



Memory Lab
Trans-European Exchange Platform on History and Remembrance

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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FINAL REPORT



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Final Report

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I. Aims of Memory Lab and of the study strip/workshop 2015

General aim:

The trans-European exchange platform “Memory Lab” (named “Dealing with difficult pasts in Western Europe and the Western Balkans” until 2013) brings together organizations, institutions and persons working on memory sites and remembrance education in the Western Balkans and in Western/Central Europe, and promotes thereby exchange, cooperation and critical understanding of remembrance and history in Europe. In this framework, the annual study trips and workshops are particular important occasions for mutual learning through the sharing of experiences and practices. The platform and the annual meetings aim to overcome existing gaps of knowledge, to strengthen constructive dealing-with-the-past-approaches as means for sustainable peace- and democracy-building, and to contribute to cooperation and understanding processes within South Eastern Europe and Europe in general and to the integration of the countries of the former Yugoslavia into a shared European civil society and memory space.

Specific aims of the study trip and workshop 2015 :

- To explore Belgium and its history, with a specific focus on World War I and Belgian Colonial History, through visits of historical sites, monuments and museums.

- To discuss current Belgian memorialization of its past and the challenges it faces, through meetings and debate with academics and persons working in the field of Remembrance and Remembrance education.
- To explore and discuss possibilities and challenges to present a history of Europe and to develop a common European memory.
- To connect the experiences from Belgium with the situations and remembrance-work in other European countries, and to discuss what other countries can learn from historical experiences and remembrance-work in Belgium
- To deepen contacts and cooperation and to provide a space to develop future activities between the participants of the Memory Lab - platform.

II. Background:

Dealing with the past (DwP) is a very sensitive issue in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, as the wounds of the wars of the 1990s are still fresh and linked with often conflicting memories. In Western and Central Europe, although there has been no war in the last sixty years, memory questions often also remain sensitive, for example concerning the Second World War and the crimes linked to communism or colonialism. Even if each country has its specific situation and if the distance of war differs in Western/Central Europe and the Western Balkans, a lot of questions are nevertheless similar: How to deal with difficult past(s)? How to face the reluctance of people to deal with the past? What is the place and the role of memory sites in DwP-processes? What are possibilities and challenges of pedagogical and educational approaches at and around this kind of places, especially for young people? To what extent can memory sites bring conflicting memories together? If international cooperation in the field of DwP is quite well developed within the EU, exchanges in this field within SEE and also between SEE and the EU-countries are still quite rare. This mutual absence of relations and knowledge is reflecting the still existing gaps between the countries of former Yugoslavia and between these countries and the rest of Europe. Also in the perspective of the European integration of the countries of former Yugoslavia, it appears to be urgent to create regular opportunities for initiatives committed to a constructive DwP to meet, to learn from each other and to develop common activities. This inclusion of initiatives from former Yugoslavia in a larger European context and the sharing of Western European experiences must be seen as an contribution to the strengthening of cooperation and peacebuilding processes in the still very divided societies of the former Yugoslavia, and also to the development of a common European memory and civil society.

III. Preliminary work

In June 2010 a workshop in Sarajevo, gathering 25 representatives of memorials and NGOs working on DwP in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Serbia, France and Germany, illustrated how stimulating and useful a trans-European exchange on these issues can be and how much it would make sense to develop such exchange on a more regular basis. A second workshop was organized in October 2011 in Prijedor in BiH, this time gathering 40 people from seven European countries, and which was preceded by a two-day study trip allowing for more field visits. The feedback was again very positive and in order to make the work sustainable, the group decided to create an informal platform, with the title “Dealing with difficult pasts in Western Europe and the Western Balkans”, and to organize this platform around an annual study trip and workshop. After two years in the Western Balkans, the third annual workshop and study trip, in 2012, took place in France, in cooperation with the “Historial of the Great War” in Péronne, the “Mémorial de la Shoah” in Paris, and the

“Centre de la Mémoire” in Oradour-sur-Glane, and the fourth one, in 2013, in Germany (Berlin and Ravensbrück) and the German-Polish border (Frankfurt/Oder-Slubice), in cooperation with the Institute for Applied History Frankfurt/Oder, the Berlin Wall Memorial and the Memorial Centar Ravensbrück. In 2013, the platform was renamed “Memory Lab - Trans-European Exchange Platform on History and Remembrance” and a website launched (www.memorylab-europe.eu). In 2014, “Memory Lab” returned to South Eastern Europe, with the annual study trip and workshop taking place in Kosovo (Prishtina, Gazimestan and Prekaz) and Macedonia (Skopje, Tetovo, Neprosteno, Zajas). Since then, the annual study trips and workshops will alternate every year between South Eastern Europe and Western Europe. – Numerous bilateral or multilateral cooperation and activities involving different participating organizations have resulted from the annual meetings.

IV. Participants/target group

Representatives of memorial centers, historical museums, NGOs and other organizations/initiatives/individuals from the Western Balkans and from Western/Central Europe, acting practically in the field of dealing with the past, especially around memory sites and in the educational field. The involved persons and organizations are working on different “difficult pasts” related to the history of Europe in the 20th century (First World War, Second World War, communist dictatorships, Yugoslav break-up wars of the 1990s, ...): this diversity reflects the complexity of European history and has also proven to be very stimulating and enriching for the working process.

At the workshop and study trip 2015, 43 persons have been participating: 10 persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 6 from Croatia, 6 from Kosovo, 1 from Macedonia, 4 from Serbia, 4 from Belgium, 4 from France, 7 from Germany and 1 from The Netherlands). 30 of the 43 participants had already participated in one of the previous study trips/workshops, what means that 13 persons have participated for the first time. That combination of “old” and “new” participants guarantees on the one hand a continuation and deepening of the existing contacts and work, and on the other hand the integration of new participants in a group which aims to be open for new persons, contacts and ideas.

Concerning the choice of the participants in 2015, for the first time it was not done by direct invitation, but by open call for applications for interested persons to apply by filling in and sending an application, We received a large number of applications, but unfortunately could not accept all those who applied, so we made a selection of candidates on the basis of their motivation, interest and previous or intended work related to Memory Lab activities.

V. The different steps of the program

The program started on Monday, October 5, 2015, at the International Press Centre in Brussels with an introduction to the week’s program and an exercise to make acquaintance among the participants, and was followed by a lecture entitled “‘Belgium for dummies’: introduction into the history of Belgium”, given by Axel Tixhon from the University of Namur and by Valerie Rosoux from the University of Leuven. Their overview-lectures, followed by a short discussion with Q&A, gave us different key-elements to better understand the complexity of Belgium’s political structures, with its two largest regions, the Dutch-speaking region of Flanders in the north and the French-speaking southern region of Wallonia, the officially bilingually Brussels-Capital Region, and also the small German-speaking community in the East, and the challenges which Belgium is facing regarding memory politics.

1. Colonial History

During the second part of the first day we discovered Belgian colonial history through a guided walk (entitled 'Walking to Congo') through Brussels. Our guide was Lucas Catherine, the author of a book on what's left of colonial heritage in the streets of Belgium (buildings, monuments, statues). In his guided tour through Brussels, he showed us some of this colonial heritage in the streets of Brussels, such as monuments, memorials, plaques and statues. The colonial history and memory of Belgium is mainly linked to Congo, which was ruled personally by King Leopold II from 1885 until 1908, and then from 1908 to 1960 by the Belgian state. To celebrate and glorify the Belgian colonial activities in Belgium, various monuments and buildings were erected in the Belgian capital especially under King Leopold's rule. In the same time, the criminal character of the economical exploitation of the Congo especially under the rule of Leopold, which led to the death of several millions Africans, has for a long time not been discussed in Belgium and remains until today a mainly silenced topic. In his tour, Lucas Catherine showed us for example the monument to King Leopold II in the centre of Brussels, as well as a plaque commemorating all employees and administration workers at the Belgian ministry of colonial affairs. He pointed and explained the history, symbolism and significance of these sites. We have, through the guided tour, learned about the various and controversial facets of the colonial history and memory of Belgium.

After the walk, we participated at a round table discussion "Belgium's colonial memory", on the place of colonial history in Belgium, with representatives from the African Museum in Tervuren and the NGO "Justice and Democracy". We were given a presentation about the African Museum, which had been opened under Leopold's rule, which is currently under renovation and which is planned to be re-opened 2016; curators of the museum told us about the history of the building and the exhibition and about the challenges of making a new exhibition which is partially integrating and reinterpreting parts of the old exhibition. The discussion after the presentations raised many questions about how to deal with a heritage which was conceived as colonial propaganda, how colonial history/memory should be represented in a museum, and who should be the persons/groups to decide what is going to be represented.

2. First World War

The second day of the program was dedicated to the memory of WWI in Wallonia. We visited the city of Dinant and memory sites situated there and related to World War I.¹ At the onset of World War I, Germany invaded Belgium in order to rapidly capture Paris and destroy the French armies. A fierce battle was fought between the French and advancing German army at the little Belgian town of Dinant, nearby the French border. The German army assumed that there were resistance fighters in the town and on August 23rd 1914 they rounded up the civilian population of Dinant. 674 citizens -men, women and children- were massacred, and many houses and buildings were burnt down. After the war, Dinant, together with 6 other Belgian towns where similar facts occurred, were recognized as 'Ville Martyr' (Martyr Town). In 2014, the town, together with two historians and a choreographer organized a theatre piece, re-enacting the events of 23 August 1914. Most actors were ordinary people living in Dinant and the surrounding towns. Our guide for the day was Bruno Mathelart, the artistic director of the re-enactment event that took place in August 2014. We visited monuments dedicated to the dead which were built in the 1920s, and a new monument erected 100 years after the war. After our visit, we went to the city hall where we were welcomed by the town's mayor, who

¹ During this day was also foreseen, before Dinant, a visit of the Fort de Loncin World War I Memorial Site in Liège, but because of an error of the bus company we lost so much time that unfortunately we had to cancel the trip to Liege and went directly to Dinant.

talked about how he organized a commemorative event in 2001 in order to foster reconciliation between Dinant and Germany: this year, the German Minister of Defense came to Dinant and in a public ceremony officially apologized for the massacre committed nearly 90 years ago by the German troops. The mayor also explained the importance of tourism for the town and how highlighting Dinant's historical heritage, including World War One, was also important for touristic-economical reasons.

After travelling back to Brussels, we had a feedback session about the day at The Belgian National Institute for Veterans and Victims of War. During the session we discussed mainly the attempt at reconciliation organized by the mayor of Dinant, which raised many important questions, such as: when does reconciliation "really" happen? How to define reconciliation? What does it imply? Why are events from WWI still so important for the local population? Should a commemoration be turned into a theatre play in order to produce emotions? Does this need to be done because the events being commemorated happened 100 years ago, so that people do not have a direct emotional connection to the events anymore? Is it acceptable to turn a commemoration for victims into something commercial?

On the third day of the program, we visited memory sites related to WWI in Flanders. We first visited the Yser Tower Memorial and Museum related to World War I, the Peace Movement and the Flemish Movement. The Yser Tower is a memorial and museum; it commemorates the Belgian, and particularly Flemish, soldiers killed on the Yser Front during World War I and is an important remembrance site for the Flemish Movement. The first Yser Tower was built in 1930 by an organization of Flemish war veterans and was given an inscription: AVV-VVK (All for Flanders – Flanders for Christ). It quickly became a symbol of the Flemish hardship in the trenches of the First World War. After the Second World War, it was considered a symbol of the collaboration. In 1946 the Tower was blown up, the perpetrators were never identified. Several years later the tower was rebuilt, taller than the first one. With the remains of the old one, the PAX-gate was built. In preparation for the centennial of WWI, the Flemish government identified this monument/museum as one of 5 strongholds in the commemoration. The museum received extra funding for renovation of the site and the exhibition. As a monument it is adopted by the Flemish Movement and the peace movement. - The curator, a young historian, briefed us on the how, when and why of the site. After that, we had a visit of the museum, during which we could ask the curator questions about the museum and its exhibition.

In the second half of the day, we continued to Ypres and visited the In Flanders Fields Museum about the First World War in the West Flanders front region. We were first given an introduction into the museum, its concept, and its philosophy by one of their educational workers, after which we had a free visit to the permanent exhibition. The Museum is situated within the Cloth Hall in Ypres which was, just like the city, almost completely destroyed by artillery fire during the First World War and then has been reconstructed. In preparation for the centennial, the Flemish government identified this museum as one of 5 strongholds in the commemoration. The museum received extra funding for a complete renovation of the exhibition. This museum is a very good example of how the memory of the First World War is kept alive today. It carries the heavy responsibility, and sometimes burden, of being considered, at least in Flanders, the ultimate museum when it comes to the First World War in Belgium. It is a very modern and interactive museum, using a lot of multimedia. As a visitor you get a bracelet that helps you identify with a victim of the War throughout different stations in the exhibition.

After the visit to the museum, we attended an Art Workshop "Coming World Remember me", related to the 600.000 victims of World War One in Belgium and made clay sculptures in memory of the victims of war. From 2014 to 2018 thousands of people from Belgium and the rest of the world will take part in the molding of 600,000 sculptures out of clay, each of

these sculptures representing one of the 600,000 victims who lost their lives in Belgium during the First World War. In the spring of 2018 the sculptures will be arranged on one of the most hard-won places of WWI: the no man's land of the frontline around Ypres. It was interesting for our group not only to look at the memory of WWI in Belgium from the distance, but in this form also to actively contribute to the commemoration of the First World War in Belgium.

At the end of the day, we attended the Last Post Ceremony held at the Menin Gate in Ypres. The Menin Gate is a city gate of the city of Ypres and was built by the British in 1927 to commemorate their fallen soldiers. The Menin Gate has the names of 54.896 missing Commonwealth soldiers engraved in its walls. Every night, at 8 pm, traffic through the Menin Gate is stopped for the Last Post ceremony. This ceremony is held to commemorate the Commonwealth soldiers that lost their lives during World War I. The ceremony was first held in 1929 and continued to be held, every night, ever since, with the exception of the years 1940-1944. Where there used to be hardly any participants, you now have to arrive nearly 1 hour in advance to have 'a good spot' for the ceremony.

The next day started with a feedback session and evaluation of the day in Flanders. We discussed the meaning of symbols in commemorating certain events and whether they are more important than what actually happened at a site. Criticism was expressed about the Yser Tower Museum for adopting a narrative on peace, without really sending a peace message and for actually glorifying the war and also a nationalist ideology. Questions were raised about the funding of the museum (is it a private initiative or funded by the government?) and about who has the responsibility to commemorate. We also discussed the In Flanders Fields Museum, which was perceived by several persons of the group as a very interactive and well-thought museum. However, criticism was expressed about the overuse of modern technology in the museum, which is distracting the visitors from understanding the main idea/narrative of the museum. Questions were raised about the message that the museum wants to communicate. The Last Post Ceremony raised questions about war tourism and how much it affects the lives of local people. Is war tourism also a means to reflect on history?

3. European History

The following day was devoted to the topic of European history and memory, so we visited the European Parliament where we were given a presentation about the project "House of European History" (HEH), followed by a visit of the site of the future museum. The HEH was launched by the European Parliament and is scheduled to be opened in 2016, in a building in the immediate neighborhood to the European Parliament. The HEH will aim "to give visitors the opportunity to learn about European history and to engage in critical reflection about its meaning for the present day." The main focus of the permanent exhibition will be on European history of the 20th century and the history of European integration, and aims "to convey a trans-national overview of European history, taking into account its diverse nature and its many interpretations and perceptions." The HEH will provide its main content in the then 24 official languages of the EU. Educational and cultural programs are also planned.

After the presentation realized by several members of the HEH-team, in the following Q&A-session, several persons of our group expressed their skepticism about the presented concept of the HEH, raising the question whether it would more glorify European history that critically interrogate it and present more an official narrative instead of emphasizing also neglected aspects of European history. The place of the Yugoslav space within the HEH was also a topic tackled in the discussion.

In general, the ambitious and innovative project of a "House of European History" raised many questions which are also relevant for the work of Memory Lab: What is European

history? How to represent the history of Europe, its complexity and its different interpretations? Is it possible to develop a balanced and critical narrative about the history of Europe? What will be the place for the history of nation-states, and what for transnational and supranational movements? The numerous challenges in developing such a museum proved also to be a good introduction into the exercise held later that day, when participants were asked to, in parallel groups, develop their own concepts for museums of European history, by answering the following questions: in which town/country will your museum be located? How do you define the main aims of your museum? What are the five main topics that the museum will focus on? What name will you give to your museum? Interestingly, out of the five groups, four groups decided to create a travelling museum/exhibition, while the main topics that these museums would cover included human rights, borders (physical and symbolic), migration/movement, citizenship, social inclusion, as well as social justice and social history/ hidden histories (see Appendix 4 for the results of the exercise).

4. Summarizing the experiences from Belgium and connecting them with the situation of other countries

The last day of the program was structured in two parts. First, the participants, in parallel groups, discussed the question “What can we learn from what we have seen in Belgium for the work on history and remembrance in other countries?” The main results were then presented at the beginning of the afternoon session, entitled “Belgium and the Balkans: laboratories for an European memory?”, in presence of Heleen Touquet from the University of Leuven, who is living in Belgium and working on the Western Balkans. In Heleen Touquet’s intervention and the following discussion a number of questions were raised about the similarities and differences between memory politics in Belgium and other West European and/or Western Balkan countries. The situation in Belgium showed that the country is split in its memory politics and that divisions are present, just as in most of the countries/societies that participants of Memory Lab come from. Belgium is also an example of how memory politics are selective – mainly those events in which the country/society had a positive role are remembered, but events in which the country/society had a negative role are forgotten. There is often no historical continuity in presentation of the past, and only some past events are presented without their relation to other past events (there is no story of cause and effect). Specifically, we learned that the Belgian society has in particular a problem in confronting and coming to terms with their role as colonizers in Congo and other Belgian colonies. We, thus, did not encounter any memorials which would judge colonialism. From this we could conclude that in Belgium exist strong attitudes of denial and of suppression of difficult memories, which is also the case in many other countries that are dealing with their difficult pasts. What is silenced or marginalized is the history of the defeated, i.e. of those who were colonized, while colonialism, if it is present, is presented as “white man’s burden”.

What also came to our attention, but is not characteristic just for Belgium, is strong presence of the state in modeling the politics of memory. Such strong memory politics which are dictated ‘from above’ are also very much present in successor states of former Yugoslavia. This kind of remembering the past resulted in the construction of history which agrees with the current situation/moment (“convenient history”). What seemed specific to Belgium, in comparison especially with Yugoslav successor-states, is the strong focus on the First World War in comparison to the Second World War, what does not mean that the memory of 1939-1945 does not play any role in the culture of remembrance of Belgium.

All together, Belgium appeared as an “extraordinary laboratory of diversity and complexity” (Valerie Rosoux), with many similarities to the post-Yugoslav space and also Europe in general, and the experiences from the week raised many questions which are also relevant for other countries. What we also have learned from the Belgian example is that even

after strong emotions about remote historical events are no more present, people still have a need to understand and come to terms with what happened. Although remote in time, traumatic historical events (such as wars and political violence) still raise questions about their cause, effects and responsibility for their occurrence. Thus, we need to be aware of this transformation from having deep emotions about a particular event to gaining knowledge about its meaning in history.

5. Networking / Memory Lab / Future projects

Before the last day, our group was joined by Oriol Lopez-Badell from the European Observatory on Memories (EUROM) who presented the concept and work of their platform to participants of Memory Lab, emphasizing the similarities between EUROM and Memory Lab. EUROM is a transnational and multidisciplinary network, started in 2011, with the aim to analyze and share different memorial experiences. Oriol Lopez-Badell invited interested participants from Memory Lab to join this network in order to realize potential future project and joint activities (some members of Memory Lab have already cooperated with EUROM and are part of the network).

During the program was also provided space for the presentation of existing joint projects and for the discussion about potential future joint activities. In the first part of the session, some developments since last year were presented, as well as joint projects that have been realized by Memory Lab's participants since last year, as for example the training for history teachers titled "From Sarajevo (1914) to Sarajevo (1992-1996): Why and how to use Memorials and Museums to teach the history of wars and mass violence in Europe?", organized in 2014/5 by the Historical Museum BiH, the Youth Initiative for Human Rights Croatia, the Memorial Centar Buchenwald, the Historial of the Great War Péronne and the Franco-German Youth Office. After that, we divided the participants into groups and each group discussed some modes of possible future cooperation. One group discussed possible cooperation with the EUROM network. Another group discussed possible cooperation in the framework of the future Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) of the Western Balkans, which the governments of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia plan to open in 2016. The RYCO is an institutional mechanism for sustainable regional cooperation among young people, established by regional governments to promote reconciliation, mobility, participation, active citizenship and intercultural learning, in a European spirit and within the European integration process of the region. - Another group in this session also gathered to discuss Memory Lab's website, its improvement and future contents.

The coordination team recalled that next year's Memory Lab annual study trip and workshop will be organized in Serbia and announced that a preparation meeting will take place at the beginning of 2016 in Belgrade. The preparation meeting will also be an opportunity to evaluate the first five years of Memory Lab and to discuss its future development, and all those interested were invited to express their interest in joining the preparation meeting in Belgrade.

VI. Evaluation by the participants²

1. The overall opinion about the 6th study trip and workshop has been very positive, and this concerns the content, the structure and the organization of the week, as appears for example in the following quotations from the evaluation sheets:

² On the basis of 36 evaluation sheets which were filled out the last day of the program. The complete answers are available on www.memorylab-europe.eu

- *“It was a very well organized week. Very rich in content and site visits, which were well-balanced. The choice of the 3 themes (World War 1, colonial and European) was excellent given the urgency and actuality.”*
- *“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.”*
- *“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-Yugoslav population (me included) is not familiar with its history and roles in different time periods.”*
- *“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).”*
- *“Very well organized! Marvelous colleagues! Splendid time, a prime-time experience... (...) The depth and broadness in our discussion was quite innovative to me. I had some eye-opener moments. (...) A big thanks for these stimulating days!”*

2. Where do the participants see potential benefits for themselves from this study trip/workshop? Especially on the following five levels (in brackets, as illustrations, quotations from the evaluations):

- Improvement of knowledge about Belgian history and memory in general (*“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, rich (and not boring at all) country.”*) and some specific topics linked to Belgium’s history, for example colonialism (*“It was interesting learning about colonialism since I never had the chance to talk about it from the point of view of a colonizing country.”*)
- Improvement of knowledge about/ better understanding of memorialization processes in general (*“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.”*)
- Deepening of comparative approaches (*“I find it now much easier to draw comparison between ex-Yugoslavia and West-European relation to history.”* *“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).”*)
- Gaining of new methodological approaches (*“The trip 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.”*)
- Establishing of new contacts and partnerships, and getting ideas for new projects (*“New and old connections have been revived!”* ; *“The trip can help me in creation of future memorialization projects.”* ; *“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 cooperation 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.”*; *“I am willing to commit myself in writing about different causes that were raised here and follow up the problematic.”*)

3. Critical remarks and suggestions: One critical point which was mentioned in one third of the evaluation sheets was the sometimes negative atmosphere within the group discussions and the non-dialogical and overcritical attitude of some participants what appeared, for example at some visits, in formulating questions in a very accusatory style, and what had a negative impact on the overall culture of discussion. Here two examples from the evaluation sheets: *“It was irritating how fast some of us are in criticizing and judging others, instead of first trying to understand.”* *“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.”* In this perspective, several persons suggested for next year for example to establish clear rules at the beginning of the program in order to avoid this kind of situation and to foster a constructive culture of dialogue. - Besides this point, other critics or suggestions were mainly expressed on an individual basis. Three suggestions were mentioned respectively by three persons: more time in the program for developing projects and ideas for future activities ; more time for reflection after the visits of memory sites ; and to give more attention to alternative memory narratives. Concerning the future choice of countries for Memory lab study trips and workshops, after Serbia next year, the country which was suggested the most (by five participants) was Spain.

VII. Conclusions and Perspectives

The program in Belgium was another successful edition of the annual Memory Lab study trip and workshop, and it can be stated that we have managed to meet the five goals which had been defined before the program (see above point I.), as show in particular the very positive evaluations by the participants. The only major problem which occurred this year and which needs to be addressed has been the sometimes negative group atmosphere; already at the end of the program in Belgium, the organization team announced that for the next study trip/workshop we will look for approaches to make sure that discussions will take place in a constructive perspective.

In 2016, it is planned that the annual study trip and workshop will take place in Serbia. As in previous years, it will be organized in cooperation with Memory Lab participants from the “hosting” country. We have a number of participants from different organizations/institutions in Serbia who have joined Memory Lab over the years, which is why we feel comfortable in securing help and support for the organization of next year’s meeting. We will also hold a preparatory meeting in Belgrade in early 2016. This preparation meeting will be combined with a more general evaluation- and strategy meeting, where, on the basis of the evaluation of the first five years of Memory Lab, we will work on the further development of the platform. Finances for organizing this meeting have already been secured from one of our donors.

We hope and believe that Memory Lab will continue with its successful work in the coming years and see the growth of our platform not only in terms of the number of members / participants, but also in terms of developed and implemented joint activities, future cooperation projects, and shared knowledge and experiences. For the moment we don’t see major obstacles for continuing the project. On the one hand we have several donors who are supporting the project in a regular way, what covers half of the budget every year, and until now we have managed every year to find also new donors to cover the other half of the budget. On the other hand, as Memory Lab is not a formal organization, but a platform gathering different organizations and individuals, and therefore the future of the initiative will very much depend of the commitment of these organizations and individuals.

Annex 1: The organizers

1. Information about the cooperation partners:

Youth Initiative for Human Rights BiH

Aims: Advancing the participation of youth in democratisation of society, strengthening rule of law in processes of facing the past and creating new progressive links in the post-war region of Ex-Yugoslav countries. YIHR BH builds new links amongst young people within Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in terms of inclusion of divided communities and encouragement of Europeanization of the Western Balkans through regional cooperation of young people from different countries of the former Yugoslavia. Through trainings, study visits, workshops, conferences, street actions and development of educational material, YIHR BIH supports and encourages young people of BiH to promote social and political action related to issues relevant to young people. Such promotion includes advancement of the 1992-1995 BIH war remembrance culture, advocating for human rights protection, minority rights, and promotion of issues related to EU integration processes and democratisation of the Western Balkans region.

The French-German Youth Office (FGYO), besides its experience in activities promoting intercultural learning and cooperation, is especially since the 1990ies organizing and supporting activities in the field of memory work, not only between France and Germany, but also with third countries. Since 2000, in the framework of its South Eastern Europe Initiative, supported by the Ministries for Foreign Affairs of France and Germany, it contributes to create links between civil society actors from France and Germany and the Western Balkans, including a specific work on memory sites and reconciliation linked with French-German experiences since 1945.

The Belgian National Institute for Veterans and Victims of War is dedicated to the men and women from Belgium who fought and suffered during the past two World Wars, but also to the men and women who have participated in peacekeeping or humanitarian missions in which Belgium took part for the UN or NATO. Besides health care and social and moral assistance, an important mission of the Institute is Remembrance Work, especially in the field of education. The Institute is involved in educational projects regarding the First World War, the Second World War and the Holocaust, and peacekeeping and humanitarian missions in contemporary conflicts.

The Forum ZFD with its offices in Pristina, Belgrade, Skopje and Sarajevo aims to contribute to a constructive debate on Dealing with the Past in and between these four countries in the Western Balkans, as a foundation for a future which provides an alternative to the violent past. On a local and a regional level, the organisation is supporting existing initiatives on DwP, launching new projects in this field, and is sharing information and promoting networking between DwP initiatives, for example through the magazine “Balkan Perspectives”.

Crossborder factory is a European think-and-do tank which aims to strengthen intercultural competence and European commitment. Crossborder factory provides a platform for European citizens who wish to actively participate in shaping a democratic, peaceful, open-minded and solidary Europe that is capable of acting.

Organization team 2015 :

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The Memory Lab - program 2015 in Belgium has been realized thanks to the support of:

- King Baudouin Foundation
- CCFD-Terre Solidaire
- French-German Youth Office
- Forum ZFD
- The Belgian National Institute for Veterans and Victims of War
- Belgian Federal Organizing Committee for the Commemoration of the First World War
- Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs

And also of:

- City of Dinant
- In Flanders Fields Museum
- Museum at the Yser
- City of Ypres
- Royal Museum for Central Africa
- Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Belgium
- House of European History / European Parliament

Annex 2: The program

Sunday, 4th October 2015:

Arrival of participants to Brussels

Accommodation: First Euroflat Hotel, Boulevard Charlemagne 50, Brussels 1000

20.00: Welcome dinner at the restaurant *The Grapevine*, Luxemburgplein 11, 1050 Brussels

Monday, 5th October 2015: Brussels

8:45: Meeting in the hotel lobby / Walk to the International Press Centre

9.00 -10:30: Introduction into the program / Presentation of the participants

10:30 – 10:45: Coffee break

10:45 – 12:45: “Belgium for dummies”: introduction into the history of Belgium, with Valerie Rosoux and Axel Tihon

12:45 – 13:45: Lunch at the International Press Centre

14.00 -16.00: Memory Walk through Brussels to discover the city’s colonial heritage, with Lucas Catherine, author of the book “Walking to Congo”

16.00 – 16:30: Coffee break

16.30 – 18.30: Belgium's colonial memory: an interactive round table on the place of colonial history in Belgium, with representatives from the African Museum in Tervuren and the NGO “Justice and Democracy”.

19.00: Dinner at *Le Roi d’Espagne*, Grote Markt 1, 1000 Brussel

Tuesday, 6th October 2015: Dinant

10.00: Travel by bus to Dinant

12.30 – 14.00: Lunch in Dinant at *Le Moma*, Chaussée de Namur 73, 5537 Annevoie-Rouillon

14.00 – 15.30: Visit of memory sites related to World War I in Dinant

15.30 – 16.30: City Hall - Q&A-session about the visit of Dinant and drink offered by the Mayor of Dinant

16.30: Travel back to Brussels

19.00 – 20.00: Feedback session about the day (at The Belgian National Institute for Veterans and Victims of War, Regentlaan 45-46 Blvd du Régent, 1000 Bruxelles)

20.00: Free Dinner

Wednesday, 7th October 2015: Ypres / Ieper

8.00: Departure by bus

10.00 – 12.00: Visit of Yser Tower Memorial and Museum related to World War I, the Peace Movement and the Flemish Movement

12.00 – 13.00: Lunch in Diksmuide, Restaurant *Lettenburg*, Lettenburgstraat 15, 8600 Diksmuide

13.45 – 14.30: Introduction into the In Flanders Fields Museum about the First World War in the West Flanders front region

14.30 – 15.30: Visit of the In Flanders Fields Museum

15.30 – 15.45: Coffee break

15.45 – 16.15: Q&A-session about the visit

16.15 – 18.00: Art Workshop “Coming World Remember me”, related to the 600.000 victims of World War One in Belgium

18.00 – 20.00: Individual walk through Ypres and dinner at *Brasserie Kazematten*, Bollingstraat 1, 8900 Ieper

20.00: Last-Post-Ceremony

20.15: Travel back to Brussels, arrival in Brussels 22h15

Thursday 8th October 2015:

9.00 – 10.15:- Feedback-session about the day in Flanders

10.15 – 10.30: Coffee break

10.30 – 12.45: Discussion on Memory Lab and common activities

12.45 – 13.45: Lunch at the International Press Centre

13.45: Walk to the European Parliament

14.30 – 16.30: Presentation (at the European Parliament) of the "House of European History"-project, discussion and visit of the future site

16.30 – 17.15: Walk back to the International Press Centre and coffee break

17.15 – 18.45: What do we understand by European History? Exercise in parallel groups

19.00: Free dinner

Friday, 9th October 2015:

9.00 – 11.00: Workshops: What can we learn from what we have seen in Belgium for the work on history and remembrance in other countries?

11.00 – 11.30: Coffee break

11.30 – 13.00: Evaluation of the week and perspectives for the future work

13.00 – 14.00: Lunch at the International Press Centre

14.00 – 16.00: Closing session / discussion: “Belgium and the Balkans: laboratories for an European memory?” with Heleen Touquet, University of Leuven

16.00 – 20.00: free afternoon

20.00: Dinner at Ristorante *Il Buongustaio*, 85 Rue d'Arlon, 1000 Bruxelles

Saturday, 10th October 2015:

Departure of participants

Annex 3: List of participants

* member of the 2015 organization team

Name	Organization	Function	Town
Maša Avramović	C31 – Centre for the development of childrens rights culture; Department of Pedagogy, University of Belgrade	President of the organization, PhD candidate	Belgrade (SRB)
Tamara Banjeglav*		Freelance researcher	Zagreb (HR) / Sarajevo (BiH)
Julie Biro		Documentary filmmaker	Paris (F)
Ervin Blažević	Optimisti 2004 Kozarac	President	Prijedor (BiH)
Laura Boerhout	Anne Frank House / University of Amsterdam	Freelance historian / PhD Candiate	Amsterdam (NL)
Judith Brand	Forum ZFD BiH	Program Manager	Sarajevo (BiH)
Griet Brosens*	Belgium Nationals Institute for War veterans	Historian, in charge of educational remembrance-projects	Brussels (BL)
Mirna Buljugić	Balkan Investigative Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Director	Sarajevo (BiH)
Fjolle Caka	Forum ZFD – Kosovo Program	Memory Mapping Kosovo participant	Prishtina (KS)
Orhan Ceka	Liberal Alternative Institute	Co-director	Tetovo (MK)
Venera Čočaj	Youth Initiative for Human Rights Kosovo	Team member	Prishtina (KS)
Erla Gjinishi	Alter Habitus	Associate	Prishtina (KS)
Nataša Govedarica	ForumZFD Serbia	Director	Belgrade (SRB)
Alain Gueraud	DRJSCS du Limousin	Advisor for youth education	Limoges (F)
Elma Hašimbegović	Historical museum of BiH	Director	Sarajevo (BiH)
Matthias Heyl	Ravensbrück Memorial Site	Head of Educational Services	Fürstenberg (D)
Joachim Koenig	Buchenwald Memorial	Pedagogical Department	Weimar - Buchenwald (D)
Korab Krasniqi *	Forum ZFD Kosovo	Project Manager	Prishtina (KS)
Vjollca Krasniqi	University of Prishtina, Faculty of Philosophy, University Programme Gender Studies and Research	Assistant professor	Prishtina (KS)
Jasmina Lazović	Youth Intiative for Human Rights Serbia	Coordinator of the Transitional Justice Program	Belgrade (SRB)
Carine Leveque	ONAC National office for war veterans and war victims	Memory and Communication Coordinator	Montpellier (F)
Lejla Mamut	UN Women Country Office BiH	War sexual violence project coordinator	Sarajevo (BiH)
Ružica Marjanović	Festival “Na pola putu” (“Half way”)	Program editor and Festival founder	Užice (SRB)
Alma Mašić*	Youth Initiative for Human Rights BiH	Director	Sarajevo (BiH)
Sven Milekić	Balkan Investigative Reporting Network	Journalist and researcher	Zagreb (HR)

Ana Milošević	Universite libre de Bruxelles, University of Maastricht	PhD candidate	Brussels (BL)
Nicolas Moll*		Historian and consultant	Sarajevo (BiH) / Paris (F)
Frank Morawietz*	French-German Youth Office	Special coordinator for the activities of OFAJ in SEE	Berlin (D)
Jacqueline Nießer	Graduate School for East and Southeast European Studies, University of Regensburg	PhD Student	Regensburg (D)
Tamara Opačić	Serbian National Council, Novosti	media consultant, editor of the web site of weekly newspapers Novosti	Zagreb (HR)
Ivo Pejaković	Jasenovac Memorial Centre	curator	Jasenovac (HR)
Tanja Petrović	<i>Documenta</i> – Centre for Dealing with the Past	Program coordinator	Zagreb (HR)
Edin Ramulić	Association of citizens of Prijedor "Izvor"	Vice president	Prijedor (BiH)
Nina Ritz	Max Mannheimer Study Center, Dachau	Head of the Max Mannheimer Study Center	Dachau (D)
Günter Schlusche	Berlin Wall Foundation	Architect, Planner	Berlin (D)
Florent Schaeffer	CCFD - Terre Solidaire	Project Manager Eastern Europe	Paris (F)
Arber Selmani	KultPlus – the online portal, PROPLUS NGO	Journalist, Project Assistant	Prishtina (KS)
Dinko Sijerčić	Youth Initiative for Human Rights BiH	Project coordinator	Sarajevo (BiH)
Tamara Šmidling	Peace Academy Foundation	activist and researcher	Sarajevo (BiH)
Ulvija Tanović		Interpreter	Sarajevo (BiH)
Juliane Tomann	Imre Kertesz Kolleg, Jena; Institute for applied history	Research associate	Leipzig (D)
Heleen Touquet	University of Leuven	Post-doc and part-time professor	Leuven (BL)
Maarten Van Alstein	Flemish Peace Institute	Researcher	Brussels (BEL)
Marjan Verplancke	Kazerne Dossin, Memorial, Museum and Documentation Centre on Holocaust and Human Rights	Head of Education and Outreach	Mechelen (BEL)
Nikolina Židek	Faculty of Political Sciences and Sociology, University Complutense, Madrid; <i>Documenta</i> – Centre for Dealing with the past	PhD candidate, associate	Zagreb (HR)

Annex 4:

*Memory Lab - 6th annual study trip and workshop, October 4 – 10, 2015, Belgium:
Results of the exercise “ Create your own museum of European history”*

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5
Name	« Europe on wheels »	« Europeans museum in movement »	« Searching Europe »	« Floating History Offshore Museum »	« Untold Histories Museum of Europe »
Location	Travelling exhibition throughout Europe / main building outside of Europe / online	Travelling train exhibition	Travelling museum on lorries	Floating platform in the sea (and rivers)	Prizren, Kosovo (the youngest country of Europe, economical support and political recognition, easy accessible)
Mission (3 key words)	1. To engage in reflection on patterns of thinking and doing 2. Discover perspectives 3. Get inspiration	1. Accessibility 2. Change of perspective (twist) 3. Thought provoking		1. Reflection 2. Confrontation 3. Deconstruction	1. Challenging mainstream history (white Christian soldiers history) 2. Challenging national myths 3. Telling stories of marginalized groups
Main topics	1. (De)constructing the concept of Europe, 2. Progress in science and technology (potentials and risks), 3. Human rights, 4. Neighbors, 5. Boundaries	1. Free and forced movement, 2. Social history, 3. Economic dependences, 4. Cultural encounters, 5. Political participation	1. Gender cross cutting, 2. Migration, 3. Hidden histories, 4. What is Europe looking inside out	1) Myth of founding myths, 2) Ideas, thoughts and values, 3) borders (physical, symbolic, societal, in mind), 4) Failure and disasters 5) Fears, hopes and desires	1. Solidarity and Civil Courage in wartime 2. Borders of Europe and citizenship 3. Migration 4. Social justice and inclusion 5. Cultural diversity and dynamics
<i>Disagreements during the discussion ?</i>	Overall concept – historical or futuristic perspective / how to make it inspiring and how not to end up in old patterns / disseminate heritage, but not burden next generation / what we actually learned from the past		On topics: conflicts, food, what the mission of the museum should be	Not really	Location (mobility, boat, strategic position etc)