



centre for migration and citizenship

## **Using memory: when refugees make history**

**Budapest – European Youth Centre (Zivatar u. 1-3)**

**15 November 2016**

**9.30am-4pm**

The striking rise in the arrivals of refugees and migrants in 2015 shed light on many shortcomings in offering a shared vision of the right of asylum in Europe. Nonetheless, Europe has a longstanding and rich history of migration that has contributed to shape the continent. Compared to settler societies such as the United States or Canada, the memory of this history is hardly ever mentioned in the debates concerning asylum and migration today, even though it may provide necessary guidelines on addressing the current situation of refugees and migrants.

The Centre for Migration and Citizenship of the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) is organizing a meeting in Budapest with the aim of structuring a debate about the way Europeans can share a reflexive and substantial memory of their history of past migrations and connect it with their perception of various issues concerning the reception and integration of migrants today.

The meeting will bring together advocacy movements, youth organizations, human rights and refugee assisting NGOs, refugees, scholars and local and European policy makers from European countries. It will discuss the use of memories of migrants and refugees in order to develop another debate on migration and asylum in Europe.

The meeting is part of a European project entitled “Memory and Migration in Europe”. The project aims to foster dialogue, networking and cooperation among several local stakeholders (NGOs, city representatives, citizens, migrants, refugees, academics...) through workshops, conferences and group discussions with civil society actors. The project is supported by the “Europe for citizens” programme of the European Union, in collaboration with the University of Warwick, the University of Amsterdam, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the French network of institutes for advanced study (RFIEA).

### - Panel discussion: **Hungary 1956-2016: stories of refugees**

In 1956, around 200 000 Hungarians fled their home country, sought refuge in neighbouring Austria and Ex-Yugoslavia and then were dispersed in Western countries within the framework of one of the largest refugee resettlement programme ever implemented. Sixty years later, the Hungarian government is at the forefront of anti-refugees policies and is rejecting solidarity with most affected countries such as Greece and Italy. How can we explain that the memory of the 1956 flight fails to feed more open and protective perception towards refugees today? What are the national narratives at political and media levels? Can we learn from policies that have addressed remembrance of the Holocaust and find ways to speak to the European youth on asylum and migration?

With Open Society Archives, UNHCR, the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, the Center for Media, Data and Society of the CEU, the Council of Europe Youth Department

- Group discussion: **The contribution of migrants and refugees in the making of Europe**

Memory of migrations in European countries often contributes to the building of a national narrative that leaves little room for the contribution of migrants and refugees to European societies. A bottom-up approach based on stories and testimonies of migrants themselves would demonstrate in a better way their contribution to the making of Europe while reducing the distance with the receiving communities. Several projects and initiatives have been implemented at local and national levels highlighting the input of migrants. However, no such initiative has been yet designed and implemented at a European level. What kind of European-wide initiative can be envisaged on the contribution of migrants and refugees to Europe? What would be the main obstacles in collecting stories and testimonies of migrants in Europe? How can one incorporate migrants' stories into European-wide campaigns on human rights and fight against racism? How can the stories of migrants be presented to a broad public and what forms can this be done to influence the image of migrants in a positive way? What kind of support, including financial support is to be envisaged?

Instead of panel presentations, this discussion will be structured in a more active and participatory way using a method of group discussion. The group discussion will include initiatives and expertise of Stichting BMP - Netherlands, "Our Migration Story – the Making of Britain" project representative, Menedek (Hungarian Association for Migrants), Réseau Mémoires et Histoires en Ile-de-France. In addition, European institution representatives and Foundations representatives will also be invited in order to discuss how such projects could be developed further and promoted at the European level.

- Group discussion: **Empowering refugees and migrants to shape future memories in Europe**

Refugees have been the "unheard voices" of the so-called "refugee crisis" in Europe. However, their stories are the testimonies of the failure of European asylum policies and should be taken into consideration to learn from our mistakes. Moreover, refugee organisations can contribute through connecting new comers with receiving societies and should be considered as partners alongside other stakeholders such as local authorities or advocacy NGOs. What could be the contribution of refugees in the debates on asylum and migration in Europe? How can refugee organisations and network be strengthened at European level?

This group discussion will include initiatives and expertise of the Refugee Association in Portugal (ARP), the Greek Forum of Refugees, City of Sanctuary UK, Ebony African Organization



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