










Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2023/2112(INI)	Procedure completed
European historical consciousness		
Subject		
1.10 Fundamental rights in the EU, Charter		
4.45.06 Heritage and culture protection, movement of works of art		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Culture and Education	 VERHEYEN Sabine	28/11/2023
European Parliament		Shadow rapporteur	
		 ADEMOV Asim	
		 ROS SEMPERE Marcos	
		 CICUREL Ilana	
		 FRANZ Romeo	
		 DA RE Gianantonio	
		 SLABAKOV Andrey	
European Commission	Commission DG Research and Innovation	Commissioner IVANOVA Iliana	

Key events			
12/07/2023	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
28/11/2023	Vote in committee		
05/12/2023	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0402/2023	Summary
17/01/2024	Results of vote in Parliament		
17/01/2024	Decision by Parliament	T9-0030/2024	Summary

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2023/2112(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/9/12584

Documentation gateway					
Committee draft report		PE752.701	14/09/2023	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE754.663	10/10/2023	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0402/2023	05/12/2023	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0030/2024	17/01/2024	EP	Summary

European historical consciousness

The Committee on Culture and Education adopted the own-initiative report by Sabine VERHEYEN (EPP, DE) on European historical consciousness.

Dealing with Europes past as a risk and an opportunity

The report acknowledged that the diverse and often conflicting histories of European nations and states make any effort to deal with history at a political level a difficult and potentially dangerous endeavour, and that attempts to steer how to commemorate and interpret the past always prove to be challenging.

Members considered a responsible, evidence-based and critical approach to history, focusing on common European values, to be a sine qua non for any democratic body politic, in order to sensitise current and future generations for achievements and aberrations of the past alike, strengthen a self-reflective public discourse and foster understanding and reconciliation within and among particular social groups, nations and states.

Politics of the past in the European Union

The report stressed the need for an honest assessment of the EUs politics of the past, through which it has striven to add legitimacy to the European project, strengthen a European sense of belonging and foster the peaceful coexistence of the continents peoples, by equally acknowledging achievements and existing shortcomings, and by scrutinising the ways in which citizens have been encouraged to engage with the past.

Members expressed concern that there continues to be a latent competition and partial incompatibility between different memory frames and remembrance cultures in Europe, including between Western and Eastern Europe, but also between countries and nations within certain parts of the continent. In this regard, they emphasised the need to bridge existing regional and ideological divides in historical awareness among European countries and peoples with a view to building a common ground for dialogue as well as mutual understanding and respect;

Towards an informed historical consciousness in Europe

The report recognised the need for a broader and more holistic understanding of European history for a critical and self-reflective European historical consciousness to emerge, in particular by widening the focus of current European remembrance initiatives, taking into due account also groups that have been underrepresented so far, and by promoting innovative ways of teaching history.

Members considered the freedom to teach, study and conduct research, including free access to archives and sources, alongside free artistic expression, to be a prerequisite for the generation and dissemination of unbiased and evidence-based knowledge in democratic societies, and for a critical dealing with history in particular.

Stressing the vital role of education, Member States are called on to update current curricula and teaching methodologies with a view to shifting focus from national towards European and global history and in order to allow for more emphasis on a supranational historical understanding, in particular by allowing for multiple perspectives on history and by fostering corresponding teaching styles that favour reflection and discussion over knowledge transfer and that are guided by the overall objective of making students learn how to think rather than what to think.

The report stressed the importance of preserving Europes rich cultural and historical heritage and memorial sites and encouraged the Member States to step up their efforts to define and protect places of democratic memory, especially those related to underrepresented groups.

Deeply concerned about digital channels being increasingly abused for political manipulation and the circulation of disinformation, including concerning history, Members called on the Commission and the Member States to step up their efforts to strengthen media and digital literacy and to endow teachers and students with adequate skills and tools facilitating fact-based history teaching, and enabling them to identify,

contextualise and analyse traditional as well as modern historical sources.

Outlook: the legacy of the past and the EUs future

The report espouses the ideal of a culture of remembering and historical consciousness based on shared European values and practices in approaching the past, yet at the same time avoiding any undue levelling or simplification of history.

Lastly, Members envisioned collective memories eventually contributing to and merging into a European public sphere, with diverging remembrance cultures complementing each other rather than being in competition, and dealings with history becoming an issue of civic rather than political action.

European historical consciousness

The European Parliament adopted by 409 votes to 165, with 35 abstentions, a resolution on European historical consciousness.

Dealing with Europes past as a risk and an opportunity

Members considered Europes complex, conflict-ridden and contested past poses both a challenge and an opportunity for European integration. They considered a responsible, evidence-based and critical approach to history, focusing on common European values, to be a sine qua non for any democratic body, in order to sensitise current and future generations for achievements and aberrations of the past alike, strengthen a self-reflective public discourse and foster understanding and reconciliation within and among particular social groups, nations and states.

Politics of the past in the European Union

The resolution stressed the need for an honest assessment of the EUs politics of the past, through which it has striven to add legitimacy to the European project, strengthen a European sense of belonging and foster the peaceful coexistence of the continents peoples, by equally acknowledging achievements and existing shortcomings, and by scrutinising the ways in which citizens have been encouraged to engage with the past.

Members expressed concern that there continues to be a latent competition and partial incompatibility between different memory frames and remembrance cultures in Europe, including between Western and Eastern Europe, but also between countries and nations within certain parts of the continent. In this regard, they emphasised the need to bridge existing regional and ideological divides in historical awareness among European countries and peoples with a view to building a common ground for dialogue as well as mutual understanding and respect.

Towards an informed historical consciousness in Europe

Parliament recognised the need for a broader and more holistic understanding of European history for a critical and self-reflective European historical consciousness to emerge, in particular by widening the focus of current European remembrance initiatives, taking into due account also groups that have been underrepresented so far, and by promoting innovative ways of teaching history.

The Commission and the Member States are invited to protect the freedoms to teach, study and carry out research, as well as the freedom of artistic expression, which are currently under threat, in particular through cases of misappropriation of memory laws.

Stressing the vital role of education, Member States are called on to update current curricula and teaching methodologies with a view to shifting focus from national towards European and global history and in order to allow for more emphasis on a supranational historical understanding, in particular by allowing for multiple perspectives on history and by fostering corresponding teaching styles that favour reflection and discussion over knowledge transfer and that are guided by the overall objective of making students learn how to think rather than what to think.

Members recalled that learning about European integration, the history, institutions and fundamental values of the Union, as well as European citizenship, is essential for the emergence of a sense of belonging to Europe. They called for the teaching of European history and integration and education for European citizenship to become an integral part of national education systems. They stressed the need for interdisciplinary and intersectional history teaching that applies an innovative and learner-centred pedagogy.

The resolution stressed the importance of preserving Europes rich cultural and historical heritage and memorial sites and encouraged the Member States to step up their efforts to define and protect places of democratic memory, especially those related to underrepresented groups.

Deeply concerned about digital channels being increasingly abused for political manipulation and the circulation of disinformation, including concerning history, Members called on the Commission and the Member States to step up their efforts to strengthen media and digital literacy and to endow teachers and students with adequate skills and tools facilitating fact-based history teaching, and enabling them to identify, contextualise and analyse traditional as well as modern historical sources.

Outlook: the legacy of the past and the EUs future

Parliament espouses the ideal of a culture of remembering and historical consciousness based on shared European values and practices in approaching the past, yet at the same time avoiding any undue levelling or simplification of history.

Lastly, Members envisioned collective memories eventually contributing to and merging into a European public sphere, with diverging remembrance cultures complementing each other rather than being in competition, and dealings with history becoming an issue of civic rather than political action.

Transparency				
CICUREL Ilana	Shadow rapporteur	CULT	05/10/2023	EUROCLIO

CICUREL Ilana	Shadow rapporteur	CULT	04/10/2023	College of Europe
CICUREL Ilana	Shadow rapporteur	CULT	04/10/2023	Council of Europe
CICUREL Ilana	Shadow rapporteur	CULT	03/10/2023	Embassy of France to the Council of Europe