

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: THE PAST AND FUTURE OF PUBLIC HISTORY

*Who controls the past controls the future.
Who controls the present controls the past.*

George Orwell's dystopian vision has only gained in relevance since *1984* was published in 1949. With the spread of digital communications technologies, states and individuals are increasingly able to manipulate the population with tendentious narratives of the past.

However, the aim of shaping the future through representations of the past needs not be nefarious. The German Institute for the History of the National Socialist Era was mandated in 1949 to document, analyse and educate the public about Nazism and its crimes, so they would never be repeated. Based on the German model, institutes of contemporary history spread rapidly, helping to consolidate the postwar democracies of Western Europe.

Established with the aim of consolidating postcommunist democratic development and European integration, the "memory institutions" of East Central Europe have sometimes been associated with the politicisation of historical research, non-inclusive approaches to commemoration, and outdated methods and practices of research. Meanwhile the House of European History was established in Brussels to implement the idea of European remembrance.

The conference *The Past and Future of Public History* invites participants to consider the establishment of institutes of "contemporary history" after the Second World War, "national memory" after the Cold War and "European Remembrance" after the eastward expansion of the EU as three waves of public history activism, and to consider what the next wave might entail.

Approaches to public history have varied considerably over time and across space, but they are joined by the key concerns of communicating the past while encouraging the participation and engagement of various constituencies.

The conference will take place on 9–10 October 2025. It will be held at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science of Vilnius University. We invite you to submit proposals for both individual papers and panels. **Please submit your abstract** (up to 250 words) along with a short bio (up to 250 words) by completing this survey **by 31 March 2025**:

[Link to the form](#)

Selected presenters will be notified on 19 May 2025. We strongly encourage on-site participation, but online participation will be possible in individual cases. In the survey, please indicate your preferred mode of participation. The conference language is English. For further information, please contact us at info@europast.vu.lt.