



Trans-European Exchange Platform on History and Remembrance

**“Albania and its place in international memory work”:
Memory Lab Working Meeting, Tirana, 29.10.-3.11.2018**

Organized in cooperation with *crossborder factory*, *CCFD-Terre Solidaire*
Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft and *Franco-German Youth Office*

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1. Context:

The trans-European platform “Memory Lab” brings together initiatives in the field of dealing with difficult pasts (wars, dictatorship) from different countries of Western/Central Europe and South Eastern Europe. The aims of this informal platform are to deepen mutual knowledge, exchange experiences, build capacities, facilitate contacts and realize common projects. Its general purpose is to strengthen self-critical and constructive approaches of dealing with the past as part of civic education and democracy-building, and to contribute to the integration of the countries of the Western Balkans into a common European civil society and memory space. The platform is organized around an annual study trip and workshop. The project was launched in June 2010 with a first workshop in Sarajevo, and continued in 2011 with a workshop in Prijedor (BiH), linked to a study trip to Jasenovac (Croatia), Donja Gradina (BiH) and Vukovar (Croatia). In the following years, the workshop and study trip took place in France (2012), in Germany and at the German-Polish border (2013), in Kosovo and Macedonia (2014), in Belgium (2015), in Serbia (2016), and in Spain (2017). The 9th annual study trip and workshop is foreseen to take place in Spring 2019 in Albania, and the 10th in 2020 in the Italian/Slovenian/Croatian border region.

The participants of “Memory Lab” are representatives of memorial centers, historical museums, NGOs and other organizations/ initiatives from South Eastern Europe on the one hand, and from Western and Central Europe on the other hand, who are active in the field of dealing with difficult pasts (wars and dictatorships in Europe during the 20th century), especially around memory sites and in the educational field.

Through the annual gatherings numerous contacts between the participating persons and organizations have been established, which resulted so far in the organization of more than 60 joint, bi- or multilateral, projects and cooperation activities. One example among many is the seminar cycle “How can arts and culture contribute to dealing with difficult pasts and to reconciliation in Europe?” for teachers, museum professionals, NGO-representatives and artists from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France and Germany, which will be organized in 2018/2019 by the Max-Mannheimer-Study-Centar Dachau, the Memorial of Rivesaltes, the

History Museum Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Jasenovac Memorial Site, the Croatian History Teachers Association and the Franco-German Youth Office.

For more information about Memory Lab see: www.memorylab-europe.eu

2. Albania as a focus of interest in 2018/19

In 2018 and 2019, Memory Lab wants to turn to Albania for several reasons:

1) Albania belongs to the Western Balkans, but since it is not part of the post-Yugoslav area, it has so far been less in the focus of actors of international memory work. This also applies to Memory Lab, which has so far concentrated its work on the successor states of Yugoslavia with regard to South Eastern Europe.

2) An examination of Albania's culture of remembrance is worthwhile precisely because of its specific communist history within Southeastern Europe, and also because various interesting state and civil society initiatives to deal with this history have developed in recent years.

3) Tirana has become the seat of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office of the Western Balkans (RYCO) in 2017, which defines as an important goal of its youth exchange programs "fostering reconciliation and constructive approaches to remembrance", thus creating promising points of contact with the goals and work of Memory Lab.

The opening of Memory Lab to Albania and the exploration of its history and memory cultures will take place in two stages: firstly with the workshop "Albania and its place in international memory work" in Tirana in October 2018, and then with the 9th annual Memory Lab study trip to Albania in May 2019.

3. Aims and content of the working meeting in Tirana:

The working meeting "Albania and its place in international memory work" from 29.10. to 3.11.2018 in Tirana will bring together representatives of Memory Lab from Southeast Europe and West/Central Europe and will focus on the following aims and content:

- Meetings with representatives of Albanian memorials, museums and other initiatives dealing with Albanian history: getting to know each other, exchange about current activities, discussion about future projects and cooperation
- Meeting with representatives of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office of the Western Balkans (RYCO): getting to know each other, exchange about current activities, discussion of future projects and cooperation in the field of youth exchange.
- Organisation of a public discussion with youth organisations from Albania on the topic "Youth and dealing with the past in Albania and the post-Yugoslav space".
- Content-related and logistical preparation of the 9th annual Memory Lab study trip / workshop to Albania planned for Spring 2019

4. Program:

Monday 29th October 2018:

16h30-18h30: Participation at the "Presentation of young researchers in the field of Dealing with the Past », organized by *OSCE Presence in Albania*

20h: dinner

Tuesday 30 October 2018:

10h: Meeting with Ardita Repishti, *Authority on access to information on the Former State Security Service*

12h: Meeting with Lori E. Amy, professor at *Georgia Southern University*, researching on the Communist past in Albania

14h: Lunch

17-19h: Participation at the award-ceremony of the youth competition “Ask your grandparents” on the Albanian past 1944-1997, organized by the *Institute for Democracy, Media and Culture (IDMC)* in the framework of the “Memory Days 2018”

20h: Dinner

Wednesday 31 October:

9h-13h:

Mutual update about ongoing Memory Lab-activities, evaluation of the last Memory Lab-activities and discussion about the current situation and perspectives of Memory Lab for 2019 and beyond

13h: Lunch

15h-16h: Meeting with Jonila Godole, director of *IDMC*

16h-18h: Meeting with representatives of *Site of Witness and Memory Shkodra, Peace & Justice-Association, Culture Heritage without Borders, Albanian Center for Rehabilitation of Trauma & Torture, and House of Leaves*. Organized in cooperation with *IDMC*

20h: Dinner with Enriketa Pandelejmoni, *University of Tirana, History Department*

Thursday 1st November:

10h-13h:

- Visit of the *House of Leaves, Museum of Secret Surveillance* during the Communist Dictatorship in Albania, and meeting with Etleva Demollari, director

- Visit of the *National Museum of History* in Tirana, especially the *Pavilion of the Communist Terror*

13h15: Lunch

15h-17h15: Visit to / of the *Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)*, and meeting with Djuro Blanusa, General Secretary of RYCO, and other representatives of RYCO

18h-20h: Public discussion “Who cares about History? Connecting young people from Albania and the post-Yugoslav space through dealing with the past”, for youth organizations and other guests, at *Libraria Tirana Times*, organized in cooperation with *RYCO*

21h: Dinner

Friday 2nd November:

9h-10h: Evaluation of the visits and discussions

10h-13h: Preparation of the 9th annual Memory Lab study trip to Albania planned for 2019

13h: Lunch

14h30-17h30: Continuation of the preparation of the Memory Lab study trip 2019 and other future activities

17h30-18h30: Evaluation of the working meeting

20h: Dinner

Saturday, 3rd November:

Departure of the participants

The working language of the meeting will be English.

5. Participants:

Representatives of Memory Lab - Elma Hasimbegovic (director of the History Museum Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo), Frank Morawietz (in charge of the Franco-German Youth Office for South Eastern Europe, Berlin/Germany), Judith Brand (director of the Forum ZFD-program Bosnia and Herzegovina), Kaja Sirok (director of the National Museum for Contemporary History of Slovenia, Ljubljana), Nicolas Moll (freelance historian, Sarajevo / Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Paris/France), Tamara Banjeglav (freelance historian, Zagreb / Croatia)

For parts of the program: Representatives of Albanian memorials, museums, NGOs and other dealing-with-the-past-initiatives ; representatives of RYCO ; representatives of youth organisations from Albania.

6. Coordination and contact:

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