "From Great Men to Ordinary Citizens? The Bibliographical Approach to Narrating European Integration in Museums," *Culture Unbound* 3, no. 25 (2011): 387.

264Ifversen and Kølvraa, "Myth and History Politics in European Integration - The Myth of the Fathers," 2011, 21.

265"From War to Peace: a European Tale," *Europa Press Releases RAPID*, accessed June 7, 2013, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-12-930_en.htm.

Illustration 5: The exhibition on the Solidarność Esplanade is a good example of the Peace Narrative proposed by the European institutions.

Finally, also the temporary exhibition, entitled, *The Peace Prize Laureate Exhibition 2012* in the Parlamentarium, the visitor centre of the EP is a good example of the Peace Narrative, propagated by the European Institutions.

Interesting is that also the reception of the winning of the Nobel Peace Peace Prize by the EU is discussed. Yet, only a very small share of the reactions has a negative tone. An exhibition text expresses that *"Many people think that the prize is an important and appropriate acknowledgement of what the EU has meant to development in Europa and that, especially in light of today's situation of economic criss and social unrest, it is important to be reminded of this."*

Illustration 6: Exhibition Parlamentarium - Reactions to the winning of the Nobel Peace Prize by the EU.

Political scientist and specialist in European history and its representation Christine Cadot points out that until very recently the debates **about** European memory have largely focussed on Western Europe. In fact, the institutional discourses of the European institutions, made hardly any references to

Eastern-European experiences when addressing the topic of a shared European memory.[266]

Both the validity and the usefulness of this discourse were challenged by the European enlargement in 2004 with ten new member-states. The memory of the people in the Central and Eastern European nation-states is determined by a markedly different course of history and does not fit in the exclusively Western-European narrative that was up until then dominant.

The most popular discourse to include these regions into the shared European narrative has proven to be the notion of a 'Return to Europe', which has been extensively used by political and intellectual elites.[267] According to this account, the fall of the Soviet Union resulted in a 'come-back' of the Eastern-Europe countries and thus fits the narrative of a continuous progression towards peace after the end of the Second World War.

The *tabula rasa* narrative that had been put forward by the founding members of the ECSC negates historical continuity and portrays the end of WW2 as a clean slate, as the start of a new historical time. While for the Western countries this narrative is beneficial, as it makes a break with the difficult past, for the Eastern countries this narrative is in fact problematic, because it negates their ties with Western civilisation.[268]

266Christine Cadot, "Europe's History Museums: Houses of Doom? Central Europe Museums and the Vanishing Dream of a Unified European Memory," in *"Placing" Europe in the Museum. People(s), Places and Identities*, ed. Christopher Whitehead et al., Mela Books (Milan: Politecnico di Milano, 2013), 35.

267Ibid.

268Ibid., 38.

4.4 Europe in the History Museum

In the first subchapter I have examined the cultural politics of the European institutions and I have shown that there was a significant cultural turn in European policies from the 1970's onwards, which was formally established with the Treaty of Maastricht. Subsequently, I have argued that a general feeling of the necessity of a shared European history emerged. I have connected the initiatives to establish a collective European history with the changing discourse on European identity. In this subchapter I will discuss how these trends have influenced the Europeanisation of history museums. Many history museums have recently begun to include a European perspective and also completely new museum projects have been launched to narrate the history of European integration.

To Leicester Museum Studies professor Susan Pearce, it is clear that "*As the Europe of the Single Act comes into being,*[269] *with its new legal, commercial and cultural climate, museums must be in the forefront of interpreting we Europeans to ourselves."*[270]

Indeed, in recent years the display of European integration history in museums has become central to the cultural politics of the EU, as Krankenhagen and Poehls point out.[271] Considering the performative function of museums, and their strong position in the mediation of collective memory, it is not surprising that the EU has been looking at museums to contribute to the narration of a shared European heritage and memory. Museums and exhibitions covering the history of Europe are being shaped in order to foster a feeling of European identity among the people of the EU. The museums thus become instruments to form an *imagined European community,* a method which is strikingly similar to the praxis in the nineteenth-century nation-building processes.[272] Museums are used as one of the primary tools in the promotion of a European past and identity, they are a significant part of what Cris Shore has called *"agents of European consciousness".*[273]

For many museums the process of *Europeanising* the narrative is used to modernise their narratives. Indeed, museums narrating the history of Europe voice clear aspirations for the

269 The Single European Act was signed in 1986 and set as the objective of establishing a single market by the 31st of December 1992.
270Susan M. Pearce, ed., *Museums and Europe 1992* (Bloomsbury, 1992), 2.
271Krankenhagen and Poehls, "Exhibiting Europe," 2–3.
272Ibid.
273Shore, *Building Europe*, 26.

future.[274] Kurt Imhof has characterised them as *Zukunfstmuseen,* museums for the future, creating a European public and fostering a democratic EU.[275]

While in the nineteenth century, the creation of national historical museums was a novel development, the musealisation of the history of European integration emerged in a field that was already dominated by museal institutions. This resulted in a much more diversified museum spectrum than was the case in the nineteenth century. That is, many of the European narratives have actually been included in the existing national and regional museums. Already at the end of the 1970's, the EC expressed the wish to make 'European rooms' in museums.[276] Different funding schemes have since been developed to encourage museums to include the history of Europe and its integration into their displays.

Historical and ethnological museums were pioneers in the redirection of their profiles and in the adoption of European narratives into their displays.[277] The Europeanisation of museums started in the 1980's and 1990's. The old EEC countries (France, Belgium, Italy, Germany and Luxembourg) were among the first.[278] The integration of a European perspective into the national or regional narrative, is thus rather confined in time and space.

Most often, the museal displays re-narrate the history of the region of the nation from a broader European perspective. The Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin is often seen as the prototype for this evolution. In this case, the integration of a European perspective into the narrative was financed by the EU. With the museum's reopening in 2003, the exhibition called *Idee Europa. Entwürfe zum Ewigen Frieden* (Idea Europe. Drafts for Eternal Peace) considers German history in a larger European framework.[279] The DHM's collection is thus meant to represent *"from where the Germans have come, who they are in the European context."*[280]

Yet, at the same time also entirely new initiatives have been developed, which explicitly take

274Krankenhagen and Poehls, "Exhibiting Europe," 5.

275Kurt Imhof, "Europäische Museen der Zukünfte", in: Georg Kreis, ed., Europa als Museumsobject, Basel, Europainsitut der Universität Basel, 2008, 48-61. Cited in: Krankenhagen and Poehls, "Exhibiting Europe," 5.

276Charléty, "L'invention Du Musée de l'Europe. Contribution à L'analyse Des Politiques Symboliques Européenes."

277Krankenhagen and Poehls, "Exhibiting Europe," 2.

278Camille Mazé, "Des usages politiques du musée à l'échelle européene," *L'Hartmattan, Politique Européene* 2, no. 39 (2012): 71–100.

279Charléty, "L'invention Du Musée de l'Europe. Contribution à L'analyse Des Politiques Symboliques Européenes," 157.

280"Die Ständige Ausstellung Des DHM Im Zeughaus - Drei Millionen Besucher in Der Ständigen Ausstelung Des Deutschen Historischen Museum," *Deutsches Historisches Museum*, 2012, http://www.dhm.de/ausstellungen/staendige-ausstellung/drei_millionen.html.

the history of Europe and of the European integration as their subject. Since the end of the 1980's, museums have been created to specifically represent the history of Europe and the history of European integration.

The HEH is thus by no means the first museum project that focuses specifically on European History. Camille Mazé has pointed out that in the last thirty years there have been at least ten different initiatives to *"put Europe in the museum"*.[281] In fact, their multitude has even left the European institutions confused about which museums to support.

The *Exhibiting Europe* research project has revealed that this is very much a Western European development.[282] In fact, most of these projects originate in the countries that were important actors in the European integration in its early phase: France, the Benelux countries, Italy and Germany.[283]

A number of national historical and ethnographic museums were converted into European museums, such as the Museum für Volkskunde in Berlin, which adopted the European collection of the Ethnologisches Museum and was consequently transformed into the Museum für Europäische Kulturen in 1999. In France, the Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires - Centre d'Ethnologie française, was moved to Marseille, to be redefined as the Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée.[284] The Musée de Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée has been struggling for political and economic reasons, but has finally opened in June 2013, during Marseille's year as a cultural capital of Europe.

Projects for the musealisation of European history have however also been created *ex nihilo,* some of which have developed into established institutions, while many have not, or at least not fully, been realised. Especially those projects initiated outside of the EU circles, have met a with lot of difficulties. The Bauhaus Europa, an initiative by the city of Aachen, was rejected by a referendum in 2006. Also the plans for the Muséion per l'Europa, to be erected in Turin and the Musée de l'Union, to open in Luxembourg, were not realised.[285]

The failure of many projects shows the gap between the ambition and the reality of the emergence of museums aiming to represent the history of Europe.[286] But most importantly, it

281 Camille Mazé, "Des usages politiques du musée à l'échelle européene," *L'Hartmattan, Politique Européene* 2, no. 39 (2012): 74. My own translation from French.
282 Krankenhagen and Poehls, "Exhibiting Europe," 4.
283 Mazé, "Des usages politiques du musée à l'échelle européene," 77.
284 Krankenhagen and Poehls, "Exhibiting Europe," 4.
285 Mazé, "Des usages politiques du musée à l'échelle européene," 74.
286 Krankenhagen and Poehls, "Exhibiting Europe," 4.

shows the controversy that has surrounded these projects, and still does.

As many museums struggle to find ways of telling a *long* history of Europe, many are turning to narrations of the history of European integration. Yet, a major obstacle to the musealisation of the history of the European integration is its lack of drama. Some historians have even characterised the construction of Europe in the post-war period as "*particularly boring"* for non-specialists.[287] The national master narratives might have been largely based on invented myths, their power was in their compelling narration of great deeds and heroic figures. The stories of war and bloodshed are much more cinematographic than the stories of treaties and diplomacy.[288] The EU does not have an honour role of heroes or heroic stories. Besides, nowadays it is no longer possible to make a history museum in the nineteenth-century tradition.

Biographical Approach

Although historians have emphasised the importance of structural factors for the European integration, the focus on individuals is an interesting option for museums, for its potential to engage the visitor with personal stories.[289] This is why the attempt to engage citizens with the history of the EU is often done through the strategy that Wolfram Kaiser has called the biographical approach. This approach is clearly apparent in three different motives: in the narration of the lives of the Founding Fathers, of the active bystander and in participative narrating or *"lived integration",* in museums such as the Musée de l'Europe and in the houses of the Founding Fathers. Especially the last two approaches are interesting for this thesis, because of their connection to Memory Boom in historical exhibitions.

287Günter Bischof, "Une Europe sans histoire?", in: Etudes européenes, no. 2 2003. Cited in: Christine Cadot, "Can Museums Help Build a European Memory? The Example of the Musée de l'Europe in Brussels and in the Light of the 'New World' Museums' Experience," International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society 23, no. 2 (April 2012): 131.

288Ibid.

289Kaiser, "From Great Men to Ordinary Citizens? The Bibliographical Approach to Narrating European Integration in Museums," 397.

Founding Fathers

The Founding Fathers myth has been a very important tactic in the historical narration of the European integration. It is inspired by the American example, where the role of the founding fathers in the birth of the nation in the eighteenth century is a key narrative in the institutionalised national memory. In European memory, the Founding Fathers are the national politicians who, after the Second World War, were the first initiators who were striving to unite Europe.

Jan Ifversen and Christoffer Kølvraa of the Department of European Studies at the University of Arhus examined the functioning of the European Founding Fathers. Their analysis draws inspiration from the research in psychoanalysis on the functioning of the father figure in the family and in society at large. Ifversen and Kølvraa argue, following Freud's interpretation of the father figure, that founding fathers have a unique position; they institute a completely new set of moral codes. Indeed, in the mythical narrative of the community's origin, the role of the Founding Fathers is often in the erection of a new symbolic structure and thereby replace the chaos of an unstructured world.[290]

Following Rabaté, Ifversen and Kølvraa point out that the main function of a founding father is to be the main character in the communal mythical narrative, and therefore his personal life often "*is carefully configured to mirror the narrative structure and core elements of the mythical narrative*.[291] Founding fathers are stripped from their concrete historical context, so that present political issues, which they may not have even been able to imagine, can be motivated through the mythical authority of the founding father. The ahistorical reference to the father becomes a political legitimation of a current political entity, such as the EU. For the narrative of the European integration, this means that both the national background and the political colour of the Founding Fathers is to be forgotten or at least neglected.

The most significant places, where the motive of the Founding Fathers is present, are the houses of the Founding Fathers, regional museums that focus on the lives of the early founders of the EU. The private houses of the first national politicians engaged in the early European integration are now biographical museums. The Adenauer-Haus, the Casa De Gasperi, the Maison de Jean Monnet and the Maison de Robert Schuman are museums which

290Ifversen and Kølvraa, "Myth and History Politics in European Integration - The Myth of the Fathers," 2011, 11.
291Ibid., 12.

focus on the lives of these personalities in the context of the construction of the European institutions.[292]

Surprisingly, when they first opened, the museums tended to focus on the regional and national lives of their protagonists and only recently have they begun to strengthen the European dimension of the work of the Founding Fathers.[293] In 2009 the four houses started a European network, called Network of the Homes of the Founding Fathers and they formulated a common identity, starting to depict an explicitly European agenda.[294] Both the house of Robert Schuman and the house of Jean Monnet now receive funding from the EU.[295] In 2010 the network unveiled the plan to organise a transnational trip for schoolchildren to visit the museums, a new sort of political tourism, called Camino de Santiago, making clear reference to the Catholic pilgrimage of Santiago de Compostela.[296] So far this plan has however not been implemented.

As noted earlier, for the success of the mythical functioning of the European Founding Fathers, their national motivations and their political background should not be emphasised. The houses of the Founding Fathers indeed denationalise the politicians' personal backgrounds. For instance, in the case of De Gasperi, his fluent German and his role as a deputy in the Reichsrat, the national Austrian Parliament are emphasised, as Kaiser points out.[297]

Also their paternal authority is exhibited with the focus on their private lives and their role as 'pater familias'. Kaiser points out that in the Adenauer house, his many children and grandchildren are the central feature. In the case of Schuman's house, who was not married, his Catholic beliefs are stressed.[298]

The museums try to make a personal connection with the visitor, by presenting banal objects from everyday life, and thereby bridging the gab between the 'little narrative' of the man with

292"Maisons - Musées des Pères de l'Europe," accessed May 4, 2013, http://www.peresdeleurope.eu/.

293Kaiser, "From Great Men to Ordinary Citizens? The Bibliographical Approach to Narrating European Integration in Museums," 389.

294"Network of the Homes of the Founding Fathers," *Association Jean Monnet*, accessed January 6, 2013, http://www.ajmonnet.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=85&Itemid=96&lang=en&65bfd7f0b44a4b273ffcd21c9195cf7b=d04543be60b6693ea64e4e2c062f078b.

295Ifversen and Kølvraa, "Myth and History Politics in European Integration - The Myth of the Fathers," 2011, 2.

296Kaiser, "From Great Men to Ordinary Citizens? The Bibliographical Approach to Narrating European Integration in Museums," 390.

297Ibid., 391.

298Ibid., 390.

the grand narrative of the Founding Father.[299] Yet, the Founding Fathers narrative is not particularly successful. While it is very esteemed in EU elite circles, very few citizens Europe really know who these figures represent, nor do they identify with their works or personal lives. In a way the motive of the Founding Fathers resembles the figure of the national hero in the nineteenth-century nationalist histories. Although they are not mythical or heroic figures fighting in 'epic battles', - even when unsuccessful – they also function as a heroic and inspirational example. This is especially apparent in comparison with the two other strategies which are discussed, which are much more connected to a postmodern memory-driven version of history, and might therefore be more popular.

Selected Europeans

A more contemporary way to engage people with the history of European integration, is through the figure of the witness or the bystander. The personal memories of non-prominent but nevertheless particularly active contributors to the European integration process. This strategy is consistent with the current trend in historiography and museology, examined in Chapter Two and Three. This strategy enables a more diversified and democratic way of narrating the past. However, this strategy can also be problematic. In Kaiser's analysis, the two main problems, related to this strategy, are clearly summed up.

The first problem is caused by the fact that a majority of the visitors still expect a cohesive, truthful narrative of *what actually happened*, and therefore often take accounts of eyewitnesses as authoritative and treat them at fact value. However, research has shown that historical witnesses usually have a blurred vision of the past. Besides witnesses bring their personal *interpretation* of what happened, rather than providing a direct window on the past.[300]

Also problematic is the fact that the witnessing is still negotiated by the curator. The curator has a great deal of influence, in the selection of witnesses and in the choosing of what fragments he or she presents. Yet, the selection of testimonies of the *"selected Europeans",* who narrate their experiences in the *"lived integration",* is mostly not transparent and they are predominantly well-educated middle class professionals who have benefited socio-economically and culturally from the European unification[301] Eyewitnesses therefore function

299Ifversen and Kølvraa, "Myth and History Politics in European Integration - The Myth of the Fathers," 2011, 18.

300Kaiser, "Narrating Contemporary European History," 3.

301Kaiser, "From Great Men to Ordinary Citizens? The Bibliographical Approach to Narrating European

more as a medium to convey a particular narrative rather than a functioning as a voice, which is able to contest that narrative.[302] This problem will be explored in the analysis of the *It's our history* exhibition of the Musée de l'Europe.

Participative Narrating

Museums are currently looking for new strategies for engaging visitors with the history of the EU, which could offer less biased solutions than the motives of the Founding Fathers and the selected Europeans. As many museums are attempting to narrate non-elitist histories, also the museums concerned with European integration are looking at the possibilities offered by the strategy of participative narrating, based on the methodology of Oral History. Here, the visitor can contribute to the exhibition, mostly through interactive devices. The visitor is asked for memories of the European integration process and its influence on his or her personal life.

As Kaiser points out, this strategy is probably the most effective in its engagement with the history of the European integration. It turns the visitor into an active observer of the European integration history and stimulates an active interpretation of European citizenship.

At the same time, a diverse account of history can be established, as it enables a far-reaching narrative pluralism. In fact, it could do this to such an extent that it might actually create a dilemma for those initiatives wanting to represent the history of European integration as an uncontested, coherent historical process. But even these initiatives are not an innocent, but rather a politicised normative practice. In fact, they explicitly seek a degree of convergence and consensus in what we remember.[303]

Integration in Museums," 393.
302Kaiser, "Narrating Contemporary European History," 3.
303Ibid., 1.

Musée de l'Europe

One of the most significant attempts to musealise the history of Europe is undoubtedly the Musée de l'Europe, a project that was initiated in 1997. It had the aim to establish a new museum on the history of Europe in Brussels. The project has encountered various setbacks over the years, and up until now it has only resulted in four temporary exhibitions. The most prominent exhibition, entitled *It's our history! 50 years of European adventure,* opened in October 2007 in the *Tour & Taxis* venue in Brussels and has also been exhibited in Poland.

The Musée de l'Europe was envisioned to become a museum about the history of Europe. It was going to portray the history of the continent in a rather teleological way, starting from ancient times to the present day. This is exemplified in the following quote by the *Association du Musée de l'Europe: "The Union is the culmination of a millenary process led by the Greco-Roman civilization and thwarted for ages by the construction of nation states."*[304] The establishing of the museum has however not been realised for various reasons, not in the least because the Musée de l'Europe has been supplanted by the HEH.

The Musée de l'Europe was an initiative of independent entrepreneur Benoît Remiche, a lawyer and economist, who has worked with the European institutions. The team behind the *Musée de l'Europe* project*,* liked to present it as an initiative originated in civil society, 'from below', but as Cadot has noted, it was actually supported by a multitude of private companies and had strong bonds with both the Belgian state and the EU.[305] The museum received political support from the Belgian political elite, including the Minister of state Antoinette Spaak, the daughter of one of the Founding Fathers of the EU and Vice-President of the EC, Karel Van Miert.[306] The EC also supported the project, with a € 1 million grant.[307]

For Remiche, it was clear that creating this museum would be very much a political act: *"Faire un musée, ce n'est pas commettre un livre, c'est essentiellement un acte politique, surtout lorsqu'il s'agit d'un musée identitaire."*[308] He embraced this functioning of the

304Cadot, "Can Museums Help Build a European Memory? The Example of the Musée de l'Europe in Brussels and in the Light of the 'New World' Museums' Experience," 129.

305Ibid.

306Wolfram Kaiser, Stefan Krankenhagen, and Kerstin Poehls, *Europa Ausstellen: Das Museum als Praxisfeld der Europäisierung* (Köln: Böhlau, 2012), 33.

307"European Commission Supports a Major Exhibition Charting 50 Years of European History," *Official Website of the European Union*, accessed May 15, 2013, europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-07-1588_en.pdf.

308Speech by Benoît Rémiche during a conference called "L'Europe sans histoire?", in Paris on the 8th of March 2010. Cited in: Charléty, "L'invention Du Musée de l'Europe. Contribution à L'analyse Des Politiques Symboliques Européenes," 149.

museum and envisioned the Musée de l'Europe as an identity museum, providing "*the place of memory that Europe needs".*[309]

It's our history! 50 years of European adventure

The *It's our history exhibition!* was opened in 2007, at the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome. The exhibition about the history of European integration received a lot of critique in specialised literature. Its rather uncritical, teleological account of the European integration process, depicted as a constant evolution to an ever deeper integration, was denounced as being heavily biased. Rather than promoting an open view, the exhibition seems to offer a very one-sided interpretation of the continent's past and future.

The choice to avoid the account of the Second World War, and to start the covered time period just afterwards is a perfect example of the 'need to forget' in the forging of a positive collective memory and of the *point zero* narrative in the histories of the European integration. The exhibition does not narrate the story of the war, with its enemies and alliances. Indeed, the first image the visitors are confronted with is a picture of a destroyed Cologne. The war is presented as a pan-European catastrophe, where all Europeans were equally victims.[310]

To engage visitors with the history of European integration, the exhibition makers chose what Kaiser has called the biographical approach; the figures of the Founding Fathers and the 'Selected Europeans' serve as a museological tools. This new approach is clearly used for identity-building purposes rather than to simply make the history of Europe come alive.

After the image of Cologne, the exhibition opens with a room on the creation of the European Coal and Steel Committee. This room focuses largely on the Founding Fathers, based exclusively on objects and without a chronological narrative. Just as in the houses of the Founding Fathers, the historical figures are stripped of their immediate historical context, their national background and political colour. These qualities could be more divisive than uniting, and therefore have to be disregarded. Kaiser has argued that histories of the European integration *"tend to (over-) emphasise idealist motivations for integration and minimize its strong political contestation".* It is therefore not surprising that in *It's our history,* references

309"The Museum of Europe," *Expo-Europe*, accessed March 15, 2013, http://www.expo-europe.be/content/view/13/32/lang,en/.
310de Jong, "Is This Us? The Construction of European Woman/Man in the Exhibition It's Our History!," 378.

to the Founding Fathers do not address their political ties,[311] national background or ideological orientation, even though the Founding Fathers were highly motivated by these factors. In fact, their ideological drives were highly contested during the early years in the European integration process, in Scandinavian countries the conservative ideology was criticised. Also the fact that De Gasperi and Adenauer were supporting the European integration partly to fight socialism in their domestic politics is not mentioned in the exhibition.[312]

In *It's our history!,* the figure of the witness is also a central feature, through the showcasing of 27 'ordinary' Europeans, who Kaiser has dubbed the 'Selected Europeans'. Already in the second room, visitors are introduced to 27 people, one per member-state of the EU. These witnesses reappear throughout the exhibition, giving an account of their life stories and, in particular, narrating how the European integration had an impact on their daily life.

Illustration 7: Group picture of the 27 witnesses in the exhibition It's our history!

The usage of the figure of the witness in *It's our history!,* has also been analysed by Steffi De Jong, a PhD student involved in the *Exhibiting Europe* research project. De Jong's doctoral research examines how the overcoming of the Second World War is represented in museums, through the figure of the witness.

In the introduction of the different motives in the biographical approach, I have discussed the possible difficulties connected to the usage of the witness motive in the museal context. Of the two issues Wolfram Kaiser identifies – the blurred memory of the witness which is taken for truth by the visitor and the manipulation by curators – the second issue seems to be the most relevant for this exhibition.

311 The exhibition catalogue does state that *the majority of them where Christian Democrats but this is not he conveyed in the exhibition itself.*

312Kaiser, "From Great Men to Ordinary Citizens? The Bibliographical Approach to Narrating European Integration in Museums," 391.

The curators of *It's our history!* claim that the 27 eyewitnesses were chosen at random. Allegedly, they could have been any other citizen of the EU. An exhibition texts states this explicitly that *"... what is true for these 27 is also true for a great many other people. At the end of the day, it is true for everyone."*[313]

Yet, the 'selected Europeans', seem to have been chosen meticulously, to represent some sort of ideal European citizens. Steffi De Jong's analysis shows how the 27 witnesses in fact represent an essentialist European unity, rather than expressing European diversity.

First of all, the 27 witnesses are ethnically all white. This is especially striking in comparison to the witnesses put forward in the *America – It's also our history!* exhibition, also developed by Tempora. In this case, the ethnically diverse witnesses, represent the American myth of the country of immigration and the united melting pot. In the exhibition on European history, immigration is presented as a challenge.[314]

But, as De Jong observes, in their personal experiences the chosen 27 do not represent diversity either. The witnesses can be divided into two groups: those who performed great deeds, from Western-Europe, and the Eastern-Europeans, who were victims of unjust regimes.[315] For all of them, the European integration process has changed their personal and professional life for the better. Clearly, this interpretation of the European integration as an improvement for all, is severely biased. The many socio-economic losers this process has produced have not been expressed through the figure of one single witness.

Especially striking is the fact that the experiences of the witnesses cover most of the objectives of the EU. Kaiser has observed that the testimony of one of the witnesses is almost an exact replication of one of the policy papers of the EC.[316]

Finally, De Jong stresses that all witnesses were themselves active participants in the integration process, the Eastern Europeans by resisting Soviet dictatorship and by fleeing to the West, the Western Europeans by actively taking part in the construction of Europe. Moreover, the fact that they can recall these events, understand their implications and that they, at this point of their lives, take up their duty to testify, makes them model European

313Exhibition text *It's our History! 50 years of European adventure.* Cited in: de Jong, "Is This Us? The Construction of European Woman/Man in the Exhibition It's Our History!," 377.
314Ibid., 376.
315Ibid., 377.
316Kaiser, "Narrating Contemporary European History," 4.

citizens.[317] The exhibition does not only want to engage the visitors with the history of European integration, but to transform them into European citizens, who are not only aware of what is taking place on the European level, but also become active participants in the building of a European society.[318]

It is thus apparent that the selection of the 27 witnesses was calculated, or even manipulated. It is clear that in their positive experiences, but also in their active participation and their vigilance, these witnesses are not jut any European but *the* model European. Of course, the question remains if this exhibition contributes to the forming of a sense of European identity among the visitors. It does not matter how emphatically the curators state that these witnesses could have been anyone, there is a possibility that those who did identify with these stories, left the exhibition disillusioned rather than impressed. The public reception of the exhibition has however not been studied.

The Musée de l'Europe and the HEH projects are often confused for each other. This is not surprising considering the many features they share: they are both based in Brussels and are top-down initiatives, supported by the European institutions. It is also a bit sensitive, as in the early years of the Musée de l'Europe Project, it was commonly seen by both the organisation as by EU representatives, that this project would eventually develop into a museum with very close ties with the European institutions. This plan was however thwarted, when the initiative to set op a HEH. Yet, when Pöttering first announced his wish to set up a HEH, Tempora, wanted to provide the museums with the plan for the permanent exhibition. Also at a later stage, Tempora, unsuccessfully, competed with a proposal for the official open tender for the exhibition design. However, despite the convergence and even overlapping of the two projects, it appears that the HEH or more specifically the APT, has taken a very different approach for the permanent exhibition of the HEH than that of the Musée de l'Europe.

317de Jong, “Is This Us? The Construction of European Woman/Man in the Exhibition It’s Our History!,” 380.
318Ibid.

4.5 House of European History

In this thesis I have analysed the historical and museological context that is relevant to the HEH, as well as the current context of European politics. In this subchapter I will examine what position the HEH takes towards the discussed traditional and current approaches in the fields of memory, identity and the historical museum.

The HEH will be the result of the negotiation between a large number of actors. Yet, even if the concept behind the HEH has partially been influenced by the politicians and advisory boards associated with the initiative, the APT has certainly put its stamp on the project. Although the political conception of the HEH is clear, the role of the APT in the development of the permanent exhibition is at least as important. As Fiona McLean argues, even if the role of a museum's staff has not been immediately recognised in the scholarship on museums, the character of the museum is often determined by key individuals such as the curators, rather than by its political patrons.[319] This is also the case in the HEH, especially because the curators of the APT have been very strict in the application of their role as interpreters of history.

In any case, it was clear that the HEH would be significantly different from the exhibition of the Musée de l'Europe. The exhibition *It's our history! 50 years of European adventure* opened in 2007, right before the European economic crisis struck. To a certain extent, the history of the European integration as a teleological story of continuous progress was still a position that could be respected and be endorsed by a large part of the European citizens. To the members of the APT, it seems no longer plausible that such a narrative would be embraced by the public after the economic crisis of 2008.

More importantly though, is the fact that the objectives of the Musee de l'Europe and the HEH offer very different visions of their purpose – positioning themselves respectively as an identity museum and as a place for reflection and debate. This is possibly partially the case, since as a private initiative the Musée de l'Europe really had to stress its contribution to European identity to obtain European funding, while for the APT it was easier to step away from this, as its independent work was established in the Conceptual Basis.

In the first section of this subchapter I will analyse the HEH from a political perspective. I

319McLean, “Museums and the Representation of Identity.”

will examine how the APT is being supervised and how the APT's relationship with the politicians, the Academic Committee and the Board of Trustees actually functions.
In the second section, I will discuss what the APT has called the principles of the museum – the guiding conceptual ideas behind the permanent exhibition and future temporary exhibitions. This section is essential to the understanding of the historiographical and museological choices made by the APT.
In the last section I will examine the permanent exhibition. I will discuss how the historical narrative has changed during the development of the project, including the content proposals made in the Conceptual Basis. I will describe the six Themes of the permanent exhibition and elaborate on both the historical narrative as the (audio)visual museological choices. This thesis does not attempt to cover all of the events and processes which constitute the historical narrative of the permanent exhibition. Rather it aims to give a general introduction to what the plans for the permanent exhibition look like today and highlight certain aspects, which will be discussed in greater detail. Since the topic of this thesis is the *usage* of the past, the focus will be on the way the past is interpreted into a visual narrative, rather than discussing the actual historical events and phenomena that are narrated. In particular, a focus will be placed on the usage of the memory image in the permanent exhibition, and how this is either used to contest or confirm the European narrative the HEH will present. As mentioned before, unfortunately, I did not obtain the permission to include the visualisations presented by the designer.
The basis or the source material for my analysis of the permanent exhibition are the briefs and scripts, developed by the curators. The briefs are museal scenario's which the curators use to centralise all content, both narrative- and object-related, that will be a part of the permanent exhibition. Hence, the briefs are a very detailed description of the permanent exhibition. The scripts are a distilled version of the briefs. They were developed to enable the exhibition designers to get an overview of the main messages of the permanent exhibition. It should be stressed that these documents are always subject to change and might still alter significantly in their execution in the actual museum.

4.5.1 Politics

The establishment of a museum representing the history of a certain political formation is always politically driven, especially considering the important place history and memory take up in today's cultural policies. The following observation by Krankenhagen explains why this is also true for museums that represent European history: *"Any museum representing the history and histories of European integration has the potential to be an important forum for defining a common European heritage and Europeaness not as a national, but as a trans- and supranational culture and identity."*[320]

This is especially the case for a museum conceived *within* the European institutions. The HEH, a project of the EP, is almost by definition a political undertaking. However, the Conceptual Basis established that the academic independence and objective portrayal of history have top priority. The APT asserts that it can work freely, without restrictions to its academic freedom.[321] Still, the constant negotiation between the political initiators of this project and historians and museologists is fundamental to the process of creating the HEH. In this sense it is not really 'pure' academic historiography, although one could ask if there such a thing actually exists, especially in the context of public history.

The APT confers biannually with the AC, to discuss the developments of the creation of the permanent exhibition. I attended the conference with the AC, on the 8th of July 2013.The AC is the only body which has the official authority to assess and comment on the content of the permanent exhibition. They AC functions as an independent body, to ensure that the APT meets the highest historiographical and museological standards. However, the members of the AC do not want the depiction of the history of Europe to put the EU in a bad light. Additionally, they want the Conceptual Basis to be respected, as several of the members of the AC were also part of the Committee of Experts which created this document. Finally, as the AC is made up of prominent historians and museologists, they do not want their own interpretation of history and their ideas on its musealisation to be jeopardised and their professional reputation definitely also plays a role

When I attended the meeting in July 2013, Professor Hütter made a plea for the part

320Krankenhagen and Poehls, "Exhibiting Europe," 3.
321Vovk van Gaal and Dupont, "The House of European History," 47.

concerning the European integration to be less 'boring' and to make a more emotional appeal on people. This is of course keeping with the political motivation of the project, which is the stimulating of identification with the European integration process and thereby encourage (the emergence of) a European identity.

The members of the APT, and in particular Taja Vovk van Gaal and Andrea Mork, its two spokespersons, have become increasingly adept in defending the APT's distinct position as an independent working team. While at the beginning the AC was poised to interfere with the development, they are now conscious of their role as an advisory board, which is only supposed to give advice but not impose particular choices.

Besides, when discussing the new developments in the creation process of the permanent exhibition, the members of the APT attempt to present the plans in such a way, that will satisfy the AC. The Conceptual Basis is consistently being referred to, even if the new developments might not be entirely in keeping with this document. The APT is very conscientious in its preparation for meetings with the AC. Over time the APT has learned to navigate within the structure of the boards and committees. Also, it is important to note, the AC does not have full access to the briefs and scripts, but only gets a rather restricted insight into the development of the permanent exhibition. Finally, the advice given by the AC is not binding. That is why the members of the APT can implement the suggestions they consider to be valid and leave out those which do not conform with their ideas.

The Board of Trustees is the other official organ monitoring the working of the APT. It is officially only responsible for the general management of the project, and follow-up on the new developments. The members of the Board of Trustees are conscious of this role, and do not attempt to interfere with the content of the HEH. This might be the case because they realise that not only would an uncritical museum receive negative reviews in the press and academia, it would also not be readily accepted by the public, which for them is of course crucial for the success of the museum.

Yet, together with some prominent European politicians involved with the development of the HEH, such as the former Secretary-General Harald Rømer, the current Secretary-General Klaus Welle, and Martin Schulz, the President of the EP, the Board of Trustees does have some influence on the content of the HEH. At a certain point, in a conflict during a discussion with the APT, Klaus Welle, clearly set out the power relationship at a meeting in August 2012,

when he was expressing his dissatisfaction at the percentage of European integration history in the exhibition plan, by stating: "*He who pays decides"* - a literal statement of what is probably the number one vexation of public historians.

The political representatives tend to have a strong personal and sentimental connection to the project. Harald Rømer, for example, has worked his whole adult life for the European institutions. His personal experiences make him feel quite strongly about the necessity of people knowing the history of European integration.

Although the opinions of the politicians are fairly similar in their wish to convey an account of European integration in a positive light, to a certain extent their political orientation determines which story they wish the HEH to tell.

This manifests itself primarily in the confrontation between the conception of the museum of respectively Hans-Gert Pöttering and the new President of the EP Martin Schulz. When Pöttering, a Christian Democrat, first conceived of the museum, he envisioned a more Judeo-Christian, conservative interpretation of European history. As we will see, this is also the interpretation of history that is suggested in the Conceptual Basis. Martin Schultz, the current President of the EP, is a Social Democrat and more in favour of a focus on socio-economic considerations in the history of Europe. In the Board of Trustees the whole political spectrum of the EP is represented.

In October 2012, the APT presented is first plans for the permanent exhibition to President Schulz. His political support was crucial for both the acceptance of the work of the APT as well as the continuation of the project as a whole. Schulz reacted very enthusiastically and actually said to be very relieved that the APT aimed to internalise a very critical approach on the narration of the history of Europe. He also indicated that he would interfere if any politicians tried to impose something on the APT and that they would always be able to to count on him for support.

Yet, even if the APT has a decent level of academic freedom, the main goal of this museum, the creation of a unifying European history, is supported by all representatives of the EU and is always present.

This was especially clear in the fact that it was quite difficult to convince the politicians of the necessity of a broad historical view both in time – *an understanding of the history of the nineteenth century is necessary to explain the events of the twentieth century* – as in space –

knowledge about the history of the Cold War is necessary to understand the European integration process.

In the end, the APT is working in the midst of politics. Even if it is important to stress that in their everyday working, the members of the APT are able to work in a rather unobstructed way and that they feel that their autonomy in their daily work is effective,[322] also a certain degree of self-censorship should not be discounted either. It is important to emphasise that in the development of the permanent exhibition, the question about hypothetical reactions of the political initiators are always present in the minds of the curators.

After the opening of the museum, the influence of politics on the content of the HEH will depend largely on its institutional framework. This will undoubtedly have a major impact on its functioning and independence. Although the Conceptual Basis clearly sets out that the HEH has to become an independent institution, the possibility exists that the HEH will be an institution working under the auspices of the European institutions, because it appears to be impossible to create a completely independent institution if it was conceived within the institutional framework of the EU.

322Ibid.

4.5.2 The Principles of the House of European History

In this section I examine what the APT has called the principles of the HEH. First I will discuss the museum's Mission Statement, a short yet important introduction to the museum's objectives. Afterwards I will discuss the museum's leading principles in more detail.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement, developed by the APT, is a very good introduction to understanding the mandate of the HEH. It defines the HEH's overall identity as such: *"The House of European History is dedicated to the understanding of the shared past and diverse experiences of European people. It functions as a reservoir of European memory. It seeks to engage visitors in discovering different points of view and common ground in European history. As such, the House of European History becomes a meeting point for people of all generations and walks of life."*[323]

The objectives of the HEH, set out by the APT in 2011, highlights what will be the main programme of the HEH. The HEH wants visitors to *"learn about European historical processes and events and engage in critical reflection on what these processes mean for the present."* [324] It also wants to be a *"central focus point where research and debate on European history can come together".*[325]

Europe – a history

The HEH will present the history of the whole European continent of the previous two centuries, and will not only focus on the history of European Integration. Hence, the scope will be much wider both temporally and geographically. The belief is that to understand the history of European integration, a certain degree of familiarity with the history of the nineteenth century is paramount. Additionally, the European integration process cannot be understood without the appreciating of the importance of certain global historical developments.

The HEH wants to narrate the history of the European continent from a bird's eye perspective,

323 Academic Project Team, *Mission Statement of the House of European History,* 2011
324Academic Project Team, *Draft Document for the House of European History*, 2011, 4
325Academic Project Team, *Draft Document for the House of European History*, 2011, 5.

rather than focussing on the specific events in the different nation-states. At the same time, it wants to ensure that the different parts of Europe are equally represented, and thereby avoid the risk of bringing a too Western- or Northern-European perspective. The permanent exhibition will only discuss those events and processes that are distinctly European, rather than just an addition to national histories. Conditions have been formulated to determine what aspects a historical topic should have to be considered as European: it has to *"have originated in Europe, which expanded across Europe, and which are relevant up to nowadays.*"[326]

Identity versus memory

During an early stage, when the first members of the APT were discussing what should become the leading principles of the HEH, it was decided that 'identity' should not be a guiding concept. Although this concept had been central to the speech given by President Pöttering, the members of the APT considered it to be a problematic concept, because of its essentialist nature. this concept was considered to be too restrictive, especially considering in the case of European history. The APT did not believe the complex issue of European identity could or should be defined within the museum, especially considering the museum's authoritative position.

Instead, the concept of collective memory was chosen, as it was thought to be less reductionist than identity and to offer a more fluid model. Memory was emphasised because it is not fixed, but subject to change and renegotiated throughout history; it has the interesting potential to portray both what unites and what divides Europe. Additionally, the potential of memory to tell a history from below and to go beyond the heroic history model of the nation-state was praised. The concept was perceived to have a critical potential, bringing forward multiperspectivity, which is also one of the main principles of the HEH. It was actually this 'contesting' quality of memory which was chosen to become central to the HEH.

Reflexivity and Multiperspectivity

A reflexive attitude is of great importance to the APT. The members of the APT consider that the lack of public debate should be battled by a constant self-critical, reflexive work method. This is of course also reflected into their perception of the permanent exhibition. When giving a historical account of the past, the HEH tries to reject any teleological interpretation, to

326Vovk van Gaal and Dupont, "The House of European History," 49.

negate a one-sided view of history. At the start of the exhibition, the visitor will be confronted with the message that every historical account is only *one* interpretation of the past and therefore a social construct. This idea has to be a guiding principle throughout the museum visit.

French historian Jean-Pierre Rioux argued that, in the narration of European history, history itself, with its geographical diversity and its inherent conflict, stands in the way of a teleological history which aims to justify the historic march towards the EU.[327] The analysis of the narrative proposed by the *It's our history* exhibition of the Musée de l'Europe proves that this assertion is not true, although this exhibition of course only discussed the post-war period and thereby avoided the most divisive memories of the history of Europe.

Yet, it is probable that when discussing the many wars and the diverging histories of the different nation-states on the European continent and especially voicing the diversity of opinions and interpretations of the past, could lead to a critical, multiperspective understanding of the history of Europe. This is what is believed by head curator Andrea Mork.

The HEH wants to offer a multiperspectival view on European history and will present different interpretations of the past next to each other, providing a diversified account of the past rather than just portraying the history of the 'victors'. Multiperspectivity, allowing different viewpoints and interpretations of history, is evoked in an attempt to reach beyond the relativity of a narrative that is designed at one given point in time and space.[328] The coherence in the historical narrative should however be kept, since the HEH still wishes to bring a comprehensive account of European history.

It is however difficult to achieve this, because of the complexity and size of a topic such as the history of the continent, and especially because of the multiperspectival view.[329]

Therefore, the APT wants to develop an exhibition that also encourage the visitors to reflect on the history of Europe, and to share their *own* interpretation of the topics addressed in the exhibition. This will be facilitated through the medium of interactive displays. The public will have the possibility of giving their own account of what happened, even if this does not

327Jean-Pierre Rioux, "Pour Une Histoire de l'Europe Sans Adjectif," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue D'histoire* no. 50 (April 1996): 109.

328Bodil Axelsson, Christine Dupont, and Chantal Kesteloot, "Entering Two Minefields: Research for Policy-Making and the Creation of New History Museums in Europe," in *EuNaMus Report No. 9 - Entering the Minefields: The Creation of New History Museums in Europe*, vol. 83, Linköping Electronic Conference Proceedings (presented at the European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen, Brussels: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012), 9.

329Vovk van Gaal and Dupont, "The House of European History," 49.

coincide with the museum's narrative. In this way a necessary dialogue will be stimulated, where the visitor is no longer supposed to be a passive recipient but an active contributor to the debate. Here, the motive of memory – with a contesting power – comes in. Essential to the concept of the HEH is thus the highlight of the idea that any presentation of history is a construct defined by individual values and perceptions.[330]

Centre and periphery

A key motive throughout the exhibition will be the juxtaposition of the concepts of centre and peripheral. By showing that in Europe, loci of centre and periphery have constantly changed, visitors' preconceptions can be challenged, while also conveying the factor of contingency in history. The role of coincidences in the European integration process will be especially stressed.

A House

Next to the 'memory 'and the 'centre-versus-periphery' motives, the 'house' metaphor will be the third leitmotif that guides the visitor throughout the museum. The principal reason the HEH is called a *House* of European History, is because the museum that functions as a model for the HEH, the Haus der Geschichte Bundesrepublik Deutschland is called a house rather than a museum.[331]

Yet apart from this, it is noticeably apparent how the political initiators behind those new museums, have developed a fear of the term *museum.*[332] It has become a dangerous term, because of its political connotations in the past. The APT decided to fully embrace the name of the HEH, by conceiving the HEH as a homey, welcoming and open institution, that does not have the same institutionalised feel as many museums do.

Visitors Oriented – an Inclusive Museum

In line with the priorities in museums nowadays, the visitor is central to the HEH. The museum aspires to be an inclusive institution and wants to attract a broad range of people of different geographical, generational and socio-cultural provenance.[333] The fact that the

330Academic Project Team, *Draft Document for the House of European History*, 2011, 7.

331Huistra and Molema, "In de Steigers: Het Huis Voor de Europese Geschiedenis," 313.
332Vovk van Gaal and Dupont, "The House of European History," 50.
333Ibid., 45.

museum will be free of entry is the main method to ensure the diversity of the public, because it will not impede anybody of coming for financial reasons.[334] Additionally, a wide array of other measures are taken to attract a wide range of people to visit the museum and for the museum's content to be accessible to all. A comprehensive knowledge of European history will not be required to understand the exhibition. In fact, due to the limited amount of time visitors usually spend in museums, a simple, clear message on the first level should help the visitor to grasp the basic meaning of a certain topic. Additional content will be offered on the second and third level to engage people who are interested in learning more about a certain topic, while at the same time adding nuance to the main message. Another way to guarantee that the HEH will be an accessible museum, is the fact that all content will be offered in the 24 official languages of the EU.

The APT claims that it is also visitor-orientated, as it is aware of both the knowledge about European History as well as the wishes of the public, as reported through the taking of public surveys. Visitor surveys were conducted at on the 9th of May 2013, during the Open Day of the EP. I assisted in the gathering of survey data. The information derived from these surveys was not really of practical use, especially as no differentiation was made on the basis of age or nationality. The questionnaire also came a bit late, as it contained ten questions on the history of Europe, when the decisions on the historical narrative that would be presented in the permanent exhibition was already pretty fixed. The results of this particular exercise have thus not really affected any aspect of the museum.

In September 2013 interviews with focus groups will be organised, to examine how they would receive the themes and topics in the exhibition and if they understand the main messages. This will probably generate more interesting results. It will be just in time to adjust some of the content and visuals of the permanent exhibition, if necessary.

Object and Multimedial

The permanent exhibition will be an object-based and multi-medial exhibition. The complexity of narrating the history of Europe in a coherent exhibition asks that the broadest possible range of modern museological tools and methods be used.[335] The fact that the entire content of the HEH will be available in all 24 languages of the EU, will result in an exhibition with very little text. Every topic will have one 'leading object', which represents the main

334Academic Project Team, *Draft Document for the House of European History*, 2011, 5.

335Vovk van Gaal and Dupont, "The House of European History," 45.

message of this topic. As mentioned before, the multi-medial displays will also enable the visitor to interact with the exhibition.

As already mentioned in the first chapter, most of the exhibited objects will be on loan from other institutions from all over Europe, where the HEH will only posses a relatively limited collection of its own.

Individual visitors will have a tablet at their disposal, where they can find information about the exhibited objects and learn more on a certain topic of interest. Groups will undertake a guided visit, where the guide will be able to change the language of displays and audiovisual material and give more in-depth information. Even though the HEH wants to convey that history is essentially a construction, it is still conceived as a didactic museum, putting forward a chronological narrative, rather than being a postmodern museum which shows all different interpretations on history on the same level, without taking a clear stance.

4.5.3 The Permanent Exhibition

The permanent exhibition will be the nucleus of the HEH, which is why it was developed in the first phase of the APT's work on this project. It was the only section that was already at an advanced stage when I began writing this thesis. For this reason, but also for the obvious reason that it is the most interesting component to examine, my analysis of the content of the museum is focused on the permanent exhibition. Special attention will be devoted to the way the principles of the HEH will be incorporated into the exhibition plan, in particular the usage of the memory motive will be examined.

The Development of the Museological Narrative

The first suggestion for the content of the permanent exhibition was made in the Conceptual Basis, which was published by the Committee of Experts in October 2008. This document presented a historiographical and museological plan for the permanent exhibition. In the Conceptual Basis, the history of the European continent is presented in eighty-six points. The historical narrative is divided into three chapters: *The origins and development of Europe until the end of the 19th century, Europe and the World Wars* and finally *Europe since the Second World War.*[336]

The Conceptual Basis aimed to provide the HEH with a general framework, to develop a coherent narrative for the permanent exhibition. It is a 'canon'-inspired document, in the sense that it is attempting to identify the main historical events and processes that comprise the history of Europe. It proposes that the HEH should illustrate the diversity of Europe as the communality of its roots.

The Conceptual Basis advises that the majority of the exhibition space should be dedicated to the twentieth century and in particular the history of European integration. It was also determined that the content should be presented chronologically.

When the APT started working on the development of the permanent exhibition, it was decided that for the development of the content, of the historical narrative, they would almost

336Committee of Experts, "Conceptual Basis for a House of European History," 11–27.

start from scratch. Of course, they had to follow certain restrictions introduced in the Conceptual Basis, such as the chronological narration and the importance of the twentieth century in respect to other periods.

Nevertheless, the APT began with brainstorming sessions about the meaning of history from a European point of view and what would constitute the principles of the HEH. In the very first instance the APT wanted to focus cultural and social history, and the ambition to talk about the European integration process was quite lacking, but this changed gradually throughout the process.

Naturally, some of the decisions made in the Conceptual Basis had to be followed, such as the chronological narrative and the emphasis on the history of European integration, but the APT was free to initiate new concepts.

The APT decided not to start the historical narrative with the first "*forms of higher culture which can already be described as European",* as proposed by the Committee of Experts and by which was meant those civilisations which existed along the trading routes near the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Instead, it was concluded that the exhibition would start at the beginning of the 'long nineteenth century', as Hobsbawm would call it, with the start of the French revolution. Some flashbacks to earlier periods will however be made. The proposed historical narrative in the Conceptual Basis continues until 2007, while the APT has decided to extend it until 2012. Not only is the winning of the Nobel Peace Prize included in the narrative, also the economic crisis will also be covered.

The APT has thus quite a lot of freedom in the reworking of the historical narrative proposed by the Conceptual Basis, especially because this document set out the entire historical narrative in a mere 15 pages. The permanent exhibition will have two reflective and four chronological historical Themes, where the history of Europe will be presented in a chronological way from approximately 1800 onwards. The focus will be primarily on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with flashbacks to important events in earlier times. The exhibition will have six thematic clusters, Theme 1 and 6 being reflections on European memory and European heritage, characterised by a general focus. Theme 2 to 5 tell the history of Europe from 1800 until 2012. I will of course also discuss how these subjects are interpreted into a visual narrative. The museum will have a clear didactic purpose.

For the further development of the exhibition, the APT is very dependent on the proposals of

the exhibition designers. In early 2013, the APT started working with GPD, the exhibition design company from Seville. Here too, it was a long process of negotiation from the beginning. GPD is a company with a lot of experience in the specialised field of multimedia installation in museums. They were the designers for the Saudi Arabian pavilion in the World Expo in Shanghai in 2010, which was the most visited pavilion, with up to 25.000 people per day. Here, the 'story' was told through an immersive video installation, showing the beauty of Saudi Arabia.

When they competed in the open tender, the designers at GPD were under the impression that the HEH would be a very positive, teleological historical account, which celebrates the virtues of the EU. The working process of establishing a musealisation of the briefs has thus proven to be quite difficult. The members of the GPD – understandably - believe the briefs which have been created by the APT for the last two and a half years, are too elaborate to fit into a one to one-and-a-half hour visit.

The GPD team also think that the APT contradicts its own story too much – due to the fact that very often as soon as one historical event is put forward, another perspective on, or interpretation of, the same event - or an event which contests the first event - is given. The GPD struggles with this, since they are used to clear-cut narratives, based on multimedia rather than objects. Yet, it is exactly this complexity the APT is not willing to let go of.

The GPD proposed to bring a large sculpture into the middle of the atrium, a 'tornado' of objects and citations, representing the Europe of Ideas and making a visual link between all the topics explored on the different floors of the Eastman building, which was greatly appreciated by the APT.

The GPD also suggested to make the exhibition more and more interactive as the historical time progresses, one can of course question the historical truth of what it implied, given the undemocratic or at least non-participatory character of the European institutions, but it will probably contribute to the goal of the HEH, to make the history of the European integration more engaging and to stimulate people to take part in this process. The proposition of the GPD to make the exhibition space brighter, as time goes on, starting in exhibition room which is darkened and the visit ends at the roof of the glass structure on top of the Eastman building is of course also very suggestive, and will probably have a big influence on the visitor's impression of the exhibition – and of European history.

Because the plan for the permanent exhibition is written in great detail - the briefs comprise of an enormous number of pages - and because this thesis is not the place for a detailed description of all of the topics addressed in the permanent exhibition, I have chosen to focus on the content that will be presented on the first level. While this decision might be slightly problematic - because it is precisely in the second level that nuances are brought in - it seemed that the second level mostly offers additional information about the topic, rather than actually questioning what is presented on the first level. Additionally, the majority of visitors will only really internalise the information that is presented on the first level, in particular considering the limited amount of time most people will devote to the museum visit.

Theme 1 – *Shaping Europe*

Shaping Europe will be situated on the second level of the new addition to the Eastman building. It aims to establish the main museological principles of the HEH and introduce the visitor to the topic of European history and memory. *Shaping Europe* seeks to convey that the HEH does not intend on showing a sum of national histories, but focus instead on those developments, that have affected *all* Europeans. At the same time, it introduces the complexity and variety of European history. It is a reflexive chapter that endeavours to convey the fact that the ideas, images and concepts of Europe have changed over time. Simultaneously, it is the intention of Theme 1 to help the visitor to understand that history is *per se* a construction by challenging what the visitor would consider as Europe and its history rather than confirming or defining it.

In July 2013, the general message of Theme 1 stated that: "*The House of European History is a reservoir of European memory that transcends national perspectives toward a shared past. Europe is not a clearly defined space geographically, but shaped by history. Ideas and images of Europe have changed over time. European history is more than the sum of its parts or the addition of national histories, due to the common perspective on those developments, which affected all Europeans, whether they have bound the continent together or divided it."*[337] The *Shaping Europe* Theme has three topics: 'The Myth of Europa', 'Mapping Europe' and 'Memory and European Heritage'.

The first topic 'The Myth of Europa', introduces visitors to the mythological figure of Europa, the princess who gave her name to the continent. The myth *Europa and the Bull* has been interpreted in various ways throughout history and this is also the main idea that will be put forward in this topic. By showing how this symbol has been interpreted in many different ways it wants to show that there is not one essential or right way to interpret the myth. There is no definitive founding story of Europe. At the same time it seeks to startle the visitors by showing that the European myth originated in what is now considered to be Asia and simultaneously express that cultural transfer has from the beginning been central to the European continent. However, the presentation of a variety of ancient interpretations of the myth could suggest to visitors that European citizens have common roots, located in an ancient past, rather than appreciating the actual scope, as these are so-called threshold concepts, which might be clear to academics but probably not to the majority of the visitors.

337Academic Project Team, *Theme 1 Script General,* July 2013.

The second topic, 'Mapping Europe' is an itinerary through the European continent as a spatial entity. It seeks to convey that Europe has never been a clearly defined space geographically, and therefore is not a self-evident entity, but rather a changing geographical delineation, marked by history. Its perception, images and concepts have changed over time. An interactive multimedia display with many different maps shows that the 'borders' of Europe have been repeatedly modified. In particular maps offering an unfamiliar vision of Europe, only vaguely recognisable by today's standards, will encourage the visitors to rethink their spatial preconceptions of the continent.

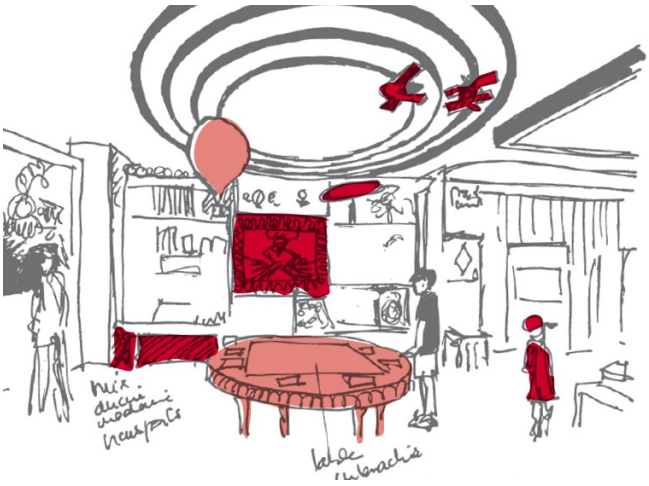

Illustration 8: A sketch of 'Mapping Europe'.

The third topic, 'Memory and European Heritage' aims to convey that Europe as a continent has been characterised by a common heritage, particular features, traditions and achievements, which distinguish its culture from other continents. It is exactly this common heritage and values which create a feeling of togetherness among the continent. The spread of basic cultural practice from their place of historical genesis across the continent has established *European* culture. At the same time however, the HEH wants to show that memory is necessarily negotiated from the present and therefore continuously changing.

In the subtopic 'Memory', one of the key motifs of the permanent exhibition is introduced. Visitors are presented with the concept that memory, said to be constitutive for mankind, as the basis of its self-understanding, both as individuals and as members of a social group, 'a sine qua non of modern civilised societies'. It is maintained that the act of remembering, as a part of history in Europe, has deep roots and is still relevant today. Yet it is also suggested that the way in which Europeans remember their history has changed over time, has been deeply contested, and is evolving as we speak. This is why any reflection on cultural identity and even any historical account is a *de facto* construction. The exhibition will express that memory depends on its historical context, is selective and can be manipulative. The link between memory and oblivion is suggested, by showing that forgetting is an integral part of remembrance, whether involuntarily or intentionally. The visitor will be invited to reflect

upon the concepts of memory and oblivion, through confrontation with the dialectics of remembering and forgetting. The mythological rivers of Lethe and Mnemosine are used as metaphors for these two concepts, and in this context a range memories of past events is presented.

In the subtopic ' European Heritage', the exhibition will express that European history is more than the addition of different national histories, but a civilisation and culture characterised by fundamental elements developed through history. Yet, the visitor will be invited to reflect on this, through an interactive presentation, asking the following questions: *What binds the continent together? What could be regarded as part of a European identity? What parts of the European heritage are worthy of preservation, what do we want to change, what should we refuse?* The interactive seeks to encourage the visitors to reflect on and question their ideas about European heritage.

Illustration 9: A sketch of 'European Heritage'.

Objects of high symbolic significance will be presented in unlikely pairs. The aim of this surprising relationship is to evoke new questions, sometimes because of their relative positions, sometimes in describing the expansion of the concept, sometimes by accentuating contradictory perspectives. Visitors will quickly appreciate that the presented ideas are complex. For instance, a bust of Aristotle will be confronted with a photograph depicting the misery on a nineteenth-century slave ship. The visitor will be struck by the pairing of the topic slavery with one of the most influential ancient Greek philosophers. On the second level, a text will explain that slavery was known in almost every ancient civilisation. In the Middle Age theologians like Thomas Aquinas justified slavery by referring to Aristotle. It will also be shown that the Slave Trade Act of 1807 of the United Kingdom was the beginning of the end of slavery by European powers.

Theme 2a – *Europe Ascendant*

Theme 2a will be located at the third floor, in the new addition to the Eastman Building. Theme 2a is called *Europe Ascendant* and gives an account of the history of the European continent in the nineteenth century. While Theme 1 is a rather innovative way of starting a historical exhibition - by challenging the visitor's assumptions about Europe and declaring that history is essentially a construction - starting from Theme 2a, the beginning of the chronological narrative, the HEH actually presents a rather traditional historical exhibition. As of today, there is no intention of stating, at the beginning of the historical presentation, that what is presented is essentially the interpretation of the APT on the history of Europe. In fact, as soon as the actual historical narrative starts, a rather traditional type of historical exhibition prevails. In July 2013, the general message of Theme 2a, as formulated in the script, was as follows:

"In the 19th century Europe entered in the new direction of modernity - politically, economically, socially and culturally. The idea of human and civic rights, self-determination, industrialization and liberal market economy were the leading factors in this ground-breaking transformation process. At the end of the century Europe reached the peak of its global power. With these changes, social tensions and international rivalries built up to an enormous potential of conflict, which in the beginning of the 20th century exploded."[338]

Theme 2a aims to express that for Europe the nineteenth century was a period of acceleration, change and dynamism, being radically different from the *Ancien Régime* that had come before. The Theme is divided into three topics: 'Politics', 'Economic and Social Order' and 'Belief in Progress and Superiority'.

The topic 'Politics' depicts the nineteenth century as a revolutionary and rebellious age. The French Revolution, which had introduced the ideas of equality, self-determination and human and civil rights, created a platform for new, radical movements. The mood of this topic will be one of dynamism: it should clearly express the newness of the ideas about democracy, nationalism, liberalism and socialism. The topic 'Politics' consists of two subtopics: 'Democracy' and 'Nationalism'.

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Illustration 10: A sketch of 'Politics'

In 'Democracy', a multimedia installation of quotations, images and objects will represent the revolutionary ideas of equality and self-determination, revolutions across Europe and the emergence of representative governments. The emphasis will be on the sequence of revolutionary currents across Europe from 1789 to 1860, focusing on 1848, because of the large number of participants and the geographical area, which emphasise the European dimension of this period. Special attention is devoted to an early edition of the Communist Manifesto written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, showing that overcoming socio-economic inequality was already on the political agenda.

The subtopic 'Nationalism' will show that the concept of national integrity was central, with its narration of tradition and idealising of national figures. The emergence of national ideology across Europe will be symbolised, by showing a 'gallery' of twenty-five nineteenth-century statuettes of national heroes. On the second level, an interactive display will provide information about the nationalist movements across Europe.

In the second topic, 'Economic and Social Order', the socio-economic changes of the nineteenth century will be discussed. The leading object to represent the Industrial Revolution will be a large steam hammer, which will be placed centrally in the space. This will be supplemented by panoramas of factories, presented in a multimedia installation, accompanied by photos of industrial, but also rural landscapes, as a majority of Europe's population still led a rural existence.

It will be expressed that the Industrial Revolution drastically changed the socio-economic spectrum, bringing about on the one side more wealth to the bourgeoisie, but on the other side generating an impoverished working class, which led to a society marked by grave social tensions and inequality. The exhibition presents 'the two new social strata', the bourgeoisie and the working class, next to each other in a comparative way. Also the emergence of the public sphere is considered, with the acceleration of the circulation of newspapers, the emergence of

coffee-houses where current affairs were discussed, the founding of political parties, the formation of trade unions and so on.

The last topic of Theme 2a aims to convey that the modernist belief in progress and superiority both reflected and drove Europe's development as a technological innovator and a dominating power. However, this topic wants the visitor to understand that this advance was dominated by inner contradictions, such as the discrepancy between European principles and brutal colonial practices, which were rationalised by new theories of Social Darwinism and the belief in European racial superiority.

The first subtopic, called 'Progress', includes a quote from Victor Hugo, expressing the dominant belief of the continuous advance of history itself. It will be shown that new insights and theories, such as the revolutionary theory of Darwin radically changed Europe's worldview. Technological development is represented through the growing of precision in scientific instruments, shown by a microscope and through a map of the train network that emerged across Europe. Also the birth of cinema and the growing usage of electricity are presented as results of these new technological developments. Pictures of the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris will be shown, since this event celebrated the accomplishments of the nineteenth century.

Nonetheless, an important aim of this topic is to communicate that the superior position of Europe produced certain troubling consequences. The leading 'object' of the topic, which will function as a central point of connection, refers to the nineteenth-century ethnographical museum. A gallery of plaster casts of faces will mirror the national heroes gallery at the other side of the exhibition space. The 'scientific' practice of measuring the physical characteristics of different races will be shown. Also through other displays the visitor will learn that colonialism, imperialism and the brutal repression that came with it, were inherent to the success of Europe becoming the dominant continent of the period.

Theme 2b – *Europe Eclipsed*

Theme 2b will be the only section installed in the refurbished old part of the Eastman building and is characterised by long and narrow galleries. *Europe Eclipsed* starts where Theme 2a ends, at the beginning of the First World War, and describes the period from 1914-1945. The general message of Theme 2b is: *"The first half of the 20th century was an 'Age of Destruction' - shaken by two traumatic world wars, an economic crisis of unprecedented depth and the decline of liberal democracy, as totalitarianism advanced. The rivalry between three social systems (Fascism, Communism, and Parliamentary Democracy) was the signature of the interwar period. The dialectics of modernity became manifest in the turnover from extreme rationality as it had been developed in modern times into extreme irrationality which became apparent in different scenarios of mass war and totalitarian terror."*[339] Theme 2b is divided into four topics: 'First World War', 'Europe between Democracy and Totalitarianism', 'Second World War' and 'Harvest of Destruction'.

In the first topic, the outbreak of the First World War will be presented as a terminating point for the ascendant Europe of the nineteenth century. It was a massive war that was devastating, both on the battlefield as well as in society at large. It will also be conveyed that the Great War had a profound impact on Europe, both on its geo-political borders and its memory and general outlook. An atmosphere of drama, tension and catastrophe will be evoked, in stark contrast with the optimistic, progressive mood throughout the nineteenth century.

The first object the visitors will be confronted with is a gun, pointed at them, namely the gun that was used for the assassination of Franz-Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary. Here the message will be that the political situation in Europe was so fragile that a single shot could destabilise the status quo and ultimately plunge the continent into war that would soon lead to a global war. Also other, more structural causes of the war are examined. Postcards, which function both as personal testimonies and as geographical records, show the variety of fronts where soldiers served in WW1. A wide range of objects will convey the issues that are, according to the APT, central to understanding the First World War. The objects will be presented in showcases, with pictures projected onto the glass. At intervals the projections will be interrupted in order to reveal the objects that are hidden behind the glass.

The second topic 'Europe between Democracy and Totalitarianism' describes the immediate

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after-war period, in which a new order emerged, radically altering what had been the reality before the war. One of the most significant changes was the emergence of new nation-states, which were created after the Paris Peace Conferences. The message of the first part of the topic, will be that after WW1, parliamentary democracies emerged in Europe, symbolised by electoral urns and photos of voters of free elections. It will be shown that the Great War considerably altered the political map of Europe, by a dynamic presentation showing the moving borders. Also in the mental arena, societies broke with certain 'borders', illustrated by the emergence of psychoanalysis, nudism, radio, design, new sports and dance but especially in the new societal position for women. An art gallery will show paintings from this vibrant period. Yet, quickly it became clear there were many obstacles to democracy, the exhibition recalls the national-ethnical conflicts, the questions of war reparations and hegemony, Fascism, the 'Great Slump' and authoritarian regimes. In the exhibition, these currents are countered by pacifist ideas, ideals for a united Europe and Keynesianism, but the balance was to unstable. *Crushing* to democracy, was the Spanish civil war. In *Europa Ausstellen*, the fact that the anti-democratic movements in the Western and Southern European countries are not mentioned in the Conceptual Basis is severely criticised. Yet, in this topic, the APT does discuss the emergence of authoritarian regimes in Spain and Italy.

The emergence of elected parliamentary regimes in Western Europe is however especially discussed in rivalry and in contrast to 'two other systems' which emerged. The topics of 'Stalinism' and 'National Socialism' are presented in a rather innovative way, they are placed next to each other, facing each other. They each consist of six panels, with the same subtopics, 'mass mobilisation', 'ideology', 'leadership principle', 'economy' and 'genocide' and 'mass terror'. Each of the aspects of these regimes will have a leading object to convey the main message. Yet, behind the panels, a more nuanced narration of history can be found. Here the visitor can appreciate, that in spite of the similarities, the two regimes have a significantly differing history.

The topic 'Stalinism', will start with the Russian Revolution in October 1917, which was from the beginning introduced to be spread over the entire world, establishing an alternative system to liberal market economy. The leading assets will be a reproduction of a large installation portraying a red star, by El Lisitsky and a recording of Lenin's Speech “What is the Soviet Power, from 1917. The claims for social justice is represented by a military cap with a red pick and a red banner, which became emblems of the revolution.

The general message in 'National Socialism', is that emerged as a counter-revolution of both Liberalism and the socialist movement, the October revolution in particular. Germany, one of the most culturally and economically advanced countries built up a totalitarian regime founded on racial hatred and pseudo-scientific racial theories. The Nazi ideology culminated in the mechanised mass murder of millions of Jews.

The principle message in the topic the 'Second World War' is that this event became the scene of unprecedented violence and murder. It led to the definite decline of Europe's position in the world and divided the continent into an American and Soviet sphere of influence, which shaped the history of the rest of the twentieth century.

As direct causes of the war, the German attempts to dismantle the Versailles Treaties, their unrestrained territorial claims and the Nazi ambition to dominate Europe are put forward. The exhibition will discuss the main developments of the war. The Hitler-Stalin Pact from September 1939 will emphasise the alliance of the two major totalitarian empires in Europe, the Third Reich and the USSR.

WW2 became the scene of unprecedented violence and murder. Millions of civilians fell victim to the Third Reich or to the USSR simply because of ideological reasons; which is why WW2 is described as 'total war'. The exhibition will express that without allies and collaborators, the Nazis would not have been able to occupy almost the whole of Europe and implement their murderous policy and that this collaboration took various forms and for a variety of reasons.

However, the fact that the Germans also had to deal with growing resistance, both civil and military, will also be emphasised. It will be communicated that the German attack on the USSR in June 1941, which marked the end of the alliance and the subsequent entry of the USA into the war in December 1941, led to a total change in the balance of power. Thanks to the coalition between the USSR, the USA and Great Britain, the Third Reich and its allies could finally be defeated. The USSR bore a large part of the war burden and paid with a very high casualty toll. However, as a the result of WW2 its sphere of dominance spread across a big part of Central and Eastern Europe.

All of these subjects addressed above are developed in the four subtopics: 'Direct Causes of the War', 'Total War', 'Collaboration and Resistance' and 'End of the War.' The main focus of the presentation lies on the description of the *total* war. On the one hand an audio-visual

presentation on destruction will express the particularity of this war, on the other hand the meaning of 'total war' will be analysed by the presentation of six aspects of destruction (bombings, mass shooting, deportation, starvation, forced labour and the Holocaust) - each of them presented by ensembles of symbolic objects and individual case studies. Visually, these topics will be presented in symbolic displays that look like broken mirrors.

The next topic, called the 'Harvest of Destruction', covers the immediate consequences of the Second World War. The war claimed the lives of sixty million people. The immeasurability of this number reflects the unimaginable suffering of the victims. The topic questions how people could come to terms with such unprecedented trauma and loss.

This topic demonstrates the efforts of historians to research the exact numbers of victims and to categorise them in different types. It then attempts to go beyond these statistics and show the different groups of people hidden behind these figures. They are presented in case studies which exemplify the different individual and collective experiences during war. The destinies of victims and survivors are presented with visuals, maps, video-interviews and iconic objects, for instance memorabilia that survivors kept throughout their lives and other highly symbolic objects.

The exhibition wants to show that many stories where subjected to deliberate omitting and suppressing in the post-war decades. Society was marked by consensus of political correctness in the West and a lack of sensitivity from the side of the winners in the East towards 'internally' destroyed enemies who were not allowed to pay honour and commemorate their dead at any instance. In the exhibition the question will be posed of how to deal with a catastrophe like this. Two contradicting standpoints reflect the dilemma from its psychological, ethical and political dimension. On the one hand the pleading for forgetting and turning one's back to the horrors of the past in order to survive; on the other hand the advocacy for remembering as a warning and protection so that something like this does not happen again.

Theme 3 – *A House Divided*

Theme 3 is located on the fourth floor, in the new addition to the Eastman building. The glass construction, rising up over the roof of the original building, results in a very bright exhibition space. This is an important element, since bright light can damage sensitive historical artefacts, especially paper and organic fabrics, and therefore this has to be considered when developing the exhibition.

A House Divided encompasses the time period from 1945, the end of the Second World War, until 1973. It narrates the main events and processes which influenced the European continent in this period of time, yet focusses mostly on the process of European integration.

The general message of Theme 3 is as follows: *"In 1945 Europe was a field of ruins, disempowered; divided and depending on the two superpowers, a scene of the Cold War between two antagonistic political systems. Nevertheless, for nearly 30 years, on both sides of the 'Iron Curtain', Europe experienced a period of unexpected economic growth. The idea of the European integration marks a turning point in European history, laying the political path towards the principle of supranational cooperation."*[340]

This exhibition space will be organised according to a strict chronological order and is divided into five topics, 'Rebuilding Europe', 'Cold War', 'Social Security and Prosperity', 'European Integration' and the 'Memory of the Shoah'.

Theme 3 starts in 1945, when 'Europe hit rock bottom'. In 'Rebuilding Europe' the immediate after-war situation, marked by destruction, loss, shortages and displacement is sketched. In the subtopic 'Surviving Among the Ruins', pictures of the destructed cities in Europe are exhibited, next to objects which show the harsh living conditions, accentuated by the leading object, an emergency stove.

It is however also expressed, through a series of paintings, by French artists Fernard Léger, of workers building a new future, expressing how people were enthusiastic for work and had better hopes for the future. In the subtopic 'Reorganising the Political Landscape', it is shown how already during the war the Allied Forces started discussing the post-war order. Memorabilia of the different peace conferences will be presented.

Through the motive of bags or keys, it is shown that many people were forced to migrate, in

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an unprecedented exercise of ethnic cleansing an population transfer, the expulsions being based on the idea of ethnically homogeneous nations.

In the topic 'Cold War', it is conveyed that Europe was plunged in a state of division, symbolised by the building of the Iron Curtain. In the subtopic 'Confrontation under the Threat of the Atomic Bomb', it is shown how the constant threat of war, but especially the ideological warfare, through propaganda, affected all aspects of daily life. An excerpt of an American and a Soviet film, will show that both blocks exerted a heavy political and economical influence on both sides of the European continent. A tractor provided by the Marshall Plan will symbolise how the European Integration, was backed by the United States. In the subtopic 'Points of Confrontation', video excerpts of five cases, Berlin 1948-1949, Korea 1950-53, Budapest 1956, Berlin Wall 1961 and Prague 1968, will show at what times the two blocks met more directly.

In 'Social Security and Prosperity', the visitor will be told that after the Second World War, Europe was a place on an unprecedented growth in state interventions in social and economic affairs, accompanied by an extraordinary economic and demographic growth on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

In the first subtopic, the structural differences between the Western and the Eastern model are discussed. Through quotations, it will be conveyed that the superpowers US and SU performed antagonistic programmes with a similar mission: economic modernisation, social security and living standards were one of the major fields of competition representing themselves at world fairs and trade exhibitions.

Through an info-graphic, it will be shown that state intervention in social services increased in all European countries - beyond all systemic differences between East and West and the specific economies within the blocs. In Western Europe this meant the emergence of the welfare state, while in Socialist Europe, social equality and security was set up by radical economic changes. Through posters, it is shown that in the West the emergence of strong trade Unions, improving working conditions, while in the East, expropriation and nationalism took place under the program for building socialism.

In the subtopic 'Social Security, Prosperity and Modernisation', differences and convergences between East and West in housing, education, health care, mobility and consumerism will be presented.

In the subtopic, 'Historical roots of charity and solidarity', will show how in medieval and modern times, poor relief had been the domain social institutions as the church, the guilds or the family, without any state intervention.
Although the racial ideology of the Nazi regime had already been discussed in Theme 2b, the Holocaust itself has not been examined to its full extent. The APT has chosen to address this subject in the topic 'Memory of the Shoah' in Theme 3, because it was in this period that these events were for the first time really discussed in the public arena. It should of course not be surprising that the Holocaust – or more precisely the memory of the Holocaust - is given a great deal of attention in the exhibition, because of its central position in European discourse on the past and European memory in particular. In the exhibition, it is presented as the 'Break of Civilisation', the beginning and the nucleus of European on memory.

The curators have chosen to portray the *memory* of the Holocaust, rather than just the event itself. First, the visitors will be shown contemporary artworks relating to the Holocaust. Then a case study of the 'Forgetting and Remembering' of the Holocaust in six different European countries, respectively West Germany, East Germany, Ukraine, Austria, France and Poland, will show that the reception of this event was very different depending on the national context, employing different strategies of apology and justification. The topic will also state that, in the meantime, the recognition of the Shoah as a singular crime against humanity has become the negative reference point of European self-consciousness.

The topic 'European Integration' placed centrally in the exhibition space and presenting eight so-called milestones of European integration, which will be linked to the historical narrative presented in the other topics. The eight milestones are the Congress of Europe (1948), European Coal and Steel Community (1951), Failure of the European Defence Community (1954), Rome Treaties (1957), Launch of the CAP (1962), Élysée Treaty (1963), Empty Chair Crisis (1965), First Enlargement of the EC (1973). Each of these milestone will be marked by a leading object. The general message will be that after 1945, European integration becomes an original method of securing a permanent peace and economic growth in a divided Europe, cooperation replacing competition or military conquest. It is expressed that due to the Cold War this tortuous path towards a united Europe will be long confined to Western Europe.

Theme 4 – *Breaking Boundaries*

Theme 4 will be located on the fifth floor. It is the last truly historical, chronological theme, starting in 1973, more or less up to our present day. As of July 2013, the main message of *Breaking Boundaries* is *"The 1970's mark the end of the post-war era. Western Europe entered a period of long-term economic transformation and far-reaching political and social diversification. The socialist countries, already worried by their relative economic backwardness, were now confronted with systemic problems and a decreasing legitimacy of the socio-political system. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain and a forced globalization the process of European integration has shown a considerable acceleration and deepening."*[341] The topics are 'End of the Boom', 'Democratisation of the West', 'Socialist countries between Frustration and Opposition', 'Europeanisation' and 'Europeanisation'.

In the first topic, entitled 'End of the Boom', it is discussed how the 1970's marked the end of the post-war era. Economic transformation and far-reaching political and social diversification changed the European landscape. The visitor is confronted with images that symbolise the death of the old industries, social tensions, instability and political changes, mainly by encountering some relics from this time. The socialist countries, whose governors had already been worried by their relative economic backwardness, were now confronted with structural problems and a decreasing legitimacy of the socio-political system.

The second and third topic 'Democratisation of the West' and 'Socialist Countries between Frustration and Opposition' confronts the processes of two different processes of 'breaking boundaries' in West and East. In this way the visitor is given the possibility to compare the developments in a cognitive way. At the same time this part of the exhibition wants to show the visitor that concepts such as democracy, elections, and repression could have multiple expressions and meanings.

In the second topic, 'Democratisation of the West', it is expressed how in Western-Europe, the demand for more democracy was expressed on one side through several social movements disturbing the democratic consensus by claiming for participation and individualization of rights; on the other side through the fall of dictatorships and the democratic transition in the South of Europe.

In 'Socialist Countries between Frustration and Opposition', it is conveyed that, as Socialist

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countries proved incapable of structural reform and the standard of living worsened, the feeling of frustration increased among the societies and undermined the legitimacy of the regimes. This will be countered with the triumphalist state propaganda of that time. In the visualisation of the narrative, the oppression will be present. In contrast Western Europe, demonstrations and protests in the public space are not allowed. The visitor has to have the impression that he or she is entering a 'corridor of frustrations'.

A handful of citizens organised opposition movements which, with the notable exception of the widespread national Solidarność movement, grew only into mass opposition at the edge of 1989. Parallel to that, reforms were introduced, following the leading example of Gorbachev in the Soviet Union. The main focus will however be on the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (1973-1975), seen as the contribution of the European integration process to the end of these regimes. Memorabilia will be presented, next to letters from opposition movements which discuss this conference. It will also be conveyed, through the quotation of the Czech 'Programmatic Principles of Civic Forum' (1989) that several opponents claimed that the alternative to Communism was not merely Capitalism but 'the return to Europe', prosperity and security in liberty.

The third topic, describing the fall of the Iron Curtain will become the climax of the narrative of the whole Theme, and it will be displayed in the same position as the construction of the Berlin Wall in Theme 3. It will be expressed that the dismantling of the Iron Curtain accelerated fast, because it was media-driven and had an impacted on each other in a 'domino effect'. On a video wall, a chain of events of 1989 will be projected, including the Polish Round Tables, the first semi-free elections, bringing the unexpected victory of the Solidarność movement, the Pan-European Picnic, the Baltic Way, the opening of the border between Austria and Hungary, the fall of the Berlin Wall. A big piece of the Berlin Wall will be the centre of this topic, as its fall became the symbol of the implosion of the Communist Block and the end of the division of the continent. The mood will be one of escalating exhilaration and happiness at the sudden but long awaited changes.

The fourth topic, 'Europeanisation' will express how, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe immediately tumbled into a new era. The atmosphere will be slightly confusing and immersive. The APT aims for *"amazement, but also engagement"* as emotions the visitor should go through when learning about the on-going development of the European

Integration.

In the first subtopic, 'Unity in Diversity', the development of the iconography of the Euro is shown. In 'Growing Together,', the introduction and implementation of common laws for the EU, will be expressed through the symbolic object of the work of Rem Koolhaas, a six-metre-long book with the Acquis communautaire, which expresses the amount of law which had to be transposed into every national law. It will also be expressed how the Central and Eastern European countries underwent a rapid transition from planned to market economies.

The subtopic 'Migration Mobility and Multilingualism', is a good example of the HEH's critical attitude towards the European integration process. The account about the Schengen Agreement, which led to the opening up of the borders within the EU in 1995, is countered by expressing that this process was accompanied by the closing-up the outer-borders and the emergence of 'Fortress Europe'. It is shown through the symbolic object of a refugee boat, once used by immigrants pursuing asylum in the EU. Also the linguistic diversity of Europe will be explored, and the practice of interpretation, widely used in the European institutions, will be introduced.

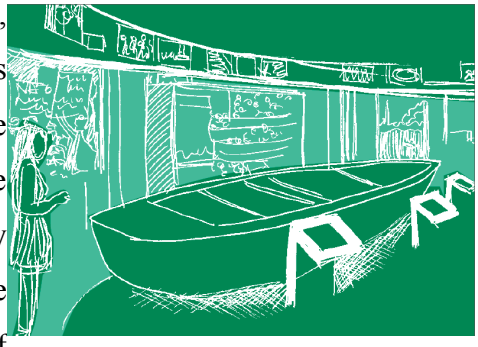

Illustration 11: A sketch of 'Europeanisation'

In 'Appraisal and Critique', the reception of the ever-deeper European integration will be discussed, Significantly, in support of the Peace Narrative put forward by the European Institutions, the Nobel Peace Prize Medal, the Nobel Peace Prize Diploma and Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speeches delivered by the 'three Presidents' of the EU were the first objects to become part of the HEH's own collection. The way the Nobel Peace Prize is framed and presented is however exemplar for the critical approach of the APT. The winning of the Prize by the EU in a

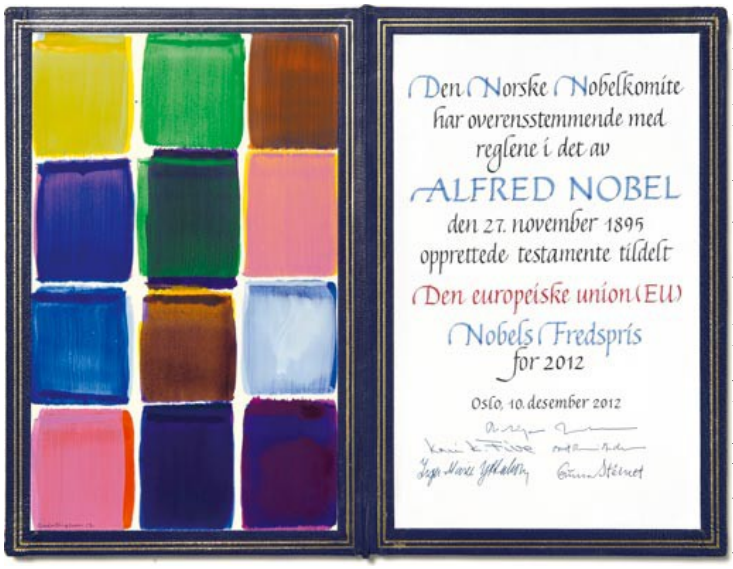

Illustration 12: Diploma of the Nobel Peace Prize for the EU.

time marked by crisis and austerity, raised a lot of protest across Europe. In Norway, the Euro-sceptic party *Nei TIL EU* organised a march to protest against the nomination for this Prize to the EU. Two curators, of the APT attended the official Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony to collect objects. They also brought back a great deal of material from the Euro-critical manifestations and the two aspects will be exhibited alongside each other. Thus, one of the most sensitive subjects, the relationship of the European Institutions to peace and democracy, will be examined in a critical way. Even though the controversy is thus being brought into attention, it is still done in a quite moderate way. Perhaps confronting the winning of the Nobel Peace Prize with the suppression of protests against the austerity measures imposed by the EU in Greece and Spain, which happened the same year, would be a bridge too far for the Board of Trustees.

In the last subtopic, 'Shared and Divided Memory', the motive of memory will become a key theme, as a counter piece of the 'Memory of the Shoah' presented in 2b. Personal memories of the oppression during the existence of the wall and about its actual breakdown in 1989 will constitute the narrative, to a context of more historical topics, such as the opening of the state archives,

In the sixth topic' European Integration II', again like in Theme 3, the visitor is confronted with six milestones in the European integration process, in a chronologically arranged overview. This topic will again be located in the centre of the exhibitions space: the creation of the European Council in 1975, the first elections of the EP, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe as a turning point towards chance through Rapprochement, the Helsinki Act, the 1989 Revolutions with the subsequent fall of the Iron Curtain and finally the acceleration of the European Integration Process with the enlargement marathon and the deepening supranational structures are discussed.

Theme 5 – *Looking Ahead*

The general message of Theme 5, which is located on the fifth floor states: *"Europe's future will be as diverse as its past, but it can only be envisaged with individual engagement and collective and communal actions."*[342] This Theme has not yet reached an advanced level of development yet, mainly because the APT believed that the GPD firm would have a better idea of how to fill this space. It will be a space with a low amount of material objects, but with a strong multimedial and participatory dimension. It consists of 3 topics, 'Looking out of History', 'The Archive of History' and 'Brussels'.

The first topic 'Looking out of History' returns to the questions raised in the first Theme of the permanent exhibition. While the visitors' perceptions of European history and heritage are examined in the first Theme, now the visitor is asked to come back to these topics, after having visited the entire exhibition. It is in the first subtopic, called 'History and Future', that the exhibition goes back to these issues, relating them to current events. These topics are discussed related to topics in popular culture, such as the Eurovision Song Contest and approached in the form of Serious Gaming, a fun, playful way of learning, in order to engage them with contemporary European politics. It can be done either individually or in groups.

In the other subtopic, 'Shared Memory', the visitor is given the opportunity to react to the interpretation of heritage and memory proposed by the HEH, in a commemorative asset. Using the House Metaphor, a homely piece of furniture, perhaps a cabinet with drawers that can be opened and closed will be offered to insert personal memories about European integration. In their last visual presentation for this subtopic, GPD proposed an interactive installation in which visitors could insert a proverb in their own language, which would then be translated into all of the official languages of the EU. This would of course by no means enable a critical contribution to the exhibition that could question the narrative proposed by the HEH and has been rejected by the APT.

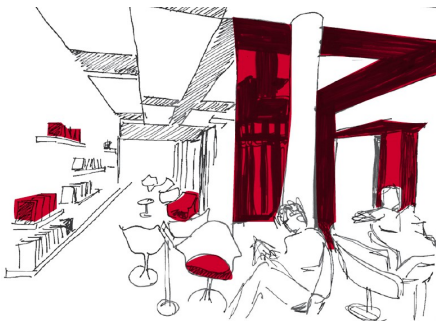

Illustration 13: Sketch: Archive of Cultures.

In the Archives of Cultures, visitors will be able to sit down, relax and explore the rich cultural heritage of Europe. Primarily books, video's and audio fragments that

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have not just a national, but a European dimension, will be at the disposal of the visitors.

In the final topic, 'Brussels', the transformation of the capital of Belgium, becoming the 'Capital of Europe', will be discussed. The fact that it was a rather coincidental decision will show the contingency of history. The impact of the architecture of the city and the influx of expats will also be discussed. As the visitor will be standing on the highest floor of the building, located in the middle of the European quarter, they will be able to see the direct impact of the settlement of the European institutions in Brussels. On the ceiling, there will be video installation, a mosaic of the skies in Europe, through live stream.

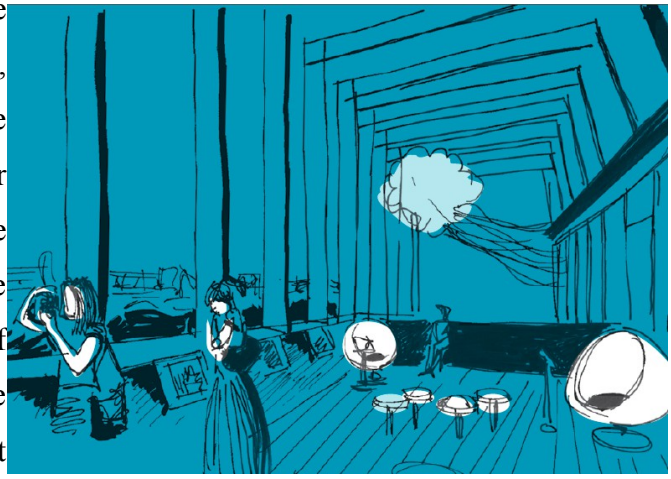

Illustration 14: Sketch 'Brussels'.

House of European History - Conclusion

The nature of the permanent exhibition of the HEH will undoubtedly be influenced by the latest ideas in museological discipline. The conceptual framework of the New Museology movement has changed the museal field completely and this has of course determined the thinking of the APT. The reflective stance, that is central to New Museology, and multi-perceptivity especially, play a leading role in the principles of the HEH. The more recent trends in museums, consequences of the change from the modern to the presentist historicity regime, have also had a major impact on the work of the APT.

In the principles developed by the APT, the concept of 'memory' is especially prominent. It is preferred to 'identity', because it is conceived as being a more fluid notion, showing both what divides and unites Europe and because it is thought to have the ability to question the proposed historical narrative.

The question remains of how much of this fluidity and reflexivity will actually be apparent in the permanent exhibition, as this is not clearly addressed in the briefs and scripts. Indeed, when the briefs mention the topic of memory, the exhibition is seen as primarily addressing institutional memory and conceived of as being opposed to what is presented in the exhibition as history.

As Kaiser notes, it is especially through the practice of participative narrating, sifting through memories without following a particular normative agenda,[343] that memory becomes powerful in its contesting role. Indeed, in this way history can be told 'from below' and thus stimulates the engagement with the exhibition and the topic being addressed, which is actually an issue the APT is still struggling with.

In fact, the APT does not seem so keen on making participative narrating an inherent part of the exhibition. This may be understandable, given that the quality of such contributions is not always very high and, as Kaiser has pointed out, might lead to more national memories than European ones. Although this is not per se problematic, it would probably not serve the museum's interests.

However, these contributions from the public would not have to be an integral part of the exhibition per se, but could remain on a digital level. In fact, anyone visiting the exhibition on a personal basis (not as a part of a group), will have use of a tablet to change the displays into

343Kaiser, “Narrating Contemporary European History,” 5.

his or her native language. The integration of the new developments in technology and multimedia in museums offer many possibilities, which do not really seem to be utilised by the HEH. The potential of the tablets, or even smartphones, as a medium for the visitors to link the museum's content and historical interpretations with personal contributions, *memories,* thoughts, remarks or even pictures, that either converge with or contest the proposed narrative is yet to be addressed. Those places where people *are* asked for their personal memories in the exhibition, are handled in the way that Kansteiner has called a linear approach to collective narrating.[344] The questions appear to look for affirming, rather than opposing responses to the proposed narrative.

In both the first and the last Theme the APT takes a rather bold approach towards the history, memory and future of Europe. Theme 1 shows that history-writing and memory are always changing and therefore are essentially a construction. In Theme 5, the visitors are asked to reflect on what European history memory means for them, after having seen what the HEH proposes as a European narrative.

Yet, as soon as the chronological-historical narrative starts, rather than offering an innovative historical and museological interpretation of history, the HEH is a rather traditional museum, confirming a political formation, in this case the EU. Of course, the fact that the Committee of Experts has decided that the HEH should offer a chronological narrative plays a big role. Additionally the fact that the AC has determined that the direction of visits to the permanent exhibition should be upwards through the building rather than having visitors start at the top and walk down (which was the proposal by the APT), is significant. This is especially important considering the work of the exhibition designers to play with this dichotomy between dark and light, and as visitors go up in the building they will move towards an ever lighter space, culminating with the last ceiling, which is showing video projections, streaming of the skies of Europe.

Head Curator Andrea Mork argues that a multiperspectival view is integral to narrating the history of Europe, mirroring the statement of Rioux discussed earlier.[345] Yet when looking at history from a European perspective, as conceived of by the APT, by going *beyond* the framework of the nation-state, national histories and national interpretations of history are not

344Contribution of Wulf Kansteiner to the final Round Table discussion of the Inaugural Conference of the International Network of Theory of History, on the 13th of July 2013.
345Rioux, "Pour Une Histoire de l'Europe Sans Adjectif," 109.

presented if they are not deemed relevant on a European scale. Thus, the multiperspectivity that is presumed may not be comprehensively addressed, as many viewpoints are actually avoided or surpassed.

Of course the HEH will present a historically correct and critical interpretation of European history. The APT does respect the highest historiographical and museological standards. The general attitude of the members of the APT is one of exchange, reflection and self-questioning. Also, the fact that the members of the APT come from across Europe makes clear that interpretations of history differ in every country and this brings forward a fruitful dialogue. The permanent exhibition will be far away from the teleological narrative in the *50 years of European adventure!* exhibition organised by Musée de l'Europe.

The format of a historical exhibition is unlikely to bring in nuance, but it is also the fact that the HEH wants to bring a coherent and *comprehensible* narrative that makes it especially difficult to include those stories that do not coincide with the curators' interpretation of history. However, it is especially the close connection to the European Institutions that cannot be forgotten. Even if the APT does not feel any direct political pressure, the idea that they are able to completely disregard politics in their narrative is of course untrue.

From the perspective of the visitor, this is essential. The location of the HEH, right next to the EP and a five-minute walk from the EC, gives the institution an aura of authority. Erik Barton Christiansen has made a similar point about the Smithsonian being located between the Washington Monument, the White House and the Capitol.[346] The HEH is thus very much connected to the European institutions and even though there is not as much direct political pressure, its positions are reflected in the historical narrative. In fact, the HEH clearly gives a particular interpretation of European history: one of cooperation at least for the section about the second half of the twentieth century.

This is of course not wrong per se, and the motivation behind this narrative- avoidance of war between European countries is even noble - yet I believe it is important that it is made clear to the visitor that what is presented is just *one* interpretation of European history.

It would be interesting to have a greater opportunity for the inclusion of the visitors' perspective. The House of European History aims to receive 400,000 to 500,000 yearly visitors. If they would be encouraged to leave behind their interpretations of European history,

346Christiansen, “History Limited: The Hidden Politics of Postwar Popular Histories,” 361.

the HEH could truly become a powerful reservoir of European memory. As Kaiser argues, the participative narrating and debating what exactly makes us European, discussing both the dark and the beautiful sides of Europe's past, would enable a discursive construction of European narratives that sets them apart from the nineteenth-century master narratives.[347]

347Kaiser, "Narrating Contemporary European History," 7.

Conclusion

This thesis set as a goal to reconstruct the main historiographical and museological issues the APT would have to confront when determining the character of the future HEH. At the same time, it intended to look at the concrete political context: the EU, its cultural politics and the musealisation of its history. I analysed how the APT actually dealt with this historical, museological and political framework and how this was translated in the plans for the HEH – as the HEH's principles were examined and the concrete plans for the permanent exhibition were discussed. In this conclusion, I will recapitulate the main findings which have been put forward in this thesis and attempt to answer the question that is the title of this thesis: *"Will the House of European History be a place of Reflection and Debate or will it be an instrument in the construction of a European Master Narrative?"*

In the first place, this thesis examined the complex relationship between history and politics, objectivity versus bias. The postmodern turn in historiography exposed that it is not possible to write *one* objective account that corresponds to a historical reality. In particular, the inherent link between historiography and nation-building was revealed. Additionally, the Memory Boom was one of the reasons for this reflexive turn in historiography. In fact, the rise of memory in historical discourse exposed the constructed character of historical time in the writings of history. The emergence of memory negated the 'naturalness' of the up-until-then dominant spatial and temporal assumptions and categories of historiography. The emergence of diverging memory, contesting the master narratives, especially had shown its virtues in the diversification of the topics addressed in the historical discipline. 'Collective Memory' is interpreted as more inclusive and diversified than the 'History'.

At the same time however, these developments have also enlarged the knowledge of the potential of history to stimulate social cohesion and to contribute to both the stability and the legitimacy of a political formation. In fact, the presentist historicity regime and memory do stand for a more immediate, ahistorical relating to the past, as the past is only questioned for what it can signify for the present. Here the concept of identity, that other key concept of the social studies of the 1990's, is central. Memory is thus a dangerous matter, as it can make a strong emotional appeal, has the aura of authenticity, but is at the same time easily

manipulated.

Notwithstanding the contesting potential of memory, the fact is that it is still largely institutionalised in the nation-states, as it is at this level that the most influential – or at least most authoritative - institutions representing memory are localised: national history museums. During the last two decades, across Europe, projects have been launched to establish new national museums with a strong desire to define the nation's historical and present identity. Just as in the nineteenth century, the wish to define a distinct national historical identity in the museum is done with frenzy.

I argue that a direct parallel can be made between these initiatives and the initiative to set up a HEH. In fact, as noted in this thesis, recently - unsurprisingly simultaneous with the growing public interest in memory - the EU has started looking at the presentation of history as an important instrument in identity politics. Many different initiatives have been launched to define a 'Narrative for Europe', to constitute a European collective memory.

The HEH was launched in this regard by then-President of the EP Pöttering, in particular to contribute to the emergence of a European identity. This was also the aim of the Musée de l'Europe, which was initiated to establish a museum about the history of Europe. It was envisioned to bring a teleological narration from the common roots up until the almost enlightened state brought by the European integration process, to stimulate the emergence of a European identity.

The HEH however has a very different approach towards European history and its representation. In fact, identity is exactly the concept which is distrusted by the members of the APT. They denounce this concept for being too static and limited and want to bring in reflexivity and multiperspectivity instead. They envision the HEH as becoming a place for reflection and debate rather than a locus which confirms an essentialist interpretation of a European identity.

Interestingly, one of the main ways to bring in this openness is through the concept of memory – in the principles set out by the HEH this is central. It seems however that the members of APT maintain that just the evoking of memory already brings in a high degree of reflexivity. Yet, as this thesis has shown, memory *itself* is not critical, it is maybe even *less* analytical than history and it is therefore of primary importance in what way memory is evoked.

In the few times that memory actually comes into the concrete plans for the permanent

exhibition for the HEH, it is done more in its affirming role, than really opening its contesting potential. In particular the potential of the contribution of the visitors' own interpretations of European memory in general or one specific historical event in particular is not fully addressed.

The HEH will however not be the propaganda museum some people have expected it to become. In fact, the multinational team of historians and museologists, coming mostly from outside the European institutions, has a rather general critical stance towards the working and the history of the EU. Besides, the curators have all internalised the attitude of reflexivity which has influenced historical museums since the 1970's. Therefore the HEH will result in a museum that is rather open, bringing in the contradictions within the European integration process – rather than bringing a teleological account, which would for example propose roots for the European institutions in a distant past and thus stress the essential community of a united Europe.

In particular the first Theme is rather bold – as it states that history is essentially a construction and attempts to challenge the visitors' preconceptions about Europe and European History. Yet it has to be noted, that from Theme 2a until Theme 4, the HEH will bring a rather traditional historical exhibition, chronological and didactic. As seen in this thesis, a historical exhibition is not an easy platform to bring in all the nuances historians want to see in their academic work. It seems to be that the APT is struggling to bring in all the principles it determined the HEH to have. Especially the multiperspectivity, presenting different interpretations of history next to each other, is difficult to bring in when wanting to bring a coherent and comprehensible historical account. Adding to this equation, is the fact that the exhibition designers are struggling to bring the complexity, that is found in the briefs, into the plans for the exhibition design for the permanent exhibition.

What I have presented in this thesis are the plans, as they look like in July 2013 and they will still undergo further change before the opening of the museum. Even if the actual creation of the House of European has long been in question, it is now highly unlikely that the actual creation will be in jeopardy. The elections in 2014 will however change the political spectrum in the Parliament and also the Presidency of the Parliament will be rotated in 2014. It is likely that a new President will represent the more conservative political group of the Europe People's Party, which could ultimately influence the content of the HEH.

In fact, while the APT has been working with quite a lot of academic freedom, they have been fearful that the politicians would 'wake up'. Yet, even if they do, the decisions considering the content and even the exhibition design are already quite set and unable to be changed, so it would be difficult to implement any big changes.

The museum will however have a very long lifespan so it is possible that after a couple of years, the permanent exhibition will be redone. The presence of many multimedial displays will make it especially possible to change their content significantly. The members of the APT are only employed for the development of the permanent exhibition, after which a partly new staff will be hired. In fact, the people who are more likely to are stay those people who have a fixed contract and thus a longer history of working in the European institutions and are therefore subject to be less critical in their evaluation of the European project. The question also arises which new people the museums is going to hire, as curators but also as educators, who will have a lot of influence on the learning experience of the visitors. Also the museum's institutional position will be influential, The functioning of the museum as a completely independent institution would be ideal, but is for now unlikely.

Theme 5, which is still being developed, could bring in the contesting potential of memory, through the medium of participative narrating. The many different and even conflicting or opposing interpretations of history, central to the principles of the HEH, could be brought forward here, just as in the temporary exhibitions. As temporary exhibitions, as argued earlier, are better fitted for more controversial subjects, they could be used to address more difficult topics such as 'Fortress Europe', the undemocratic, bureaucratic character of the European institutions or the discrepancies between the EU's values and actions.

Even if the HEH will not present history - or identity - in an essentialist way, the political side of the project is not something the members of the APT can ever truly detach themselves from. When the HEH opens, the primary aim will be the emergence of a European identity – I believe this is unavoidable. The fact is that the APT has chosen to bring one narrative about Europe – a story of unity, also bringing forward a strong message for a united Europe, in which citizens can participate. This is of course not problematic per se, but I believe that a more transparent communication about this choice would be beneficiary for the quality of the museum.

To me, one of the most interesting findings in this thesis is the fact that historiands,

sociologists and museologists generally feel very negative about national myths and believe that they should be deconstructed because of their biased nature. Yet, when talking about the European context, much effort is being put in the construction of new myths. Here, the transcending of national boundaries and identities sometimes makes places for a self-flattering, teleological narration of the European project. It appears to be that, when talking about the EU, the building of a imagined community becomes a moral imperative, and thus does not have to be argued for scientifically.

Even though the APT does not have this intention and this is not what the HEH will turn out to be, I believe that, given the authoritative position of the HEH, being a top-down initiative and the *only museum* aiming to bring a comprehensive account of European History, it is extremely important to bring a very critical position towards the EU, its history, but also its present. As any history museum – especially when conceived within political institutions - makes clear aspirations for the future, I think it is necessary to embrace these factors. The fifth Theme and the temporary exhibitions could thus not only be a locus for a critical interpretation of Europe's *past*, but indeed also be a forum for debating Europe's *future*.

Although some online platforms to debate the future of Europe already exist, the EU does not have an actual physical place, where this can be done. The HEH could serve as such and use the resources of the platforms that already exists, such as the interesting initiative *Debating Europe,*[348] by integrating them into the exhibition.

The visitor could also be offered the opportunity to sign proposals by European Citizen's Initiative, a format that enables citizens to directly participate in European democracy, by calling with the EC to make a legal proposal, when supported by 1.000.000 signatures.[349] It has so far however been unsuccessful, due to the large amount of signatures to be collected, the limited time frame and the lack of knowledge about this initiative.

I believe the HEH should become a locus for debating both Europe's past and future. It would really engage visitors with European issues, their difficulties and the possibilities, not just on a rhetorical level but also in practice. Only then the HEH can be a place of discussion and debate and still carry a message for European collaboration – at least a positive and not an essentialist, restrictive interpretation of a European master narrative.

348"Debating Europe – Discuss YOUR Ideas with Europe's Leaders," *Debating Europe*, accessed January 8, 2013, http://www.debatingeurope.eu/.

349"The European Citizens' Initiative," *European Commission*, accessed January 8, 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/welcome.

Epilogue

From May until June 2013 a fascinating museum, called the Domo de Europa Historio en Exzilo, Esperanto for the HEH in Exile, opened its doors in Brussels. It was part of the Tok Toc Knock Festival, organised in the European quarter of Brussels by the Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg, the Royal Flemish Theatre.[350]

Illustration 15: Thomas Bellinck, with an Angela Merkel citrus press, representing the austerity measures following the economic crisis of 2008.

The HEH in Exile was conceived and created by Brussels-based theatre-maker and visual artist Thomas Bellinck. It is many things at the same time: a museum, an artwork, but maybe most of all a critique, an ironical reflection on the museum as medium.

This avant-garde museum tells the history of the EU – form the viewpoint of 2063. A fictive group, who call themselves the Friends of a Reunited Europe, nostalgically look back on the days of the 'Second Interbellum', the period of European unification, which emerged after the Second World War and was shattered when the rise of nationalism broke up the Union.

The HEH in Exile became the talk of town in Eurocrat Brussels and tickets were sold out quickly. It received laudatory critiques in international press. The renowned British newspaper

350"Thomas Bellinck - Domo de Europa Historio En Ekzilo," *Koninklijke Vlaamse Schouwburg*, accessed January 7, 2013, http://www.kvs.be/index2.php?page=program&vs_id=802&lng=ENG.

The Guardian described the museum as *"a clever attempt to document the EU's current woes."*[351] Journalist Gareth Harding, evaluated the HEH in Exile, in juxtaposition to the HEH, as a *"less sanguine and more creative, anarchic, fleeting — and fun — exhibition about Europe in the dystopian future"*.[352] Guy Verhofstadt, former Belgian Prime Minister, MEP and fierce supporter of the European project highly recommended a visit on Twitter.[353] He probably interpreted the HEH in Exile as a warning for rising nationalism and for what these developments could lead to. Indeed, Verhofstadt stated that this museum conveys this message better than any politician could.[354]

The HEH in Exile does appreciate the European integration period for what it partly is – a long period of continuous peace on the European continent. Yet at the same time it is a very critical, sometimes scrutinising, analysis of the European institutions.

The museums ridicules the overly bureaucratic Brussels – symbolised by a pile of new legislations, which goes though the ceiling and takes up three stories and by the absurd regulations on the curving of bananas and the speed of window-screen wipers. However, rather than just being a funny gimmick, the museum also broaches more serious topics. An exhibition room examines the border security firm Frontex and the harsh border policy of the EU. Another one talks about the Brussels lobby, which rose exponentially over the last two decades. Yet another room shows a little hut, similar to the ones inhabited by African immigrant workers in the South of Spain, exposing the lacking rights of asylum seekers and illegal workers in the EU. Finally, the last exhibition room tells a very personal, yet achingly recognisable story on the impact of the economic crisis and the austerity measures on the rise of suicides in Europe, exemplified by the suicide of a friend of Bellinck.

The historical period covered by the HEH in Exile largely coincides with the narrative of the HEH - in this way its position as an answer to the HEH is very evident. In fact, Bellinck even includes the creation of the HEH as a subject. Yet, the same time it is an intelligent critique on the museum as an institution, its unfinished flair exposing the constructedness of the medium.

To me, it was very encouraging to see how enthusiastically the HEH in Exile was received by

351Ian Traynor, "EU Will Collapse in 2018, According to 'Museum of the Future' Art Project," *The Guardian*, May 9, 2013, sec. World news, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/may/09/european-union-collapse-2018-museum-art-project.
352Gareth Harding, "The EU Is History, Now Enjoy The Museum," *Foreign Policy*, June 2013.
353"Thomas Bellinck - Domo de Europa Historio En Ekzilo."
354Leen Vervaeke, "Terugblik Uit 2063: Hoe EU Kapotging," *De Volkskrant*, April 6, 2013.

my colleagues, the members of the APT. The manner in which this mirror project was perceived is really representative of the APT's reflective and self-critical attitude. It gives me confidence in their will to continue being cautious and reflective of their role in the cultural politics of the EU.

Illustration 16: The entrance of the HEH in Exile already shows that it is a critique on the museum as a medium.

Yet at the same time, the HEH in Exile it is a symbol for everything the HEH cannot be: a creative, spontaneous and very critical representation of both the good and the dark sides of an ever deeper integration of the European continent under the wings of the EU.

In my conversation with Thomas Bellinck, he expressed that it is precisely by taking a step back – or forward – that the museum can place past and present events in a larger perspective. This statement essentially grasps what the HEH cannot do, being deeply involved with EU politicians who are determined to encourage a European interpretation of history and thereby form European citizens for the future: taking a step back.

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Appendices

1. List of Members Committee of Experts

Włodzimierz Borodziej (PL)	Professor of Modern History, University of Warsaw
Giorgio Cracco (IT)	Professor of Ecclesiastical History, University of Turin
Michel Dumoulin (BE)	Professor of History, Catholic University of Louvain
Hans Walter Hütter (DE)	Professor of History, President of the Foundation House of the History of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn
Marie-Hélène Joly (FR)	Head Curator, Deputy Director of History, Cultural Heritage and Archives, French Defence Ministry
Matti Klinge (FI)	Emeritus Professor for Nordic History, University of Helsinki
Ronald de Leeuw (NL)	Professor, former Director of Rijksmuseum
António Reis (PT)	Professor of History, New University of Lisbon
Maria Schmidt (HU)	Director of House of Terror, Budapest

2. List of Members Academic Committee

Norman Davies (GB)	Emeritus Professor of History, University of London
Hans-Walter Hütter (DE)	*see above*
Matti Klinge (FI)	*see above*
Anita Meinarte (LV)	Deputy Director Collections National History Museum of Latvia
Hélène Miard-Delacroix	Professor of History, University of Paris (Sorbonne)
Mary Michailidou (GR)	Former Director National Gallery of Greece, active in international organisations such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European Parliament
Oliver Rathkolb (AT)	Professor of History, University of Vienna
Antonio Reis (PT)	*see above*
Maria Schmidt (HU)	*see above*
Jean-Pierre Verdier (FR)	Director Mémorial de l'Alsace-Moselle
Henk Wesseling (NL)	Emeritus Professor of History University of Leiden

3. List of Members Board of Trustees

Chaired by Hans-Gert Pöttering (DE)	CDU-politician, former President of the EP
Advised by Harald Rømer (DE)	Former Secretary-General of the EP
Wlodzimierw Borodziej (PL)	*see above*
Étienne Davignon (BE)	Viscount, businessman, former Vice-President EC
Hans-Walter Hütter (DE)	*see above*
Miguel Angel Martinez Martinez (SP)	MEP – Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
Gérard Onesta (FR)	Former MEP
Doris Pack (DE)	MEP – European People's Party
Chrysoula Paliadeli (GR)	MEP – Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats
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Alain Lamassoure (FR)	MEP – European People's Party
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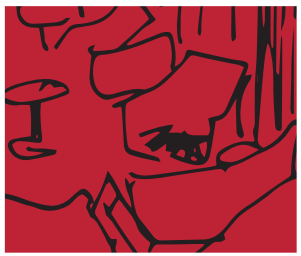
Diana Wallis (UK)	Former MEP - Alliance Of Liberals And Democrats For Europe
Francis Wutrz (FR)	Former MEP - European United Left - Nordic Green Left

4. List of Members of the Academic Project Team

Led by Taja Vovk van Gaal (SLO)	APT Leader
Michèle Antoine (BE)	Exhibition Project Manager
Erika Aronowitsch (SE)	Curator
Nicholas Auzanneau (FR)	Communication
Kieran Burns (IRL)	Curator
Ngaire Bushnell (GB)	Educator
Perikles Christoulou (GR)	Curator
Etienne Deschamps (BE)	Curator
Hans de Waegeneer (BE)	Registrar
Christine Dupont (BE)	Curator
Nathalie Duquesne (FR)	Finance
Ronald Evers (NL)	Finance
Marti Grau Segu (ES)	Curator
Anna Huth (HU)	Assistant Curator
Constanze Itzel (DE)	Curator
Pirjo Kemppainen (FIN)	Legal
Alan Kirwan (IR)	Educator
Sonia Marconi (IT)	Communication
Raili Minkkinen (FIN)	Administration
Andrea Mork (DE)	Head Curator
Françoise Petit (NL)	PR Officer
Elisabeth Pluijmen (NL)	Curator
Ollivier Rocher (FR)	Administration
Tessa Ryan (GB)	Communication
Raivis Sïmansions (LV)	Assistant Curator
Zofia Wóycicka (PL)	Curator

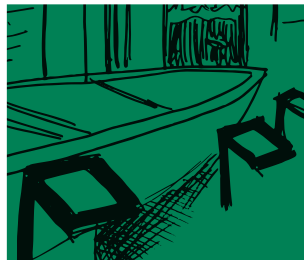
5. “Building a House of European History”

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



BUILDING A HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

A PROJECT OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



THIS DOCUMENT

This document is an overview of the work undertaken and progress made, since early 2011, on the project to create a House of European History. It sets out in some detail a description of aspects of the evolution of the project, including the architectural developments, progress on the interpretive process and the visitor experience, and the development of the contents and the narrative of the permanent exhibition.

At the same time, it offers insight into aspects of the process of building the House of European History such as the exhibition design, educational and outreach programming and the future collection policy. It sets out the rationale of key areas of its activities, such as museological and historical research, so that the genesis of the project to its current status can be understood. It also maps out in clear terms the future vision of the House, as of its scheduled opening in late 2015.

The sketches in this brochure are freely based upon the preliminary design concepts (August 2012) of Arnaud Dechelle, from StudioDiem, and reproduced with his kind permission.

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

'The study of history is the beginning of political wisdom.' This is how Jean Bodin, the French jurist and political philosopher, defined the unquestionable bond between history and politics.

My predecessor, Professor Hans-Gert Pöttering, affirmed that the House of European History would be the place where the memory of European history and the process of European unification would be jointly cultivated so as to provide an environment for reflection on the meaning of European identity. The establishment by the European Parliament of a House of European History in Brussels constitutes a significant innovation in the way in which an advanced democratic system approaches its relationship with the past.

It is in this light that the Parliament's Bureau unanimously backed the creation of the House of European History and appointed a committee of experts to give flesh to this project. The members of this committee have emphasised how the House of European History would enable Europeans of all generations to be in a place where the European idea comes alive. The creation of a public space, a 'House' — the former Eastman dental clinic — will become a platform where the politician plays the role of facilitator in the democratic debate and where the historians and the curators freely carry out their function to convey their knowledge and reading of European history. It is this principle which underpinned from the very beginning the basis for a broad political consensus in our Parliament, a consensus guaranteed by two important consultative bodies: the Board of Trustees, chaired by Professor Hans-Gert Pöttering, and the Academic Committee, chaired by Professor Włodzimierz Borodziej.

According to Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, it is also the duty of the European Union to contribute to the improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples. As President of the European Parliament, it is therefore an honour and a duty to introduce a project which will act as a bridge between the academic world and the general public. The design and operation of this House will reflect the latest museological thinking and will also seek to be at the forefront of the debate not just about the past, but also on the future of Europe.

In 2012 the Union won the Nobel Prize for Peace for its decennial work towards reconciliation and democracy in a continent which had been ravaged by war and totalitarianism. This award was not only for the European institutions, but above all for the European citizens. The Nobel Peace Prize medal and certificate will therefore be placed in the future permanent exhibition at the European House of History as a symbol of the recognition of six decades of work. The House will be the perfect place for the public to freely access their award.

I am convinced that the House of European History will engage visitors in critical reflection on what the European integration process means for our common present and for our future together. The House of European History will provide a space necessary for debate, knowledge and exchange of views regarding the history of Europe, its people and its institutions. We are building our European project on solid common roots, but our political union is all about the future.

Martin Schulz
President of the European Parliament

INTRODUCTION

The objectives and mission of the House of European History are based on a first concept paper, the 'Conceptual basis for a House of European History', which was drawn up in 2008 by a committee of renowned historians and experts from various European countries, chaired by Professor Hütter — President of the Foundation of the Haus der Geschichte in Bonn — and in response to the initiative of former President of the European Parliament Hans-Gert Pöttering, announced in 2007, to create the House of European History.

The House of European History will be a resource open to the general and specialised public from across Europe and beyond. It will take its place at the heart of the visitor services policy of the European Parliament in Brussels. It will be located in an historic landscape on an important architectural site of the Belgian capital. Over time it will have a web presence, develop partnerships and cooperation, and build a cultural profile that will extend far beyond the physical boundaries of its actual location.

The House of European History will be a resource open to the general and specialised public from across Europe and beyond.

The focus is on ensuring the best possible quality of experience for all of its future visitors.

In building a House of European History, the focus is on ensuring the best possible quality of experience for all of its future visitors. It is of great importance to the project that the development of the exhibition is accompanied by openness, communication and dialogue with the wider public, with its stake in the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of the House. This is a core aim of this document, in that it constitutes one of the earliest opportunities for public information about the project.

Just as is the case for the House of European History venture as a whole, this document has been built upon the continuing and valued work of past and present members of its Academic Committee and of its Board of Trustees, of the consistent and valued support of the Bureau, the Secretary-General, many Directorates of the General Secretariat of the European Parliament, and of the sustained work of the Academic Project Team. It represents a small but significant step in the challenging and exciting process of delivering what it is hoped will be a lasting European cultural landmark.

SUMMARY

The House of European History has drawn up a mission and objectives that underpin its vision of becoming an enduring platform for exchange about European history and the history of the European Union.

It is planned to open the House at the end of 2015 in the renovated Eastman building in the Leopold Park at the heart of the European quarter in Brussels. The architectural plans will enhance the building by providing open exhibition spaces, complementing the original building.

The House will be visitor-centred and open to all, in line with the Parliament's policies on equality of access. It will also cater for groups of visitors who are visiting the European Parliament. Particular programmes will be devised for groups, young people and schools.

On offer will be permanent, travelling and temporary exhibitions, events and cultural programmes, as well as a cafe and a gift shop.

The narrative of the permanent exhibition will guide the visitor through an outline of European history, beginning with the early myth, multiple perspectives on identity and the cultural heritage of Europe. For the visitor to understand the tumultuous events of the 20th century, the exhibition will focus beforehand on the convictions and belief in progress that defined the 19th century — Europe's 'entry into modernity'— before moving on to consider Europe's descent into war and destruction. This will be followed by a thematic section on the search for a better life through an increasingly united Europe. The visitor will be encouraged to think about the Europe of today, the status and position of the European Union, and the part that can be played by everyone in shaping its future.

Three main criteria determined the choice of the decisive aspects of European history which would shape the narrative of the House: firstly, they must be events or processes which originated in Europe; secondly, they must have spread across Europe; and thirdly, they must still be relevant today. Throughout the permanent exhibition the historical approach will be largely chronological, but where apt and necessary, a thematic approach will be taken.

The House of European History has drawn up a mission and objectives that underpin its vision of becoming an enduring platform for exchange about European history and the history of the European Union.

The concept of 'shared memory' will permeate the historical narrative, forming a basis for the interpretation of history, including the passive and the active sides of this phenomenon, formed as it is in a social context — and which both characterises and binds groups of people together.

A number of museological tools and techniques, including the use of 'connectors', various leitmotivs and 'red connecting threads', as well as the visual metaphor of a 'house' will be deployed throughout the exhibition to assist orientation and recognition. For example, the concept of 'centre and periphery' will function as a leitmotiv of the exhibition, while visual landmarks will guide the visitor and provide additional information on the narrative of the exhibition.

The collection that is being assembled for the permanent exhibition will play the central role in communicating the messages of the House. It will be supplemented by multimedia technology, opportunities for visitor interaction and areas where visitors will be able to obtain further information.

A HOUSE FOR EUROPEAN HISTORY

In setting up a House of European History, the European Parliament aims to offer the visitor the opportunity to learn about European historical processes and events and to engage in critical reflection on what these processes mean today. It will be a resource for exhibitions, documentation and information, which will situate past developments and events within a wider historical and critical perspective, bringing together and juxtaposing the contrasting experiences of Europeans in history.

The House of European History will be a cultural institution with a very specific scope, that of conveying a transnational overview of European history that is inclusive of its diversity, its varied interpretations and differing perceptions.

The House aspires to increase knowledge about European history and its implications. It aims in addition to enable the broadest possible public to understand the context of earlier centuries in the course of which so many of its ideas and values were shaped. In so doing, the House plans to empower the visitor to understand European history, taking into account the wider global context, and to facilitate discussion and debate about Europe and the European Union.

It aims to offer the visitor the opportunity to learn about European historical processes and events and to engage in critical reflection on what these processes mean today.

The House of European History will be located in the heart of the European quarter in Brussels.

@ University of Rochester Medical Center, Eastman Institute for Oral Health

The renovation will also respect original features of the building.

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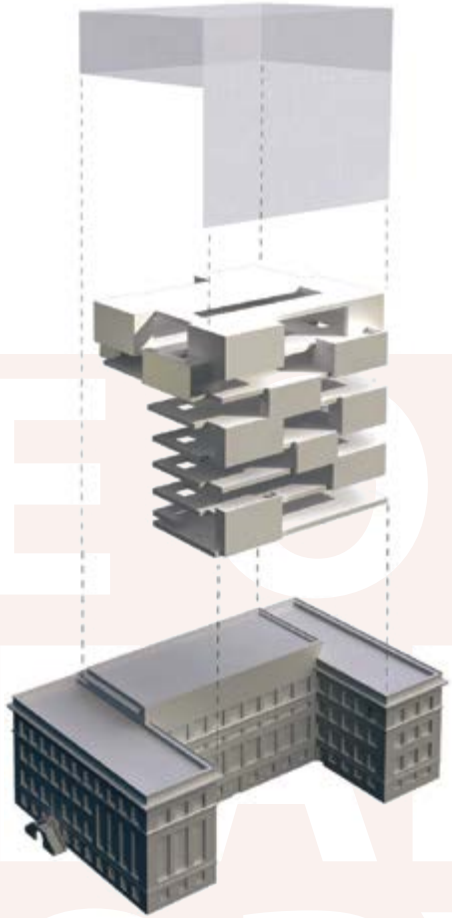

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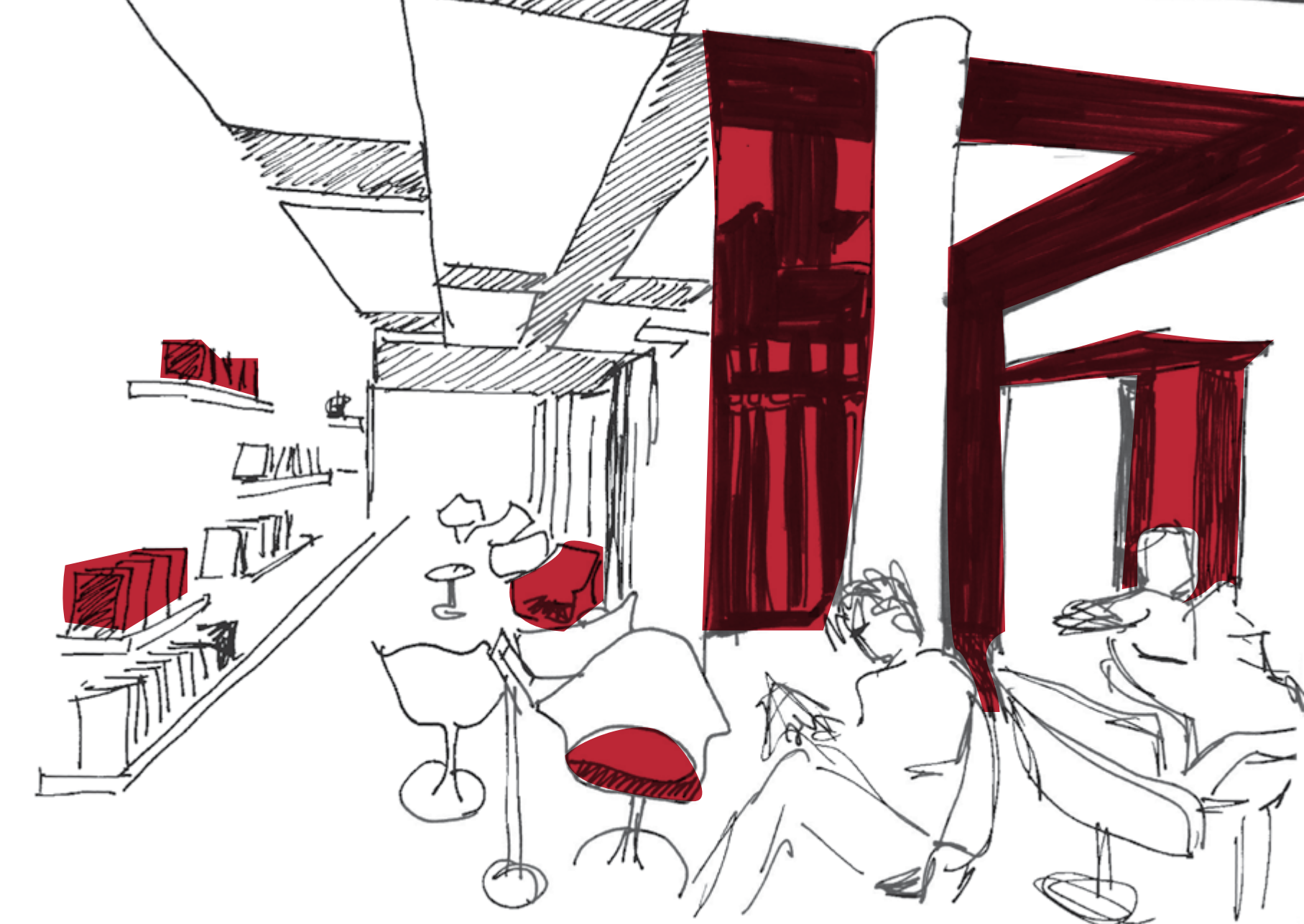
A WELCOMING HOUSE

The House of European History will be located in the heart of the European quarter in Brussels, next to the European Parliament and close to the buildings of the main European Union institutions.

The future museum building is situated in the Leopold Park, created in the 19th century on the grounds of a former private domain. It was built in 1934-35 to host a dental clinic for disadvantaged children, financed by a donation in 1931 from the American philanthropist George Eastman, the inventor of the Kodak camera. In the same period, similar Eastman dental clinics were established in London, Paris, Rome and Stockholm. The plans for the original building were drawn up by the architect Michel Polak.

A contract was signed in 2011 with the architectural group practice composed of Atelier d'architecture Chaix & Morel & associés from France, JSWD Architekten from Germany, and TPF from Belgium, winners of the international architectural competition for this project. The architects have designed a contemporary extension in the courtyard and on the roof. Their plans include the renovation of the original façades and of some rooms, thereby maintaining the historic aesthetic. The renovation will also respect original features of the building, such as the former clinic waiting room, decorated by the painter Camille Barthélémy with representations of animals from the fables of Jean de La Fontaine: these wall paintings will be restored and form part of the future foyer.

The House of European History building will also welcome those who do not plan to visit the exhibitions: the cafeteria and shop, for example, will be open to people who are not visiting the House. Educational rooms and conference facilities will host public events and educational programmes.



THE VISITOR – AT THE CENTRE

Situated at the heart of the European district in Brussels, the House of European History will form part of a triangle of visitor facilities in line with the visitors' policy of the European Parliament. This policy is based on a public itinerary or pathway between three locations which will together comprise the full information service for visitors to the European Parliament. Currently, the visitor can visit the parliamentary debating chamber, the 'Hemicycle', in one of Parliament's buildings, while the second major visitor facility is the European Parliament's visitors' centre, the 'Parlamentarium', which presents the European Parliament and its functions and powers in the context of the European Union's institutional framework and decision-making processes.

The House of European History will be a further facility for visitors within this public itinerary: its function — complementary to the existing visitor facilities — will be that of contextualising the history of Europe and the European Union in the light of the passage of time and memory.

EVALUATION AND SURVEYS

In placing the visitor at the centre of all the activities of the House of European History, it is essential that its facilities and activities actually meet its visitors' expectations and requirements. Therefore, the House of European History will base its offer on quantitative and qualitative research into the profile of potential visitors and their aspirations.

Central to the concept of the House is the belief that, for the visitor to understand the content of the museum, it will not be necessary to have extensive prior knowledge of European history.

The most recent research indicates that most of the visitors will come as members of a group. On this basis, the House will develop advanced logistics for the organisation of group visits. Analysis of the profile of existing visitors to the European Parliament suggests that the greatest proportion of visitors will come from two age groups: young people of up to 25 years of age and people of 56 years and above. A free entry policy will be an important inclusive factor in attracting and involving certain groups of the population. There will also be educational programmes for particular target groups.

For the visitor to understand the content of the museum, it will not be necessary to have extensive prior knowledge of European history.

As well as catering for group visits, the House will cater for individual visitors, such as city trippers, cultural tourists and students, as well as for family visits.

In this context, it is important to stress that the House of European History is committed — in line with the policy of the European Parliament — to the values and practice of equality and non-discrimination, and to supporting diversity in an open and inclusive environment. The aim is therefore to offer the same museum experience and equal opportunities for learning and engagement to all users.

As well as catering for group visits, the House will cater for individual visitors, such as city trippers, cultural tourists and students, as well as for family visits.

SERVICES FOR THE PUBLIC

The House of European History aims to provide a coherent range of services for its visitors.

At the heart of the House there will be a permanent exhibition on European history, focusing mainly on the 20th century, with retrospective insights into processes and events from earlier centuries. Particular emphasis will be placed on contextualising the history of European integration.

There is also scope for temporary exhibitions in the project and, in principle, one temporary exhibition will be organised each year. The subject matter of the temporary exhibitions will be closely tied in to the main focus of the House of European History's mission and objectives.

Travelling exhibitions will provide an important further means of outreach and of strengthening cooperation with other museums at the national, regional or local level.

While the exhibitions will form the nucleus of the House of European History, they will be complemented by a variety of actions and activities online and offline. It is planned to develop online exhibitions that could be used by other institutions in order to place their own exhibitions in a wider European context.

Extensive educational programmes which will target children, young people, adults and families will be organised to accompany the exhibitions. Based on the conviction that history education is not simply a matter of general historical knowledge but is also concerned with the acquisition of skills such as research, criticism, analysis of historical documents, contextualisation and communication, these educational programmes will aim to inspire critical thinking. They will also provide opportunities for cooperation with educational institutions at a local level and also with networks further afield.

HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

Extensive educational programmes will be organised to accompany the exhibitions.

MULTILINGUALISM

The House of European History will provide its main services in at least 24 languages, corresponding to the official languages of the European Union at its scheduled opening date. Multimedia devices will enable visitors to explore the museum in the official language(s) of their home country.

Multilingualism being understood as an expression of cultural diversity in Europe, the House of European History wishes its visitors to experience its multilingualism as one of its main assets.

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A PLACE IN CONSTANT DEVELOPMENT

The House of European History is a project which will be developing continuously. The aim is to build up, over time, a key source of information and a wealth of expertise on European history. To this end, the permanent exhibition and collection will be regularly updated and enriched. This process will be backed up by evaluations of the House of European History's products and activities, in the light of new trends and evolutions in museology and history.

In order to become a central point for research and debate on European history, the House of European History will create links with all kinds of initiatives and debates throughout Europe.

The House of European History will also seek to become an integral part of the local and international cultural landscape, with strong links and cooperation alliances with existing networks and partner institutions.

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THE PERMANENT EXHIBITION

The scope of the House of European History transcends national, regional and local boundaries. Its permanent exhibition will present a broader perspective than the summation of national histories. It will also reveal the diversity of European history and its interpretations and perceptions: knowledge of this diversity will be clearly communicated to the visitor.

The development of the House of European History, in particular of its permanent exhibition, is based on a dichotomy of objectives: on the one hand, the exhibition will convey a coherent historical narrative which will be easy to grasp for any interested visitor; on the other hand, it will raise awareness of the existence of a variety of different historical interpretations, points of view, nuances of perception and memory, so as to stimulate reflection and debate.

Its permanent exhibition will present a broader perspective than the summation of national histories.

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MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY

The House of European History will offer a permanent exhibition narrative on European history. The selection of historical events to be presented in the main exhibition narrative has been made on the basis of three criteria: there will be particular focus on events and processes which have originated in Europe, have expanded across Europe and which are relevant until today. These three criteria have allowed the examination of large periods of history without losing analytical focus.

Based on up-to-date historical research, the House of European History will focus on phenomena which are considered to be significant in the history of Europe. Different memories and opposing interpretations of history will be portrayed and their interrelationship shown by juxtaposing them, using to the full the museological potential of the setting.

The House of European History will highlight the way in which the presentation of history is a construct defined by individual values and perceptions. It will use the concept of 'shared memory' as a basis for the interpretation of history, encompassing the passive and the active side of this phenomenon — which is formed in a social context and which both characterises and binds groups of people together. The House of European History will reflect on how core factors and decisive developments in European history could contribute to the formation of a European historical consciousness. Moreover, the concept of a 'shared memory' should contribute to the development of a critical perspective, one that seeks to uncover the intentions and motives which lead to the construction of history.

The House of European History will highlight the way in which the presentation of history is a construct defined by individual values and perceptions.

The House will present European history as a process that is constantly evolving. For this reason, the permanent exhibition will contain some sections in which the visitor's awareness of sensitive questions and of issues still under debate will be heightened, at which point he/she will be invited to step back and reflect on the diversity of historical interpretations. In this way, the visitor will be encouraged to engage in debate about different perceptions of historical events.

EXPANDING EUROPE

The House of European History will focus on presenting and interpreting the various and sometimes tortuous processes of the 20th century history of the continent. The development of the European integration process will be presented in its broad historical context. Links with global history and with the position of Europe on the international scene will be shown.

The House of European History is committed to an understanding of Europe in the broadest sense — east and west, north and south. Its scope will extend beyond geographical and psychological boundaries and limitations. It will also recall that the enlargements of the European Union have involved a constant review of the dimensions of Europe, physically and psychologically.

The House of European History is committed to an understanding of Europe in the broadest sense — east and west, north and south.

CHRONOLOGY AND THEMES

The core narrative, as defined in the 'Conceptual basis' document, will comprise the history of Europe with an emphasis on the 20th century. This storyline will be backed by timelines and divided into several interconnected themes, topics and subtopics.

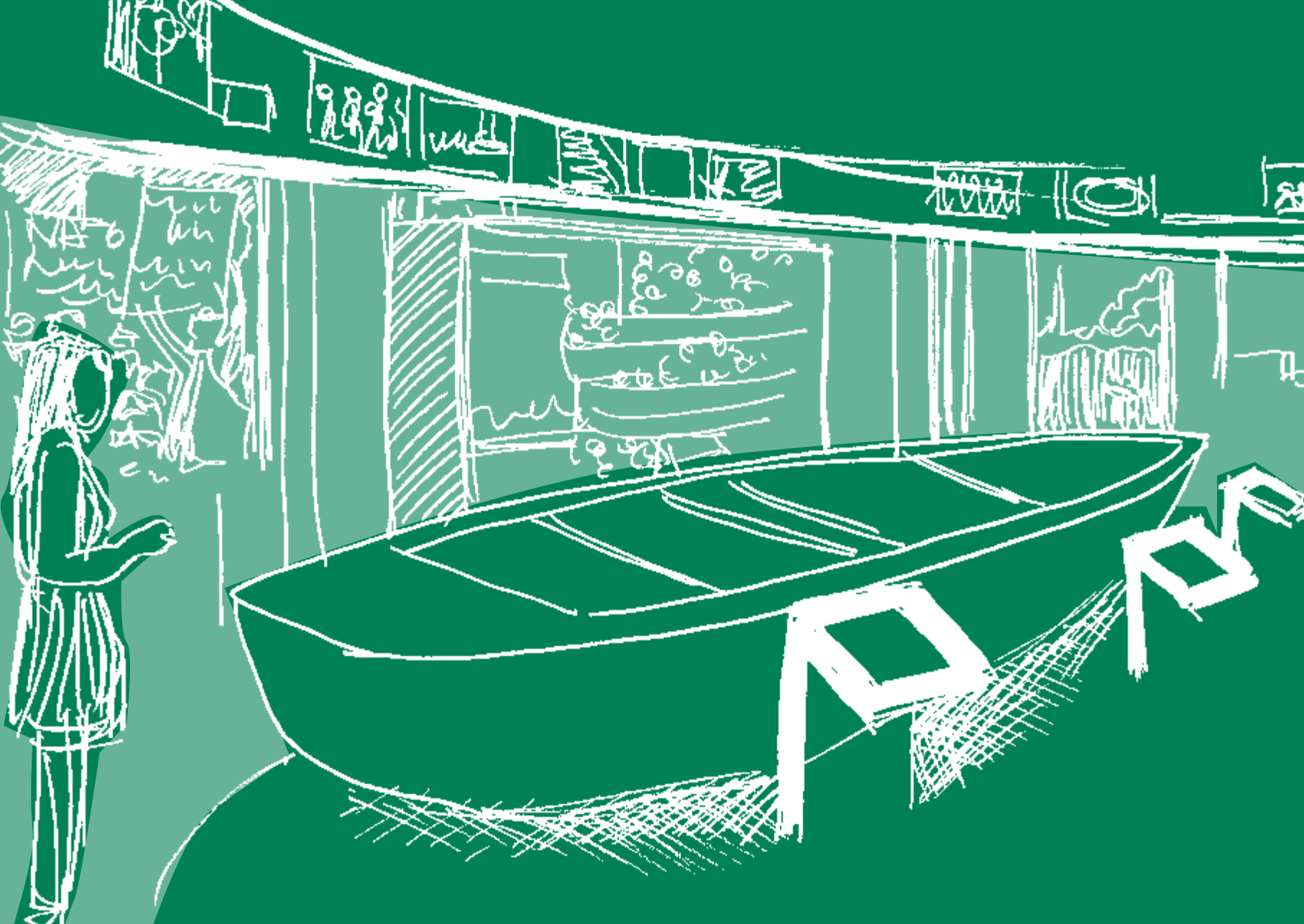
The overall structure of the permanent exhibition will be chronological, starting on the second floor of the building and taking the visitor up to the top floor. This chronologically based narrative will be paired with a thematic approach, which will allow the visitor to acquire an overview by means of retrospectives and broader appraisals, in which the internal chronology of events, causes and consequences will be presented in the wider historical context.

The first theme will provide an introductory section and a guide to the exhibition, while the last theme, situated on the top floor of the exhibition space, will offer a space in which the whole visit may be evaluated and knowledge deepened in an interactive and questioning environment. The other themes will be devoted to European history of the last two centuries.

LAYERING THE CONTENT

The main storyline is divided into six themes, subdivided into topics and, where necessary, subtopics. These will be supplemented by examples which will give greater substance to the main narrative and will illustrate different processes and events by means of small or more personal stories. These will give the visitor a 'flashback' perspective through time and space.

A guiding principle of the development of the exhibition is that of offering different types of visits adapted to the various expectations and differing availability of the visitor. For example, some visitors will have only a limited amount of time in which to take in the main messages of the exhibition.



In order to take account of the diversity of visitors and of the time they are able to spend in visiting the House, the exhibition will be layered in a way that will enable them to follow a recommended or given itinerary, but will also give them the freedom to decide how much time to take and how deeply into the substance they wish to go. The way in which the exhibition will be layered will also take into account the constraints encountered by group visits.

The content will be presented in layers, using differing means of communication, ranging from the exhibiting of original objects to multimedia displays. The aim is to arrive at a well-balanced exhibition in which multimedia does not dominate or overwhelm but, instead, is used aptly and effectively in supporting the content: this principle will also be applied to interactive tools.

The content will be presented in layers, using differing means of communication, ranging from the exhibiting of original objects to multimedia displays.

CONNECTING THE CONCEPTS

Throughout the exhibition there will be a recurring leitmotiv, that of the concept of 'centre and periphery'. It is an enduring topic in European history which even today remains central to the debate about the development of the European Union. Over time, different parts of Europe have occupied the role of the centre or of the periphery, spatially and psychologically. It could be said that Europe has developed mainly through these processes of shifting borders, centres and powers. The sense of belonging or of marginalisation is important for every European individual, for example in his/her relationship to the development of the European Union.

Recurrent visual elements will be located near to the starting point of each theme, providing landmarks for the visitor. Their main purpose is to introduce the visitor to the theme, to act as orientation points and to explain the timeline of the theme. These points will also enable tour guides to adapt the graphics, sound and lighting to the needs of particular groups, thus giving them a customised introduction to the nature of the content and experience on each floor.

The exhibition narrative will be complemented by a spatial installation which will take its inspiration from metaphors about the house. This will rise up through the five levels of the permanent exhibition and will feature a vertical showcase on each exhibition floor — visible from the staircase — which will contain iconic objects connected to the theme presented on that floor. An area located behind this showcase will provide a further opportunity for interpretation of the house metaphor in a way that illustrates the theme exhibited on that level.

THE MAIN STORYLINE OF THE PERMANENT EXHIBITION

SHAPING EUROPE

The function of the first theme, entitled 'Shaping Europe', is to engage and familiarise visitors with core issues in European history. As the starting point of the permanent exhibition, it will also provide an introduction to the subject matter of the House of European History and will explain that, as a reservoir of European memory, the House of European History will transcend national and regional perspectives in depicting and describing a shared European past. It will be seen to be a bridge, mediating between research into European history and the public.

Europe is not a self-evident entity — the perceptions, images and conceptions of Europe have changed throughout the ages. Nevertheless, it has a common heritage, being characterised by particular attributes, traditions and achievements that distinguish its culture from that of other continents. The introduction to this theme will make the visitor aware that, for humankind, memory is constitutive in that it is the basis of self-understanding and learning, whether as individuals or as members of a social group. It will be revealed in this way that memory is inextricably intertwined with oblivion: to bear something in remembrance means, ineluctably, to lose sight of something else or to ascribe another meaning to it. Current interests always drive the selection of the remembered past. Memory is never fixed and changes continually. That is why any reflection on cultural identity and any description of history are essentially constructs.

One of the most powerful ways of representing the continent has been by means of its personification. The ancient myth of Europa and the Bull became emblematic for the continent, acquiring a multiplicity of interpretations throughout history. Viewed from a modern standpoint, the myth refers to the fact that European culture has ancient roots outside Europe.

In addition, mapping is an important tool in the presentation of the image of Europe and the political self-definition of the continent, which has changed radically from antiquity to the present day. Rather than being defined by sharp-edged geographical boundaries, the map of Europe is based on cultural, political, social and psychological characteristics and trajectories.

The philosophy of the House of European History will be explained throughout this theme: the focus on European history; questions of national and transnational identity; the multiplicity of perceptions; and the question of a European memory, as well as the leitmotiv of the 'centre and the periphery' which will highlight the changes in the centre of gravity over time.

EUROPE ASCENDANT

The second theme focuses on the 19th century, which was a revolutionary and rebellious age. Europe underwent radical changes in the political and economic sphere as well as in the societal and cultural spheres, transforming a traditional feudalistic society into a modern social order. The French Revolution put firmly on the map the ideas of freedom, equality, self-determination and human and civil rights all across Europe.

New political visions arose. In this process, the revolutions of 1848–49 constitute a turning point, opening the way to new forms of political representation through parties, trade unions and diverse other associations, and leading to a gradual expansion of democratic participation and constitutional rights. Nationalism, viewed as the basis of sovereignty and as the only legitimate basis of the state, was on the rise. Industrialisation radically changed both working patterns and societal structures. New social strata, those of the bourgeoisie and the working class, emerged.

In the second half of the 19th century, Europe became the centre of world finance and commerce. The capitalist organisation of work created unprecedented productivity, but also gave rise to new levels and dimensions of social unrest. As populations moved from rural surroundings to overcrowded cities, appalling living conditions resulted. In this new, class-based society, the question of social justice became one of the central issues of political discourse. The advent of a Marxist-oriented labour movement created a new political factor, opposing liberalism with a set of revolutionary goals. The need to provide protection against the risks of unregulated wage labour brought into play a new definition of the duties and responsibilities of the state, creating the basic elements of a welfare state. Modern definitions and understanding of instrumental and rational science were established, accompanied by improvements in the educational system and increases in knowledge and technical innovation.

There was no more obvious gauge of progress, in the eyes of the European elite, than the expansion of European colonial power. The sheer scale of imperial expansion bolstered the self-held European sense of superiority compared to the rest of the world. Nationalism and the vision of European civilisation were permeated by racist and social Darwinist ideas. Before World War I, Europe was at the peak of its global power.

On the eve of World War I, the majority of Europe's population was still rural. The asynchrony with the processes of social development led to mass migration from the countryside to the city, from poorer regions to richer ones, as well as to large-scale overseas emigration. As the 19th century came to its close, social friction and international competition accumulated to generate a multifaceted potential for conflict.

EUROPE ECLIPSED

The following theme considers Europe's downward trajectory in the first half of the 20th century. The outbreak of World War I was a terminating point for the ascendant Europe of the 19th century. The conduct and technology of war had changed; as well as the unprecedented killing of millions of young men on both sides, mass war had devastating human consequences on society at large. It changed the political landscape of Europe and had a profound impact on the European memory.

All of the states, old and new, which emerged from the 'great war' were basically representative parliamentary democracies, with the exception of the Soviet Union. Over the next 20 years however, in more than half of these same European states, democracy proved to be too fragile to survive the powerful social and political tensions which were on the rise across the continent. The October Revolution of 1917 was a world-shaking event, imposing an alternative order to that of capitalism, liberalism and parliamentary democracy. Marxist ideology was used to legitimise the communist regime in the Soviet Union, a regime based on omnipresent mass terror.

National socialism was a reaction against both liberalism and the rising socialist working-class movement in general, and against the October

Revolution in particular. Under the leadership of the Nazi party, Germany — although considered to be among the most culturally and economically advanced countries — built up a totalitarian regime founded on an ideology of race hatred, and planned a war which would culminate in the occupation of large parts of eastern and western Europe and in the mechanised mass murder of millions of Jews.

The 'break of civilisation' of the Shoah is the beginning and the nucleus of the European discourse of memory. For a long time, states were silent about their failings. In the meantime, the recognition of the Shoah as a singular crime against humanity has become the negative reference point of European self-consciousness.

World War II became a 'total war', in which civilians became targets of warfare. Thus, Europe became the scene of unprecedented violence and murder. This led to the definitive decline of Europe's position in the world and the division of the continent, shaping its history for the rest of the century.

In 1944, the gradual liberation of the continent began. However, the suffering of civilians did not come to an end; it continued and reached a peak in the chaos of displacement and retribution. Liberation could not be perceived in the same way by everyone; for some, it brought a surge of tremendous joy, while for others it brought only fear, dread and tragedy. With the end of the war, Europe — and the world — looked back in horror and sought to make a fresh start based on the conviction that the catastrophe of another war should be prevented by all means. However, yesterday's allies were becoming today's opponents and enemies.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

In this theme, it will be seen that, after World War II, Europe had hit rock bottom. It had turned from being a leading global power into a continent devastated, divided and dependent on the two superpowers, even in decisions on its own future. Many of its people could focus only on survival. The reconstruction of housing, the rebuilding of infrastructure and, indeed, of political structures, was paramount. Millions of Europeans were seeking to return to their old homes or to find new ones.

The Iron Curtain became the historical divide of the continent. The United States and the Soviet Union developed antagonistic programmes, with economic liberalisation and democratisation on the one hand, and modernisation via state planning and the leadership of the communist party on the other. Very soon, their struggle for spheres of influence polarised the world and divided Europe sharply into two camps. Few countries could stand aside, or take or maintain a neutral or non-aligned position. The decolonised countries became another arena in which this power struggle was played out.

In this situation of competing strategies and bipolar rivalry and under the threat of nuclear weapons, Europe engaged in an astonishing new direction. On both sides of the Iron Curtain, the economies grew at a similar rate, despite the fact that two completely different political and economic systems had been installed in east and west. Vast differences and unexpected convergences between east and west marked Europe at this time. Western Europe experienced a phase of international reconciliation, economic prosperity, the development of the welfare state, and democratic and institutional consolidation, while the socialist states under Soviet control underwent a period of forced industrialisation, increasing social security and mass literacy campaigns, enforced by partly brutal dictatorships, which were in turn supported militarily by the Soviet Union. Based on different ideological foundations and embedded in different socioeconomic regimes, the establishment of social security systems grew across Europe. The competition between the systems reinforced the pressure to reform.

In western Europe, the beginning of the European integration process set the course of a development with far-reaching consequences. Visionaries from very different backgrounds expressed — with great persuasive effect — the idea that the maintenance of peace and the pursuit of reconciliation required new political solutions. The foundation of the European Economic Community, an entirely unique form of organisation aimed at integrating the economies and, to some extent, the legal systems of a number of independent nation states, marks a turning point in the history of the continent. It prevents western Europe from regressing to earlier chauvinistic, aggressive and imperialistic mechanisms.

The exhibition here focuses on the key events in this process, ranging from the Hague Congress of 1948 to the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community, the failure of the European Defence Community, the Treaties of Rome, the establishment of a common agricultural policy, the Elysée Treaty, the 'empty chair crisis' and the first enlargement of the European Community in 1973.

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

Moving to the next theme, it will be seen that 1973 marks the end of the period of general prosperity and the beginning of a time of long-term economic instability, as a result of the worldwide economic recession, exploding energy costs and increased competition from overseas. With the oil crisis, Europe became aware of its energy dependency — and of the limits of its progress. The decline of the iron, coal and steel industries, which had formed the basis of the post-war boom and which had given rise to the European integration process, led to growing rates of unemployment in western Europe for the first time in 40 years, necessitating economic restructuring. Moreover, in the 1970s, widespread debate about 'guest workers' was to be heard, reflecting major social change and the deficiencies in the integration of migrants. Socialist countries, already concerned by their relative economic backwardness, proved to be inefficient and incapable of structural reform; the standard of living of their people worsened.

From the perspective of western Europe, the 1970s can be considered to be an age of mobilisation, driven to a great extent by the new generation who had not experienced World War II. The claims from all sides for greater participation and the voicing of new concerns for individual rights combined to undermine the democratic consensus which had characterised the previous years. The fall of the last western dictatorships in southern Europe finally brought the isolation of these countries to an end and led to their membership of the European Community.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe was a turning point in the constant confrontation of the two antagonistic camps in Europe, bringing about 'change through rapprochement'. The Helsinki Final Act of 1975, which, largely through the initiative of the European Community, established human rights as a basic norm, became a reference point for dissidents and opposition movements in eastern Europe: in the exhibition it serves as the starting point of the portrayal of the final decade of the socialist countries. Stagnation, the growing discrepancy between promise and reality and the erosion of public authority were palpable. People mobilised for more freedom, social justice and political reforms. These movements ultimately led to the 1989 revolutions and to the symbolism of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Cold War, which had dominated and immobilised the political situation in Europe for 45 years, came to an end.

The collapse of the Soviet Empire accelerated the European integration process. This is seen most clearly in the enlargement 'marathon', in the deepening of the supranational structures and the expansion of competence to more and more domains, thus enabling the erosion of political, geographical, economic and psychological boundaries. Europeanisation encompasses both integrative elements — the strengthening of intra-European connections and similarities — and disintegrative elements — the processes of delimitation and fragmentation.

The developments falling within the scope of 'breaking boundaries' are reflected in the milestones of European integration, ranging from 1974, when the European Council was established, to the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979, the achievement of the single market, the enlargement rounds of 1980–86 and 1995, and from the Treaty of Maastricht to the implementation of the Schengen Convention in 1995, the debate on a treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe and the enlargement marathon of 2004–07 and onwards to the future.

LOOKING AHEAD

This last theme differs from those which form the core of the visitor's historical itinerary through the House of European History. Whereas the first theme offered an introduction to the House, the last theme will offer a space in which the visit can be evaluated and deepened. It will engage and immerse the visitor in an active questioning process about the shared responsibility for important decisions and choices that continue to shape the history of Europe and its relationship with the rest of the world.

This theme will pose the following overall question to the visitor: what are the differing perceptions of the future held by Europeans? In response, it will explore with the visitor, for example, the role to be played by the nation state in the future: it will look at how Europe deals with diversity and will consider which issues are best dealt with at a European level. Topical and critical questions relating to the European Union's Member States will be tackled in the context of topics such as the economy, human rights, democracy, nationalism and diversity, all of which have deep roots in Europe and most of which visitors will have encountered frequently during their visit of the House of European History.

The visitor will be invited to immerse him/herself in the cultural sources of Europe by using a variety of interactive tools as sources of further experience, learning and research. To a greater extent than in the other parts of the exhibition, the visitor will here be encouraged to look more deeply into both historical and current issues, such as questions of European heritage and of what might contribute to a European identity. These questions will have been present as 'red threads' throughout the exhibition and, here, the visitor will be invited to get involved and answer the questions in a more interactive, hands-on and even playful setting.

Finally and crucially, and throughout the permanent exhibition of the House of European History, it will be shown that there is not one single, predetermined way of defining Europe — and that many combinations and permutations of factors are possible as well as differing individual and collective perceptions.

HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

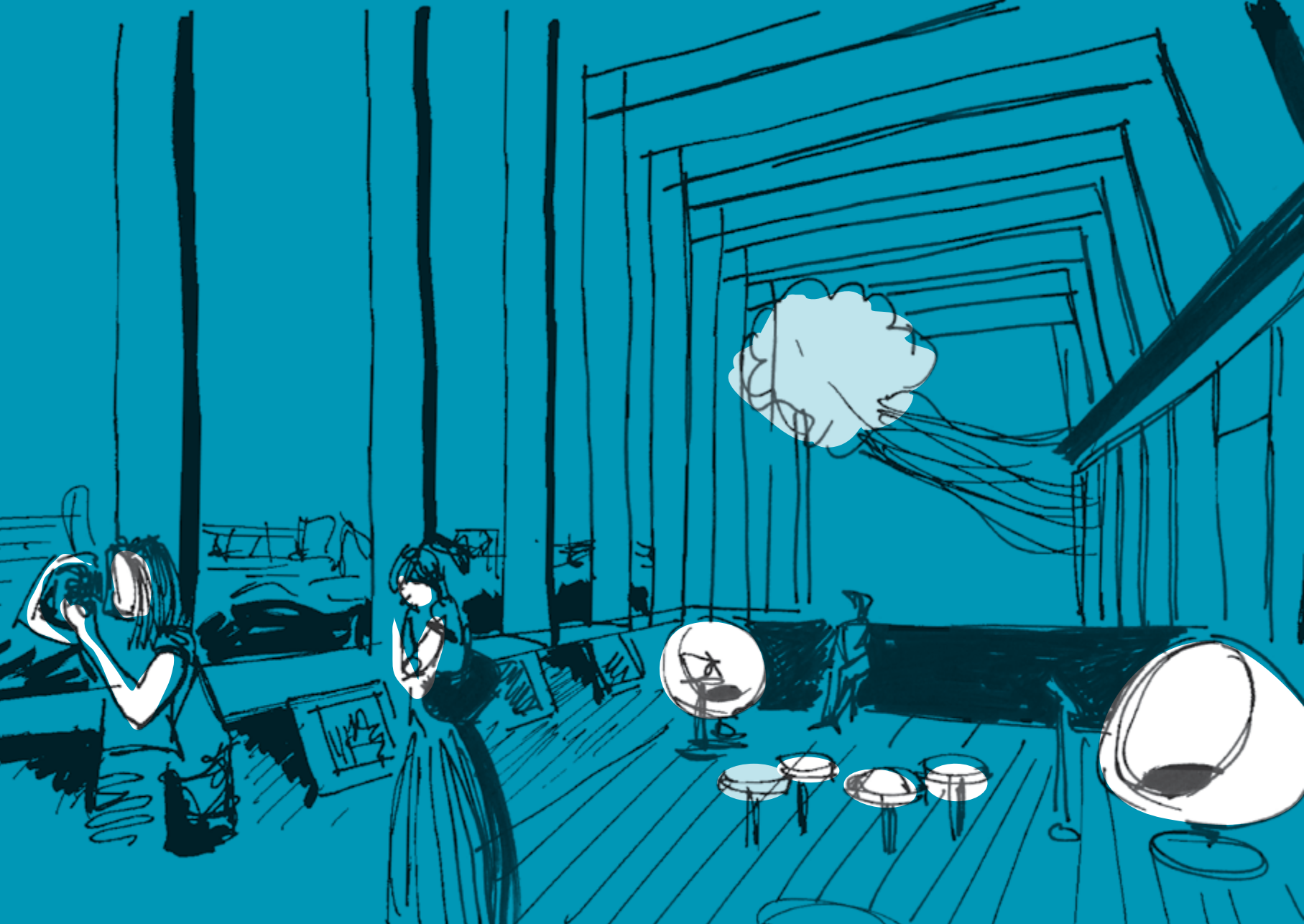
AN EXPERIENCE FOR ALL THE SENSES

The House of European History understands exhibitions to be communicators of ideas. The exhibitions will function as a medium which will allow visitors to understand the messages by means of a multisensory, participatory experience, while retaining the option of selecting their own physical or conceptual pathway. In order to provide a comfortable and inspirational setting for learning and enjoyment, the needs of the visitor will be central to the structure of the exhibition.

To facilitate this, repetition of a number of structural elements will be necessary, in order to assist visitors in finding their way around the exhibition and in devising their own pathway through it.

In order to offer visitors a varied experience, the atmosphere of the six main themes, laid out over the five floors of the building, will be developed using different moods. In this context, the first and last themes have specific functions: the first should inspire and motivate curiosity in a welcoming atmosphere, while the last theme should enable visitors to end their visits and reflect on their experience.

Different models of spatial typology have been defined for each theme. These conceptual models indicate the intuitive type of spatial organisation that at this stage seems most appropriate for the different chapters of the story. This typology will help guide the development of the concepts in space and ensure that each level possesses a spatial identity as well as a different thematic focus.



Variation of experience will be developed through changes in the density of objects and in the level of interactivity for each theme: the use of multimedia and technology will be varied according to the content. Taken together, these factors will help to create a more engaging and richer experience for all types of visitors.

The House of European History understands exhibitions to be communicators of ideas.

FUTURE COLLECTIONS

As a new institution, the House of European History does not possess its own, pre-existing collection and it will have to build one, from the ground up.

The collection policy of the House of European History focuses on relevant tangible and intangible material from the 20th and 21st centuries, but will also seek to acquire suitable available material from previous centuries. The House of European History has a broad approach to the term 'collection', comprising objects, documents and archival material as tangible heritage, to be completed by records of intangible heritage.

The first phase of the building up of this collection, from 2012–14, will be focused on collecting material, on the basis of long- and short-term loans, which will directly support the permanent and the first temporary exhibition: during this period, the focus will be on evidential research into relevant material in European collections (and where necessary into collections outside Europe), as well as on collecting the objects needed for the permanent and the temporary exhibition.

A pilot project which looked into the possibilities for long-term loans was carried out in the summer of 2012. In the autumn of the same year, the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union provided an opportunity for a collection exercise covering all of the official and unofficial events surrounding the award ceremony in Norway, as a result of which the first objects for the House of European History's collection were brought to Brussels.

The new collection will become the 'nucleus' for a permanent reservoir of shared European memory.

The House of European History aims to use, insofar as possible, original objects to support the exhibition narrative. These will be selected for their capacity to convey meaningful messages and to offer an enriching visitor experience. In addition, recorded testimonies and personal stories will play an important role in conveying memories and depicting particular perspectives on historical events. The new collection will become the 'nucleus' for a permanent reservoir of shared European memory.

Items of evidence will be sought that have a proven association with a particular known individual, event, process or period in the history of Europe (a wide range of themes and items ranging from those used in everyday settings to objects of high cultural or artistic meaning and value) and that are considered significant by the House.

Visitors and institutions alike will be invited to contribute to future collections and projects: for this initiative, the online facility of the House of European History will play an important outreach and collection role.

A particular collection policy is being developed for collecting material and immaterial assets that will document the history of the European unification process.

The House of European History's collection policy will comply with the different regulations in force in the European Union on tangible and intangible heritage, and the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for Museums.

Visitors and institutions alike will be invited to contribute to future collections and projects.

A CULTURAL LANDMARK

The House of European History will become a place for exploration, engagement and enjoyment. Its vision for the future is to become a permanent forum that offers everyone involved and interested in European history a platform to reflect, to learn, to debate and to share opinions and ideas. The House of European History will be a connecting link for institutions as well as for visitors and researchers.

It will be a centre of excellence, from which Europe's future will be envisaged in the context of its past, and in which reflection on the history of European integration and its position in our daily lives will be encouraged, enabled and sustained.

HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

The House of European History will become a place for exploration, engagement, and enjoyment.

MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT

Responsibility for the House of European History is borne by the Bureau of the European Parliament, which steers several institutional structures.

The Bureau Contact Group for the House of European History, chaired by Vice-President Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, and composed of Vice-Presidents Isabelle Durant MEP, Georgios Papastamkos MEP, Gianni Pittella MEP, Alejo Vidal-Quadras MEP, Roberta Angelilli MEP and Bogusław Liberadzki MEP, provided early oversight of the project.

The relevant parliamentary committees are closely involved in the realisation of the House of European History. All financial aspects are dealt with by the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Budgetary Control. The Culture and Education Committee has supported the project and regularly monitors its progress.

The Board of Trustees, chaired by the former President of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering, is a body made up of high-level politicians and well-known public figures, bringing together several European institutions and the Brussels authorities. The major political families and the most important bodies of the Parliament are represented on the Board, which supervises the general management of the project and is advised by Harald Rømer, formerly Secretary-General of the Parliament. The Board has an advisory role and supervises the general management of the project.

The members of the Board are: Włodzimierz Borodziej, Étienne Davignon, Hans-Walter Hütter, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Gérard Onesta, Doris Gisela Pack, Chrysoula Paliadeli, Charles Picqué, Alain Lamassoure, Wojciech Roszkowski, Peter Sutherland, Androulla Vassiliou, Diana Wallis and Francis Wurtz.

The Academic Committee, chaired by the historian Włodzimierz Borodziej and made up of historians and professionals from internationally renowned museums, plays a follow-up and advisory role on historical and museological transcription issues.

Its members are: Norman Davies, Hans-Walter Hütter, Matti Klinge, Anita Meinarte, Hélène Miard-Delacroix, Mary Michailidou, Oliver Rathkolb, Antonio Reis, Maria Schmidt, Jean-Pierre Verdier and Henk Wesseling.

The Academic Project Team of the House of European History is a unit within the General Secretariat of the Parliament, Directorate-General for Communication (Juana Lahousse-Juárez, Director-General), Directorate C for relations with the citizens (Stephen Clark, Director). The unit is led by historian and curator Taja Vovk van Gaal and is responsible for preparing the exhibitions and for structuring the future museum.

Its members are: Michèle Antoine, Erika Aronowitsch, Nicolas Auzanneau, Kieran Burns, Perikles Christodoulou, Étienne Deschamps, Hans de Waegeneer, Christine Dupont, Nathalie Duquesne, Ronald Evers, Martí Grau Segú, Anna Huth, Constanze Itzel, Pirjo Kemppainen, Sonia Marconi, Raili Minkkinen, Andrea Mork, Françoise Petit, Elisabeth Pluijmen, Ollivier Rocher, Tessa Ryan, Raivis Sīmansons and Zofia Wóycicka.

The Building Team, responsible for the Eastman building, is part of the General Secretariat of the Parliament, Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics (Constantin Stratigakis, Director-General), Directorate for Buildings Projects (Diogo Quintela, Director), Unit for Brussels Building Projects. This unit is headed by staff architect Xavier Lacroix who organised the initial architectural competition and is now charged with overseeing the execution of the renovation and extension project by the external architects.

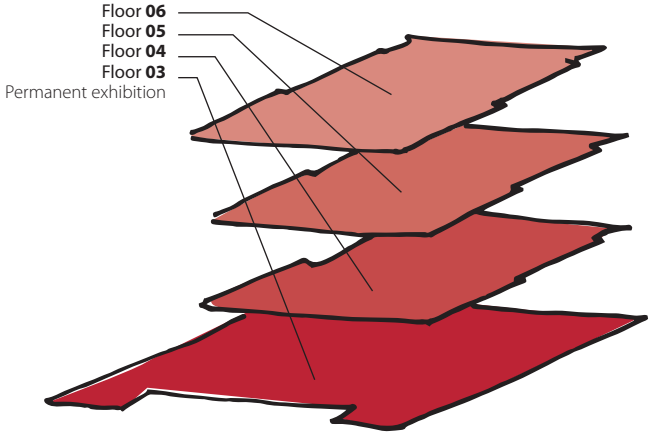
Its members are: Dave Baudoux, Charalampos Chaitas, Florence Decrop, Andrew Kabelis, Philippe Masson, Jean-Pierre Pamart, Ricardo Quiros Lazaro and Danièle Van de Lanotte.

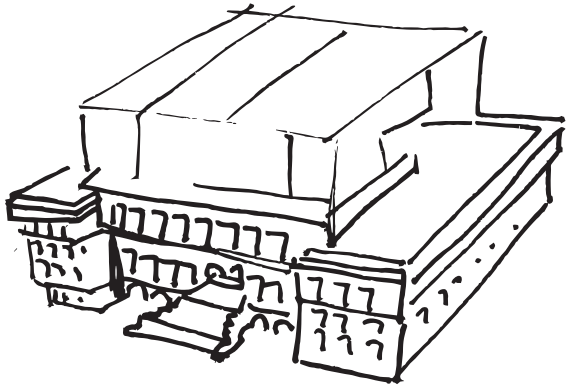
The House of European History works closely together with the other Directorates-General of the Parliament's General Secretariat — especially the Directorate-General for Finance, the Directorate-General for Translation, the Directorate-General for Personnel, the Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support and the Directorate-General for Interpretation and Conferences.

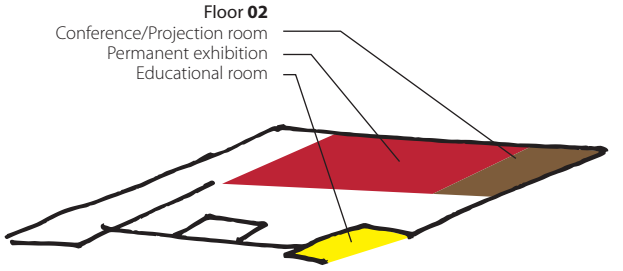
The European Parliament has been assisted by BL Associates (France) in its work on the museography. The preliminary concept design has been developed with studioDiem (United Kingdom).

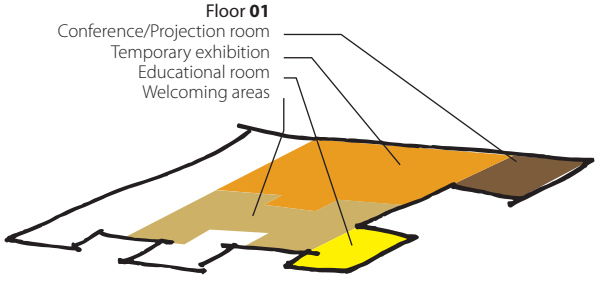
On 26 March 2013, the European Parliament signed a contract with General de Producciones y Diseño, a museum design company based in Seville, Spain.

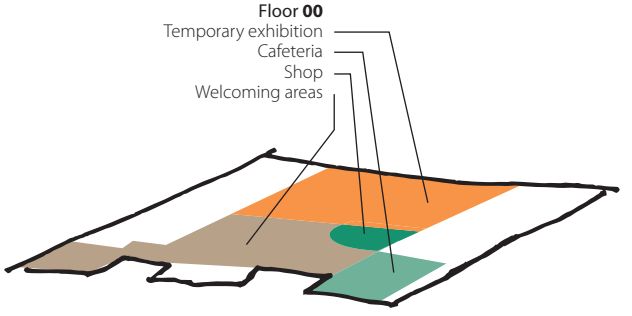
HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY


Floor **06**
Floor **05**
Floor **04**
Floor **03**
Permanent exhibition




Floor **02**
Conference/Projection room
Permanent exhibition
Educational room


Floor **01**
Conference/Projection room
Temporary exhibition
Educational room
Welcoming areas


Floor **00**
Temporary exhibition
Cafeteria
Shop
Welcoming areas

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