



*Memory Lab*  
*Trans-European Exchange Platform on History and Remembrance*

## **EVALUATIONS**

**Sixth annual study trip and workshop,  
October 4 – 10, 2015, Belgium**

Organized by:

Youth Initiative for Human Rights BiH (Sarajevo),  
Belgium National Institute for Veterans and Victims of War (Brussels),  
French-German Youth Office (Paris/Berlin), Forum ZFD (Pristina / Belgrade / Sarajevo /  
Skopje) and crossborder factory (Berlin / Paris / Sarajevo)

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*Sixth international workshop and study trip, 4-10 October 2015: Belgium*

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*Nota: The answers 1 to 10 have been translated from B/C/S into English, the answers 11 to 36 have been written in English*

### ***1. My general opinion on the study trip and/or workshop (content, structure, organisation)***

1. An interesting and very well designed trip. A lot of information at a minimum of visited locations. The program has provided us with good insight in complexity of social relations in Belgium and colonial past and WWI and WWII.

2. As always, the study trip and workshop are well designed and organized, and more than anything useful. Even when some memorials are not on the expected level, on the other hand our discussions and questions asked the guides were particularly useful. I believe that some raised issues were very useful.

3. My general opinion of the Study trip is excellent. I was very excited to participate and my expectations were met.

Content: excellent, very diverse, and interesting examples of memorialisation and ideas

Structure: very useful visits to different locations, and I find it the most valuable part of this study trip. Sometimes we had discussions before the visits, and after the visit there was not enough time for questions. But, since we have pretty busy schedule, it is fully understandable.

Organisation: 5+, very professional, and the same time very relaxed and human. Congratulations!

4. My general comment is that idea of this kind of study trip is very important and necessary. The content was full of information, which was important to me. Organisational part was OK, but it could have been better.

5. I was pleasantly surprised by the concept of this study trip since it was a combination of workshops/discussions/ and field visits. The concept was dynamic and productive. In addition, I am very pleased with the choice of Belgium as host country, as most of ex-Yu population (me included) is not familiar with its history and roles in different time periods. A plus goes also for the fact that besides the WWI, we dealt with other periods (colonialism, current situation and ratio of “powers” within the Federation.)

6. Again, Memory Lab was exceptionally organized, and congratulations for that and for selection of locations we visited.

7. As always, organisation of the study trip was at very high level. Locations selected for field visits were very interesting. Belgium is a specific country since in focus of memory culture there is WWI, and not WWII. It is difficult to say something more about the African Museum as exhibition is in preparation, but it was interesting to hear how Belgium deals with its colonial heritage. The workshops in which I participated were well organized and vivid discussion took place.

8. Well designed. Sufficient diversity of examples of memorialization. Only sometimes there was not enough time for discussion or visit. Interesting counterparts in our group. It was really nice that we had opportunity to discuss colonial history of Belgium.

9. All three components (content, structure and organisation) were excellent, the same as previous years.

10. Study trip was extremely well prepared including structure, content, timing, diversity, time for discussions and reflections.

11. It was a very well organized week. Very rich in content and site visits, which were well-balanced. The choice of the 3 themes (WW1, colonial and European) was excellent given the urgency and actuality. Compared to previous workshops, I particularly liked the more creative activities (art workshop) and group exercises (museum exercises) which helped a lot to process the issues and to give the brain some time off. - One thing to point out, which seems to be hard every year, is enough time for discussion and reflection. I propose to have every day of the workshop a start of ½ hours and a closing of an hour to deepen issues and to give space for dialogue. Too often discussion time stays an expression of monologues instead of real interaction. As always, and this time particularly thanks to dream team Tamara and Griet and of course all others, organizing part was excellent. Perfect accommodation, logistics, food, etc. Thank you!

12. The study trip and the workshop in Belgium was nicely organized. Content-wise the visit was well structured, the agenda well respected and, I believe, we all had the opportunity to get introduced to the memory context and memorialization in Belgium (divided).

13. The general feeling I have on this trip is very positive; the program was very well thought and good balanced, not too heavy, with nice restaurants and hotel. The atmosphere was relax and very friendly. But some (rare) persons seem to be not ready to be in a group and play a collective game. I also appreciate that Kosovar were more present and it was very *[unreadable]*.

14. The study trip and workshop was organized very well and it ended up achieving its goals. Presentations and guided tours were very informative about the history of Belgium, sites of commemoration and memorials, but also the challenges faced during the processes of planning and inaugurating some of them. I wish we did not miss Liege in order of having a balanced overview of Flemings and Walloon memorialisation. I ended up having more information and clues related to the Flanders. Overall it was very educational and serious organization, which made me challenge myself towards different issues regarding the remembrance of the past and reconciliation.

15. My general opinion is that Memory Lab is very useful considering that you learn a lot of things that can be used in your job and you get a lot of ideas for future cooperations with participants. Another thing is that knowing the concept of how Memory Lab works gives opportunity to become a partner and help in some future study trips.

16. My general opinion is very positive. The concept and the content of the program were very well chosen and the organization was very good

17. I liked the division into/ focus on 3 clear topics: Colonial history, WW1 and European History  
A pity that we had to discuss 2 times on 2 interesting topics (Colonial history, European history) on a concept of museum in the making- but it was still interesting.

Organization was great.

Also great: the diversity of sites visited – Wallonia, Flanders, museums/ memorials run by NGO to promote Flemish identity, highly technical, modern museum in a touristic place.

Positive (to not always use ‘great’) intro day/ part on Monday.

Group size is the maximum.

I enjoyed it! Big compliment to the organizers and heir humorous way to flexibly adapt to challenges, bus drivers, etc.

18. Generally I think the study trip was very enriching. I felt comfortable within the group and it was a good mixture of ‘old’ and new participants and a good selection of institutions/ organizations they are involved. The organization was just PERFECT! Hotel, working venue, food, etc. was really great and it seemed to me that the organization team worked together in a very good way. Compliments to that!

19. The whole experience for me in general has been very inspirational, reflective and auto-critical. Besides the learning process which was present, I liked the structure of study visits, presentations and reflections, because it involved us on several levels with the places (visually), the content of it and the possibility to dig into ourselves as individuals and members of communities we represent vis-à-vis what we experienced during the trip. Overall, I really thought the format works for me (kept me interested, concentrated and alert).

20. My general opinion: It was very good and well prepared study trip. I’m really happy I got the chance to be the part of this, it’s a pure privilege (and I really mean it). I knew almost nothing about Belgium context (apart from very general things), and this tour helped me a lot in understanding complexities of this small, reach (and not boring at all) country.

21. The study trip/ workshop in Belgium was very well structured. Richness of visits of different memory places (spots, museums, etc.) as well as lectures and meetings. Perfect organization (thanks to the team and special thanks to Griet who has offered us the Keys of Knowledge about History and memory in Belgium).

The venue was perfect, well situated. Meals good.

22. My general opinion on the study trip is positive. Even in the cases that did not turn out as interesting as I hoped or expected, I could draw a lesson or find some detail that drew my attention. The group is heterogeneous and it is a great asset because we could hear different perspectives and points of view. Group discussions were really fruitful and interesting. The content was diverse and the organisation is excellent.

23. The program was really good this year as it mixed study trip and workshops. It gives a better dynamic to the week. It was also constructed in a way that allowed us to see different projects and of different nature.

24. It seems to me that there is a lot of focus on official memorialization and in particular on museums. There is less focus on alternative means of memorialization.

25. Great experience! Well structured, balanced and planned.

26. My overall opinion of the study trip and workshop is excellent. The program is well thought: conceptually and the methodology. The site visits well chosen too and information provided of importance. However the program has been intense and the wealth of information provided at some point was felt overwhelming. Yet the agenda enabled diverse voices, experiences and perspectives. That proved very beneficial to my interests.

27. I felt this was the best Memory Lab (noting that I did not attend the one in Germany and France). The ratio between visits and indoor work was well balanced. Visits to sites were quite rich. We had art workshops for the first time and for me it was fun, but also emotional. Also for the first time we attended an actual commemoration, which was very interesting. The persons we engaged with were well prepared for their encounter with us and provided insights.

28. Excellent! So good that we didn't have to change hotels this time, that saved energy. The discussions in smaller groups, again, very productive and thought provoking. The mix of backgrounds of people makes the exchange extremely rich. The civil perspective on memory was lacking.

29. Very well organized! No comments on that needed, except that it would have been good ask participants in advance about vegetarian food to avoid trouble. But that is really the only remark in terms of organization.

Structure: Good idea to start with general introduction and then go on field trips content. After all I have the impression it would have been reasonable to visit one site that related to WW2. Because how these occurred an impression that it doesn't play any role at all.

30. A very in depth study trip for those who are not well informed about Belgium's way to commemorate and remember. Different discussion and the expertise of the participants made me reflect profoundly on the matter, and what's more important. I am willing to commit myself in writing about different causes that were raised here and follow up the problematic.

31. Thank you very much for the well organized week!! Structure and content have been excellent.

32. This experience was very valuable since my knowledge of the Belgian approach towards past was really poor. Maybe it is fair enough to say that I did not possess any knowledge about it. I believe that this knowledge I gained here is really important in order to understand different narratives, ways of memorialization and the way politics influence it.

33. The study trip was very intensive, as we had the opportunity to visit several sites around Belgium. The trip was very well-organized in terms of both structure and content.

34. Great organization, very good choice of topics and sites, everything what we saw, heard and discussed was very thought-provoking!

35. A very well organised study trip with a coherent programme and competent speakers resp. guides (thanks to Griet Brosens and friends)

36. Very well organized! Marvelous colleagues! Splendid time, a prime-time experience... I missed Liege... The depth and broadness in our discussion was quite innovative to me. I had some eye-opener moments. Thanks to the organizers' team!!!

## ***II. What are the three most interesting things I learned this week?***

1. - It seems that both in Belgium and the bigger part of Europe there is a wish to forget and set aside ugly and difficult past in comparison to the event that suit better current politics.
  - The First World War is present in memory of people almost equally as the Second World War, and memory of the WWI is predominant.
  - European Union tries to embellish past of Europe through memorials, and use it for realization of own political objectives.
  
2. It was interesting to me to see up to what level there is presence of denial and suppression of certain memories and historical facts (especially in context of colonialism) in public memory and historiography of Belgium. Moreover, because of the fact that the entire economy is built up on that. Another interesting thing for me was the way of commemoration chosen in Dinant. Use of events for creation of a spectacle and reconciliation, which was trying to come from 2 men, was very interesting. Also, manifestation in Ypres, which has been taking place for 90 years, is really something I never heard of before, and it would sound unreal to me, if I had not seen in personally.
  
3. Three most interesting things I have learned:
  - Work on violent and embarrassing past is long-lasting and includes many social factors, which we often forget
  - Experience of Belgium and memorialization of events that took place 100 years ago in Wallonia and Flanders. Very interesting!
  - Selective presentation of events is almost universal
  
4. I understood how much power of a state and institutions is important for collective memory. Money that enables opening and maintenance of museums. Another thing I figured out is European hypocrisy towards history, stand of Western Europe, etc.; and the last thing I learned is how much responsibility is important in representation and fragmentation of memory and its selectivity.
  
5. - Way in which a “western” country commemorates own history (subjected to a lot of criticism due to strong militant and single-based approach.)
  - Relation between 2 or 3 Belgium ways through history and how it is reflected on today.(different approaches in allocation of funds for commemorations and museums, application of bilingualism and separated schools)
  - Way in which Memory Lab participants from different countries relate to what they have seen and learned. The most entertaining for me was to look how such “conflict” is sometimes going along ideological lines (e.g. pro and contra EU)
  
6. I learned, or even better, I have noticed that in today’s Europe, especially here in Belgium live strong memories of WWI. Unfortunately there are still divisions.
  
7. a ) Economic development of Belgium is very linked to exploitation of raw materials from colonies;  
b) it is possible to have commemoration of victims on daily basis for 90 almost years;  
c) nobody understands you in Flanders if you speak French.
  
8. The Last Post ceremony [in Ypres] was extremely interesting at several levels (commercialization of a tragic event, slightly ridiculous formality of the ceremony, foreigners organize the event, ... *[Unreadable]* is the same everywhere. We are silent about some things, and in others we exaggerate. Whether such focus on the WWI is consequence of regular anniversary or lack of readiness to speak out about WWII? That is a topic worth discussing. Money invested in memorialization does not necessarily result in good effects (especially if ideology/idea behind it is not the most positive one)

9. a) Historical lecture on Belgium
- b) Visit to the King Leopold II park
- c) ...

10. - Lack of critical distance towards colonial history
- “Commercial-ceremonial” aspect of reconciliation
- How nature suffer during the war (a tree in Flanders Fields museum)

11. I have learned that:

- Belgium is even further behind The Netherlands when it comes to discussing and exposing colonial history and racism in the present ->Possible reasons? Strong white dominant narrative and lack of space for (black) activist movement
- Despite 100 years passed, without being a descendant there can still be a very emotional connection with historical events such as WW1 -> Possible reasons? Serious branding and marketing of war and WW1story of victimization (opposed to WW2 that also includes narrative of collaboration) and secularization that provides space for new rituals?
- About the complexities of fixing history in a museum especially when that (hi)story is not only yours (Africa museum), when the (hi)story is artificially constructed (European House of History), when the (hi)story is driven by very particular interests (Yser Tower) -> museum exercise made me think of the need for a museum to narrate history, shouldn't we move on to a collection of mobile temporary exhibitions all across the world to do justice to the wide variety of (minority) memory narratives?

12. - Colonialist past history (silent consensus) and WW1

- WW1- sadness and patriotic joy (United Belgium – glorification of heroes and martyrs – Balkanization)
- Questions Belgium society is posing about their past and divided memories, transformatory memories and economic influence to memorialization (‘dark’ tourism)

13. I really discovered things I didn't know before: Thanks to Axel Tixhon I learned history of Belgium and a lot of good overview of the important facts. Thanks to the visits both in Dinant and Yser, I realised how local dynamics of history are important and lively. I enjoyed the moment in workshop where we tried to build a museum on European history

14. It was interesting learning about colonialism since I never had the chance to talk about it from the point of view of a colonising country. It was also interesting how Belgium “removes” certain parts of history, or doesn't mention/expose them. This made me think of my country which also tends to eliminate some of its past (i.e. after the last war in Kosovo, monuments of WWII were seen as a representation of Brotherhood & unity with Serbia, therefore many of them were destroyed or damaged). So, this makes me ask “What do we keep or not while remembering?” and “How do we decide which occasions best represent us?” and “Should we really filter what really happened?” Another interesting thing to see is also the use of strong nationalist concepts while commemorating, thus excluding or undermining the others.

15. To tell everybody how in Belgium there is commemoration every night for the historical movement that happened 100 years ago. I mean every night☺. Everything I have learned about Congo. No Leopold's chocolate anymore.  
To make tourism out of history.

16. I have learned that:

- History and challenges of Belgium and Balkans have parallels and common issues & challenges (divided country, selective memory, identity issues, fragile identity).
- Political and economical motives influence memorialisation and it is not always easy to be transparent about it

- There are different layers of memory and memorialisation and different “templates” and approaches to memorialisation. What do we do with them? Are we creating spaces for them different aspects? How do we choose the approach? We should look at memorialization in dynamic way (in time and space) and reflect upon it all the time.

17. Maybe not ‘learned’, but I’ll definitely reflect further on the purpose of commemorations (mourning, dealing with past, closure, touristic, educational, acknowledgement, identity, economy...) and their functions.

- An event that happened 100 years ago is purposely kept alive and vividly remembered- more than some things in more recent past (at least, this was impression gained).

18. I can’t really say that there was something ‘most’ interesting to me. All parts of the program had their own dynamics and it was interesting to reflect in the group about it. Yser Tower for sure was a very controversial station symbolic for the tension in the Belgian society between the Flemish nationalistic movement and the Walloons.

19. a) We as practitioners/ researchers/ academics have a responsibility when dealing with memory and commemoration to find a proper balance between presenting on integrated reconciliation and remembering and presenting those that were ‘broken’.

b) Again, we (the aforementioned in a)) tend to channel the frustration of being constantly criticized into criticizing others, which is what I feel happened during the study trip where we attacked more than we listened, and we criticized more as to make the ‘other’ side uncomfortable rather than to open a dialogue and critical thinking. So I learned that we need to be more open-minded when we exchange knowledge and experience and provide criticism accordingly.

c) Third thing I learned is that there might be a long time until we can expect a truthful reconciliation process to start in the Balkans given that the memories of the wars are not embedded only in moments, dates and stories but in living individuals as well in which case finding the balance between reconciliation and remembering the broken ones is even more important.

20. Divided country actually can mean lots of things.

Bosnian division and Belgium division are not that much similar

I’ve expected Belgium to be more “outspoken” about its colonial past. I get an impression that they invested bunch of money in new, soon to be renovated, African museum as a sort of compensation for not including the topic into school curricula.

Société Générale – long are the fingers of colonial masters. Economy is crucial, not identity (identities). I knew this before of course, this just helped me to re-arrange my priorities once again.

Commemoration as a tourist attraction, as a performance, as a show. Meaning/purpose of commemoration for locals- it remained unclear.

21. \* Thanks to the historical introduction to Belgium by Alex Tixhon, I had have a clear frame about the making of Belgium, the colonial process and the political meaning of Walloon and Flemish communities.

\* The visit of Bruxelles (Brussels) “Walking to Congo” has given to me facts to reflect also about colonialism in France.

\* Considering that museums, memory places and ceremonies are part of the tourism system in Belgium (just like everywhere, I think) I think we should work on that, avoiding clichés, and reconsidering what are the aims of memory places.

22. It is a mixture of learning and confirming in practice what I learned before or in other places:

- The time component that play an important role in dealing with the past

- How strong the Flemish national narrative is and the division in the country

- The narrative/selection of appropriate terminology in dealing with an uneasy past

23. There are a lot of similarities between the memorialization process in Belgium and in my own country. That was interesting to see how the different institutions deal with it in Belgium.

Also, I have seen that it is not always a good idea to get the money first. What I mean is that it is sometimes better to have an idea of the message you want to convey and then to struggle to make it possible. From what I understood seven places in the country have been given an allowance to have something ready for the Centennial of WW1. Maybe it is why I missed the purpose of those projects.

24. - I learnt about the fascinating projects of the participants

- Fascinating also to hear how foreigners experience Belgian memorials

25. a) I've gained deeper knowledge on local mnemonic practices & actors

b) How personal motivation can be an added value in memory activism

c) I've appreciated ever more the very existence of such a Trans-European platform, able to provide a locus for exchange of ideas on European past, but in the same time on its future

26. - The role of wartime memory of the First World War in Belgium

- Diversity in commemoration

- Forgetting and remembering in memory policy/policies and practices

27. - Colonial past of Belgium and especially the connection of exiting cooperations with the colonial past (I will never buy Dunlop, Stella Artois and Unilever again!)

- The divisions in Belgium and the Flemish movement

- The fact that Flemish people are Catholic, and that is one thing that distinguishes them from the Dutch

28. How the colonial heritage is omnipresent without being addressed.

That Belgium is a divided country and it is alright.

How history is a template for drama, - with the objective rather to feel, than to enlighten.

29. - That a state can have more bureaucracy and institutional structure than Germany- but people seem to love their country in spite of this fact.

- Dealing with colonial past in similar to the processes in Germany that are going on now

- What remains of Belgium or what is the core of a nation that is so regionalized. It is still an open question to me.

30. - Gender representation is somehow absent in Belgium as well as other places that went through a conflict or war

- History changes but needs no oblivion

- There is a need for absolute objectivity in the process of remembrance

31. - Remembrance in Belgium: focus on WW1

- To have an idea of local and legal actors in remembrance + their ideas and interests (Dinant + Yser Tower)

- The complete Lack of communication skills in the presentation of the ideas coming from the House of European History!

32. a) The history of war is very present in Belgian society regardless of national background, time distance or role of certain group in concrete war

b) The policy of memory is heavily influenced by the dominant political narrative and concrete aims of concrete political elite/ government/ its goals...

c) The memory sites can be/ are conceptualized to be attracted by the tourists/for tourism industry.

33. The three most important things I learned this week are the following:

- Danger of government-supported memorialization process
- Silence of the Western European countries over the uncomfortable history (colonialism)
- Use of memory for touristic purposes and the dilemma ambivalence over such use

34. - The visit of Dinant: a fascinating experience! The dramatic history of 1914, the way the town is coping today with this page of history, the fact to have a theater director and humorist as a guide...

- Colonial History of Belgium: I didn't know much about this topic before
- The House of European History: this project raises so many stimulating questions!

35. The emphasis in Belgium on commemoration on World War I

The importance of the colonial heritage and of the commemoration to the crimes committed by Belgian authorities/organisations until 1961 esp. in Kongo/Zaire

36. How WWI could become a kind of cover-memory, in order not to confront the WWII-story... the missing of gender as a concept in the memorialization of WWI in Belgium [we had it twice about women in WWI – in Dinant as civilian hostages of the Germans, and as nurses in the battlefields; the “male” construction of soldiers was not too much questioned in the exhibitions, we saw]. These different strategies, to support the development of a “national identity” for the Flemish part, combining it with a decontextualized memory of WWI – strange experience! Even stranger to meet this with a mixed group especially from the Western Balkans, Germany, and France... How good to meet colleagues again, with whom I developed a strong feeling of trust, sympathy and empathy, which helped to touch even quite difficult subjects.

### ***III. What did I find striking / irritating / moving.... Why?***

1. The commemoration that takes place every day at 20:00 [in Ypres] is very striking and dignifying gathering with very good choreography, especially part when name of a killed soldier is spoken and memory of an individual is emphasized.
2. I was irritated by the way in which very specific political ideology, false political correctness and fictive identity building is implemented in culture of memory. This has happened before, but this time it was much more obvious. "The Show" (as they named it themselves) performed by the Mayor of Dinant and the theater director was a little bit repulsive. I was irritated and disappointed by the extent to which Belgium, European and all our societies failed in dealing with the difficult past.
3. Visit to Yser tower was the most striking for me, because of the exhibition that in fact glorifies war (and primarily is intended for younger children), and the WWI is represented to them from the perspective that de facto glorifies war and victims, and the message is skillfully wrapped in speech on tolerance and peace. Very dangerous!
4. What definitely surprised me was a ceremony for killed soldiers, which that takes place every day [in Ypres]. I was irritated by Euro-history attempted to be presented in the European History museum. It seems inaccessible and not participatory for all beings of this continent. I was emotionally touched by the Flanders Fields museum, where I was directly faced with oral history and pictures of dead people.
5. I was stroke by similarity of Belgium mode of commemorating with one of Croatia. In fact, it is about use of similar patterns. Black and white presentation of war, men and soldiers in focus, mixing of civilian and war victims, and participation of school children in all that. (Which I find counterproductive and even dangerous for future and strengthening of nationalism). I was irritated by certain Memory Lab participants who were trying to be as loud as possible and sometimes overcritical without objective grounds. Their offensive attitude had negative impact on overall atmosphere.
6. I felt bit emotional about selective approach to memory and vaguely presented links of causality-consequences in historic concept , where more attention is paid to WWI, which greatly caused WWII, whereas there is very little said about WWII, and what is said is somehow more for the purposes of current political and other objectives. - Commercialization of symbols was irritating for me.
7. Story about civil victims in Dunant was striking to me.  
Touching: the silence of all present during "the Last Post" [in Ypres]. Why? People come their 100 years after the WWI.
8. The fact that was moving for me in the Flanders Fields museum were the names of people who were killed on that very day, 100 years ago. It really works on emotional level.
9. Maybe I could refer to the fact that crimes committed during colonial period are almost fully disregarded or unspoken of, as an irritating moment.
10. I was extremely concerned with the lack of readiness to deal with colonial past and monument to Leopold II....
11. I was irritated by the –at times- unpleasant group dynamics which seem to be marked more by competition than a willingness to learn from each other. I hope we can establish a safer space to discuss and reflect next year from the start.

12. - Striking – I find the presentation of Ms. Valerie Rosoux. It was the clearest introduction to different levels of the Belgian context from a theoretical perspective.  
- Irritating – I find the tones (high and arrogant) during discussions. Socializing and group interaction was at low level.  
- Moving – I find the museum ‘In Flanders Fields’ and the idea and discussions about European History Museum

13. I found irritating the presentation of the EUROM because this was a fake project. Its empty, no real goals, driven by the EC, very disoriented and I had the feeling that we come to go “to the market for partners”

I was disappointed by the impossible dialogue between the group and the team of Tervuren’s museum. I was irritated by the very quick negative reactions of the group at the museum of European history.

14. I find it challenging and confusing when we hear peaceful and optimistic presentations, and in the other side the group makes harsh and pessimistic questions. In such occasion I don’t really know what’s the best thing to be done, or how should things be done better, because such things require compromises. I.e. Balkan’s people tend to be harsher and seek for perfect answers or solutions, because we are bored of perceive the Western Europe as a role-model and the all-knowing. And when we don’t get what we expect probably we get disappointed or pessimistic about our own situations. Apparently Western Europe also has similar problems as we do.

15. I have found striking their/ Belgium opinion about Congo or should I say silence- at the same time it goes to irritating, as well.

In the group I have found irritating weird/ smart people and the thing that sometimes I had a feeling they would shoot historians/ museum people/ EU people who take their time to explain things to us. You should make some Rules and Regulations of Memory Lab. I mean of course you can say what you think but there are limits in everything.

16. I was moved by some dialogue with people from the group, and irritated sometimes with lack of self-reflective approach and closing of the dialogue by some people; because, I believe the aim of Memory Lab is to open a space for dialogue. I was moved by the insight how sometimes memorialisation could become meaningful/meaningless at the same time. And by the insights how Western Europe and Balkans could and should learn from each other in terms of dealing with the past and shared experience& shames as well, but still dualism between Western Europe and Balkans is vivid and it is a lot to do toward going beyond that dualism.

17. Irritating: the Last Post ceremony- it sometimes did not make ‘sense’ to me, but looked more like a touristic show- but there’s still more to it (I suppose).

Irritating 2: the fact that school children have to visit the Iron Tower (if I understood correctly) – so what do they take with them?

Irritating 3: I’m still not sure of what to think about that highly symbolic, ritualized act of reconciliation in Dinant.

18. The most striking experience to me was the presentation of the “House of European History”. I had much higher expectations about the ethical and philosophical approach to this subject. So I was pretty much disappointed by what the curators presented. But still it was an interesting experience and it is very symbolic for the state of Europe (or the European Union) today.

19. While I don’t really have a ‘aha’ moment, I personally was irritated by the “Last Post” ceremony which made me very uncomfortable and for me made something that was real and painful turn into a more spectacle and formality detached from emotions.

20. We, as a group, were irritating from time to time. I'm tired of all these "Ex-Yu experts" for commemoration, memory culture etc. I like criticism, and I like to challenge certain concepts, but I'm not that sure about the way to do it in a truly dialogical way.

I had a feeling few times that our questions were more important, to us, than the answers. That we were not ready to listen to the people, because we already had our own petrified conceptualisations in mind. This is not just about "the others", but also about myself and my role in the group.

I missed a lot WW2 part. It is a missing piece of the puzzle for me, without it I cannot create whole image, and, yes, it's a little bit frustrating.

More time for discussion in big group. (I know there are 40 of us)

21. - Questioning: About the "House of European History", the difficult position of the curators/historian team in the process of building an European history place which has to be politically correct and have to please the EU administration as well as the politicians of all European countries. Big challenge!

- Also the "Last Post Ceremony" was interesting in the sense of: reproducing every day emotion among a large public about the 1<sup>st</sup> World War

22. Well, not really striking or irritating, but coming from a country that used to be in a bigger country (Yu) that was the founder of the Non-Aligned movement and in terms of international relations had excellent relations with former colonies in Africa, the attitude of Belgium towards their colonial past in terms of not almost denial, but a tendency to skip the uncomfortable period in history. Especially since the darkest period in Congo occurred while it was private property of Leopold II, a King that was not elected by the Belgians.

23. What I found a bit irritating, and maybe it is true about other study trips, is being aware of all the untold stories. I ended up with a feeling that I could only get a somewhat superficial vision of the process of memorialization in Belgium.

24. Irritating the difficulty sometimes to think outside of the fixed memory paradigms, to think also about the psychology and *[unreadable]* of memory.

25. I found that sometimes peers were overactive and somehow defensive when others had different (from their own) ideas.

26. Striking -> the presence of First World War in memory  
Moving -> persistence on peace as an even ending possibility

27. I found striking the expressively masculine and militant politics of memory from the 1<sup>st</sup> WW. Even in Dinant, where civilians suffered, the ceremonies left an impression of being quite militaristic. Even though the ratio between killed soldiers and civilians from the 1<sup>st</sup> WW varies significantly, it seems that the suffering of civilians (apart from those who died) is not displayed in the official narratives. I am wondering what kind of message does this send?! Military casualties are expected in any war, parties who engage in war and take upon guns have to realize that loss of members of the military is inevitable. Thus, I am not sure that by glorifying the death of soldiers one can send a message of peace. I saw nowhere words about the suffering of the civilian population: what about starvation, disease, rapes, tortures, plunder... How did the people around the Yser Tower live while they were flooded for four years? These narratives to me are very important and can give a stronger meaning to the message of peace.

28. "We will always remember him". Spoken with ca. 200 mouths in a way of an oath at the Last Post – ceremony. Who is 'we' there? Who was 'him'? And what can the undefined 'we' remember of an unknown 'him'? So, in broader terms: what does memory serve for? Tourism = commerce > Whose identity?

How much of glorification of soldierhood and men is still in all narratives within Belgium. (not European History Museum).

29. I learned that I almost know nothing about Belgium before I came here. That's strange as it is a neighboring country with Germany and it didn't really play a role so far in my work/ research.

30. I find it striking the way people still remember even after a century the atrocities and their loved ones. It's as well moving the idea how generations commemorate and how they perform when it comes to critical standpoints over the war. It's nevertheless irritating and overwhelmingly disturbing to see European Parliament neglect countries that are not part of it, with an apparatus and people who still find "the diplomatic language" to talk with in this regard. Its irritating equally to encounter harsh arrogance, lack in knowledge and vast justification from then, at many points and levels.

31. Striking: Yser- Tower: instrumentalization for Flemish politics/policies  
Irritating: Dinant: the 'show' by the city mayor  
Moving: Ypres: Imagination of the complete destruction in WW1 (exhibition)

32. The fact that some stories are pretty much simple (basic story behind is easy to define), but still in the memorialization gestures/ ceremonies/ museums they are often put in layers /lasagne/. Those simple stories to be told are skipped/ hidden/ are not told. Conclusion is actually exploitation of the other territories, crimes were committed, colonial powers benefited from it significantly. Collaboration of Flanders population in WW2 with Nazi regime existed. The monument/ site we visited did not explicitly say so.

33. I found very irritating the aggressive critical tone of the majority of participants. This made the reflective sessions very bitter and full of negative emotions. We never really spoke of the bright side of the commemorative practices happening in Belgium, as well as how we could possibly think in terms of improving the memorialization process in here and in our countries of origin.

34. Striking: Dinant! A great field of reflection about dealing with the past, tourism and reconciliation  
Irritating: How fast some of us are in criticizing and judging others, instead of first trying to understand.  
Moving: the tree in the Flanders Field Museum – to see how the traces of the battles of WW1 are surviving within this tree

35. The amount of engagement put into the renewal/relaunch of memorial such as Flanders Fields museum in Ypres or Dinant

36. Moving: listening to a person, who gave a voice to his personal trauma in a very personal talk. Irritating: how history is still used in a quite naïve way, to strengthen "national identity"... Strange: the reenactment moments in memorialization...

#### ***IV. From what I have seen/heard this week, what can I use for my own work?***

1. It can help me in creation of future memorialization projects and to revise all my stands and activities in relation to commemoration and memorials for victims of the recent, 90's wars in the former Yugoslavia, especially in context of using new technologies; and bad examples will help me to improve my own projects
2. I think there are many things that would be useful for me in my writing or potential researches. Mode of divided memories within the same national borders (between Flemings and Walloons) is something similar to the situation on the Balkans. However, I believe it can help us to transit to a bit higher level of commemoration approach to past events. I think that presentation of colonial past and its heritage, as it is done by a guide is extremely useful for our societies.
3. Everything will be useful:
  - How the state that is a centre of EU that promotes fellowship deals with internal divisions in context of dealing with past and memory policies
  - How they remember/commemorate colonial past, WWI, WWII
4. Definitely modernisation and equipment of the museums. However, I learned more from experience and exchange of opinions with other Memory Lab participants than from the field visits, which I could use to advance my own work.
5. Being a journalist I mainly deal with "war" topics and relation of minority to majority, seen and learned will help me in contemplations/writing. Also, I find it now much easier to draw comparison between ex-Yu and West-European relation to history. Considering the fact that I partly participate in organisation of commemorations, "practical part" (visit to museums and commemorations) will also help me in advancing of my future work.
6. The most of all I liked use of technology, which could be example for our future attempts of building of memorials.
7. When I speak English, and someone disagrees with my presentation, it is wise to say that is because of my not-all-that-well English skills.
8. Discussion on "our" European history museum was really good. Museum in Yser is an excellent example for discussion on manipulation with emotions and facts.
9. Maybe, division in historical narratives are not only part of everyday life at the Balkans, and it seems that more patience is needed for the processes taking place at the Balkans, and less self-criticism that we frequently express.
10. "Less is more" when it comes to methodology of presenting of certain topic
11. At the same time I have very much benefited from the expertise of the group and particularly of the feminist perspective on narrating history. It also gave me a new input and ideas (especially the walk about Congo) how to tackle uncomfortable memory narratives and new ideas how to approach memory questions in a more creative and dynamic ways. Finally, new and old connections have been revived!
12. Being a practitioner on DWP and memory work, the whole discussion will bring more light to what we work, and also will help better understand dynamics of the past memories in different contexts and timelines.

13. As I'm preparing and making different films on memory issues I'm asking myself how we can transmit history, the visits of museums and memorials is touching the heart of my interrogations. Also very fruitful discussions in the group.

14. I believe such experiences make me more objective and neutral in perception of the history. As a "Memory Mapping"- participant, such experiences make me understand different and alternative perspectives of comembrance and co-memorialization. As an architect, I believe that every input is important in shaping my mind and broadening it through these holistic approaches, if I design any memorial site or museum in the future.

15. I was thinking of including my organization into making a Museum in my country, because I got ideas and the thing is connected to what I work.

16. I keep with me some questions related to theoretical & methodological approach in my work that I opened here in Belgium; Some methods of work with public and points for reflection.

17. The networking & ideas-developing part was helpful and will result in something- apart from that: purpose/ function of commemoration, see above 2.

18. For my own work it is always enriching to visit places that represent history in one way or the other so I can compare. But it is also good inspiration to reflect the subject 'dealing with different past' with people from different nations (nationalities, cultural backgrounds, working fields and so on). And it is also an excellent platform for networking concerning special projects.

19. As I noted before, in the presentation of Valerie Rosoux in the first day I found the "finding the balance between reconciliation and remembering the broken" as something that I will take with me as a professional check. Otherwise, being new to the practice everything was a learning process which I will attempt to somehow reproduce in my work back home or even in an academic sense.

20. Probably, I will use a lot of insights, ideas etc. I'm too tired now to think of it. I have a feeling that I'm going back to basis, it will be useful to me, I'm sure.

21. I think using and, if possible deepening, memory/ history walks.

22. It drew my interest enough to deepen my knowledge further after the workshop by reading and using more material for comparison, such as the commemorations and parallel commemorations (contested narratives), the issues of veterans (that has not been treated, unfortunately, but there is obviously a state institute addresses that issue that I will definitely reach more afterwards etc. etc.)

23. Not much as we probably face the same challenges in my own country and I found a similar situation here.

24. Would love to work on the different participants' conceptualizations of 'reconciliation'

25. I have had the opportunity to discuss my own ideas with various people and importantly, to somehow put them on the test. I've appreciated the feedback from the group, fruitful dialogue and their different perspectives. I would like to conduct a research on Trans-national (Regional) memory activism and the contacts made will be very useful for this purpose.

26. Representation of conflicting memories in an equal way. Strategies of participatory memory narratives/sites and commemorations.

27. I actually saw what I should not be using in my work: and that is the typical, dominant and mainstream narrative and way of thinking when it comes to memorialization.

28. The emotional and pseudo-religious aspects of memory: I will focus on that more in my future academic work on memory.

The ambivalent use of symbols for memorialization process.

That Belgium is good reason for stopping the assumption/ or talk about a difference between Western Europe vs. Western Balkans.

29. - It was interesting to see the different museums and how they exhibit. I will take this experience to my work on the series of workshops on exhibiting 20<sup>th</sup> century history, which we are preparing for 2016.

- All the contacts to people that are active in this field

- A lot of suggestions and ideas to think more theoretically about history tourism, re-enactments, etc. and what impact this kind of dealing with the past has on historical consciousness.

30. I am undoubtedly going to write about different perspectives and angles, and as a journalist will try to provoke minds in Kosovo. There is so much we need to learn and rasp and a follow up report, why not some of them, would be useful to the devoted Kosovar reader, historian, researcher and so on.

31. Critical view on exhibitions ; role of biographies in exhibitions (...reflect on ...) ; background information on Belgian groups for my own work!

32. I learned that we should be patient when it comes to the legacy of past and the way society and political elites deal with it. Additionally, I learned that the role of 'professionals' in this field should be to monitor the process of dealing with the past and be critical towards it/ constructively contribute when possible.

33. This Memory Lab study trip served to instill in me a sense of responsibility of what kind of "mainstream" history we teach to our younger generations.

In my country, I believe that more work should be undertaken in terms of advocating for cultural heritage, as well as commemoration practices and memorialization.

I believe that with the experience we had in all these museums, I could contribute in terms of advocating the past for touristic purposes and for economic empowerment of the country.

34. Many new ideas and contacts ; what comes first in my mind is the « create-your-own-European-history-museum »-exercice, which can be adapted also to other topics and which allows the participants to develop their own ideas and in the same time to put yourself in other's shoes and to see how difficult it is to create exhibitions / memorials etc.

35. The exchange with the participants of Memory Lab was very useful

The approach of the African/Congo Museum curators in Brussel was very interesting (Humboldt Forum Berlin)

36. I would like to be part of a group inside Memory Lab, which would deal with gender issues – about men & women in war... I get a lot from these meetings, being more sensitive for the concept of trauma, coping concepts... the ambivalent messages in our dealing with difficult pasts.

## ***V. Suggestions for future workshops/ study trips***

1. Spain – civil war and relation towards it today.

Poland – example of dealing and memorialization in Eastern parts of Europe

After Serbia that has already been planned, Croatia also.

Northern Ireland – because of similarities with my country in terms of unresolved issues.

2. Maybe bit more time for reflections and discussion between participants. Also, presentations and introductions should be shorter, as to leave more time for discussions. For instance, good example is the ratio seen in presentation of the European history museum, and bad example is presentation of the Central Africa museum.

3. Suggestions for future: It would be good that Nicolas Moll is a moderator during discussions with experts. He is constructive and has positive energy, and it seems to me he can create good atmosphere.

4. I think there was a lack of marginalized narratives that are not included in the state protectorate. As far as Memory Lab is concerned I deem important for more different people to get involved. There are no Roma people, LGBT, in context of memory work and representation of those social groups.

5. I think that Memory Lab should keep the existing concept with more careful selection of participants (to avoid “NGO tourists” and aggressive persons).

6. -

7. -

8. It was excellent that the hotel was close to our working venue.

It is necessary to plan more time for discussions after visits to “controversial” memory locations. Maybe to work bit more on integration of the group.

9. I do not know what specifically to propose in this moment, but if I remember something I will pass it on to the organizers

10. If possible at all, the same or similar programme present during longer time (e.g. ten days) or make more rigorous selection (although if you ask me I would not know what was unnecessary this time, - I think nothing.).

Maybe it is possible to use bus time to reflect (with 2 microphones it is possible) and in that way disburden the schedule ?!

Thanks!

11. Always welcome in The Netherlands + exploring the borders/walls of Europe would also be interesting to me!

12. I suggest the program for the next year to take place in Serbia and Montenegro. On the other hand, Albania would be good to be considered for the future because of the recent communist past. In terms of organization, I suggest a warmer host.

13. I would like in the future:

- To see different points of view on one topic or one event ( to see the controversial)

- To go a bit deeper in the topics to have a chance to see the work in progress presented by people with a more sincere (not commemorative “Show”) approach on the representation of history.

14. Serbia & Montenegro

15. Maybe Poland should be country I would love to see Memory Lab included into some future trips. Actually I don't know a lot about Poland but would love to see connections with WW1 and WW2. Anyhow, guys you are doing amazing work and I like the concept so much. Good luck in the future, Memory Lab team! ☺

16. More facilitated dialogues.

17. How to create an atmosphere of dialogue (within groups, but particularly with hosts, panelists, guides)- and avoid the atmosphere that was created in discussions / Q&A's this year which were at times very tense & accusatory

More time for idea of networking-developing/ small groups –e.g. 2 rounds of project networking; maybe presentation of bi/tri... lateral Memory Lab project at the beginning-> boost informal networking & exchange.

18. I think “Memory Lab” as an introduced platform should develop in the same direction as it is set so far. I like the idea of annual study trips and workshops once addressing Western European countries and once countries from the South-Eastern Europe. I think it is also a good idea to involve even more countries (if money can be found for that... Great Britain, Italy, Spain, Greece, Poland...).

19. Maybe as a suggestion only to have more time to discuss with presenters, and if possible have some of presenters as guests in our reflection sessions.

20. Consider changes of methodology maybe.

“Peer to peer” work for 1 or 2 days.

Reader with few texts/articles about the context would be appreciated.

Share responsibility with participants- let us prepare some reading materials, presentation.

In terms of possible locations: Vojvodina (with Hungary maybe)- I could help with this

In Europe (oops): Ukraine (the context) or Poland

Thanks for everything!

21. –

22. Spain- because although there is an official amnesia, there are interesting sites and academic institutes that could give us another perspective in a country that applied general amnesia from the official policy standpoint. It also shows the component of time passage and social demands for transitional justice. And, whenever possible, discussion format rather than Q &A, if possible, with the representatives of the institutions that we visit.

23. I think it would be nice to keep this structure (study trips and workshops mixed throughout the week). Also it might be interesting to think about how it would be possible in a Memory Lab meeting to go beyond that somewhat superficial impression of what is made around memory in a country. Throughout the years, the mood in Memory Labs has shifted from a nice, friendly and constructive atmosphere in the beginning to a very critical way (and not in an exactly constructive way) of looking at things, which sometimes do not even exist yet.

I have no suggestions for the future about that but it is certainly a regret to me.

24. Outside Europe. South America (Argentina, Chile). Africa (Uganda, South Africa). Israel. Also [*unreadable*] individuals who ‘do memory’ outside of museums, and people who attempt to reclaim monuments

25. Very interesting case study could be *Cyprus*. It's for the content, thematic workshop (ex. policy analysis or trans-national commemorative practices in the field of memory) could be interesting. I would include not only exercises that involve dialogue, but "oblige" the participant to interaction with the others (ex. Net-making exercise with personal contact details attached). Overall, the workshop was a great success.

Thank you!

26. More involvement of persons/ group from the "communities of remembrances" in the program.

- Resistance (counter narratives) of the dominant narratives/memories
- Women's inclusion of *[unreadable]* and gender perspectives on the politics of memory

27. I would suggest that we always invite in future Memory Labs someone from the European House of Memory, preferably a curator or a person from the educational department.

I would like to visit with Memory Lab the following countries: Albania, Greece, Turkey, Italy, Spain.

28. Emphasize at the beginning that this is a common area/ space for exchange and sharing thoughts, doubts and feelings. That we are all different, but able to tolerate and appreciate the difference, That everybody is invited to say what they want, feel, think and respect the others freedom to do so.

Thanks for all the great job!

29. I would like to shift the focus on other regions like e.g. Spain.

30. Do not get me wrong, but less people from the Serbian-speaking countries. I am willing to explore, but not in the case of ten people somehow disrespecting you when you do not know and speak their language. A bit more time for debate, exchange, embracement and reflection.

31. We should work on remembrance in Greece. If we are doing visits in exhibitions: please more information on concepts, pedagogical activities and more time.

Thank you very much for organizing all!!

32. I do not have suggestions regarding the methodology or the program structure. This study trip inspired me to learn more about experiences of Netherlands, Spain regarding some topics and also about Poland/ Ukraine... these are suggestions for future Memory Labs.

33. The study trip was great. I also really liked the parallel exercises groups' topics for discussions. I would just suggest that we continue with art workshops in other trips. I would also suggest that we only visit one country per study trip, as this time, so we gave the chance to analyze in more detail.

34. More space for developing projects among the participants. And let's work on ourselves (how we talk about memory, memorials, museums...)

35. Keep going! Continue!

36. Try to find out, which common language you have with your bus driver, in advance ☺

Some more time for developing new ideas.

And keep it, like it is/has been.

You have been great! A big thanks for these stimulating days!