



EUNAMUS

European National Museums:
Identity Politics, the Uses of the
Past and the European Citizen

Open Access Reports



Funded under Socio-economic Sciences & Humanities

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For the last 250 years national museums have developed as important instruments of nationhood operating alongside schools, media, and popular histories to provide citizens with cultural glue, a sense of belonging and communality.

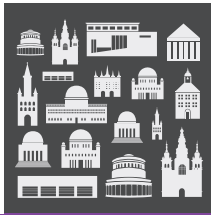
Valued for their independent, authoritative and trusted voice on matters of national history and identity, national museums are specialized institutions that focus on a particular aspect of a nation's identity or heritage. The unique contribution of national museums is that they materialize national narratives using authentic artifacts from the past.

EUNAMUS, a three-year multi-disciplinary, transnational research project, has been mapping diversities and commonalities in Europe's museumscape to help determine the future role of these institutions. Its systematic comparative investigations start from an operational definition recognizing that any institution, collection or display can be considered a national museum if it articulates and represents dominant national values, myths and realities.

The entire project's rich set of case studies are published in a series of Open Access reports, introduced in this pamphlet and available via the internet. EUNAMUS Open Access reports support creative rethinking and reinvention of national museums for researchers, museum professionals and policy makers in areas such as the birth of national museums, national narratives, strategies of interpretation and display, museum architecture, museum policies and audience reactions.

The comparative framework of EUNAMUS reports enables interested stakeholders to detect transnational patterns across multiple museum examples. EUNAMUS has highlighted some of the patterns in its publications; many others are waiting to be discovered. We invite you to browse the following documents and unleash the creative capacity of national museums in a new Europe.

ALL REPORTS CAN BE ACCESSED FROM THE EUNAMUS WEBSITE at www.eunamus.eu/outcomes or www.ep.liu.se.



Building National Museums in Europe 1750–2010. Conference proceedings from EUNAMUS Bologna 28-30 April 2011. EUNAMUS Report No. 1. Peter Aronsson & Gabriella Elgenius (eds). Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2011. ISSN (print): 1650-3686. ISSN (online): 1650-3740.



This report includes the first-ever comprehensive examination of museums in 37 European nations.

National case studies describe major foundational and restructuring moments of the museum system in each country, and provide an overview of the interface between cultural policy and national museums. They assess the relative power of individual, civic, academic, professional and state initiatives in relation to the nation-making process. The most important institutions in this process are identified, as are central moments and controversies in each nation.

Each case study also includes reports of individual museums in chronological order. What values and territories are represented in their displays? To what degree are these understood as manifestations of universal, civic, territorial, multi-cultural, national or ethnic values and identities?

The editors' introduction gives a comparative overview of the historical roles of national museums in state-making processes, suggesting that forces of cultural, social and geopolitical change have driven the development of national museums. A general pattern emerges from the data, showing that whereas elites clearly took museum-making seriously, many of Europe's national museums grew out of interactions between civil society and the state in the process of nation building.

Thus national museums are shown to have had long-standing relevance. They have become part of a "cultural constitution", providing the political constitution of a state with a counterpart for negotiating attitudinal conflicts by means of the cultural sphere.



Crossing Borders: Connecting European Identities in Museums and Online. EUNAMUS Report No. 2. Simon Knell, Bodil Axelsson, Lill Eilertsen, Eleni Myrivili, Ilaria Porciani, Andrew Sawyer & Sheila Watson. Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012. Serie: Linköping University Interdisciplinary Studies, No. 14. ISSN: 1650-9625.

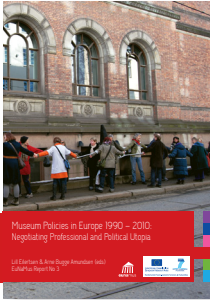
This report presents key findings on the museology of Europe: activities which are peculiar to museums and which result from the manner in which museums assemble and deploy objects.

This research investigated the ways in which capital cities, national art museums, national, regional and local museums, as well as online museum-like spaces produce opportunities for connecting identities.

A study of national art museums and capital cities discusses how nation-making acts produced a shared sense of European identity. Art museums produce an implicit sense of Europe, and this recognition of the shared heritage has underpinned collaboration, loans and travelling exhibitions. At the same time, a preference for high art, for representations of established themes and actors, and for Christian symbolism is shown to produce an exclusive engagement and narrow traits of Europeanness.

The case studies of local and regional museums in Norway, Italy and the UK, as well as the Swedish research collaborative SAMDOK, explore how the grand narrative of national identity developed by national museums is nuanced at a local level. Local and regional museums reveal the nation as a mosaic of historical performances.

The final section considers the democracy of the web, where citizen and institution can have equal prominence. Case studies from citizen-led, museum-like encounters in contested histories raise hopes for new kinds of transnational debate. What they reveal, however, is that these developments have yet to recognize the museological potential of the Internet. At times, professional or government mediation may well be required to permit communities to escape their difficult pasts.



Museum Policies in Europe 1990 – 2010: Negotiating Professional and Political Utopia. EUNAMUS Report No. 3. Lill Eilertsen & Arne Bugge Amundsen (eds). Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012. Serie: Linköping University Interdisciplinary Studies, No. 15. ISSN: 1650-9625.

This report studies how nations develop policy in order to deploy national museums in the redefinition of the national vision.

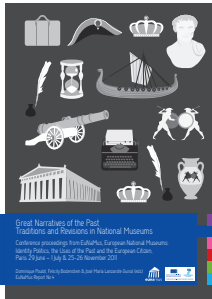
It highlights two main issues — how do policy makers identify museums as instruments for negotiating identity, diversity and change; and how do national museums formulate their position as political and cultural institutions. Case studies from France, Norway, Estonia, Hungary and Greece demonstrate the broad range of

change occurring throughout Europe. The report also analyzes twenty years of EU policy as a new actor in museum negotiations.

The report makes it clear that European museums are often more different than similar, with individual national museums responding to highly localized contingencies of funding, philosophy, and personnel. However, all museums have responded to differing circumstances using five broad policy-making techniques to engage in national redefinition: re-formulation of exhibits, re-narration of histories, re-mediation of display practices, re-professionalization of staff, and re-organization of cultural-political relationships.

The period 1990-2010 is particularly important in renegotiating the meaning and function of national museums. The reason is obvious: the dramatic political changes in Eastern Europe concurring with major demographic changes in Western Europe have created a new agenda for using culture and cultural institutions politically to smooth, reflect, or counteract the effects of societal changes.

The report suggests that national and transnational narratives coexist uneasily in today's national museums due in large part to three competing utopian visions articulated by Europe's various policymakers: EUtopia of a shared supranational heritage, Multicultural Utopia of a more inclusively diverse community, and National Historical Utopia, of a still-relevant nation-state.



Great Narratives of the Past: Traditions and Revisions in National Museums. Conference Proceedings from EUNAMUS Paris 28 June-1 July & 25–26 November 2011. EUNAMUS Report No. 4. Dominique Poulot, Felicity Bodenstern & José María Lanzarote Giral (eds).

Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012.
ISSN (print): 1650-3686. ISSN (online): 1650-3740.

This collection examines the different narratives that museums have developed as monuments to and of national histories in order to identify how narratives and their impact have changed over time and how we can understand them as changing today.

What has allowed the national museum to coherently present “great histories” – those vast epics spanning major chronological and geographical subjects?

A series of 36 case studies from across the spectrum of time and space show museums in service to the larger political agendas of their nations—from Hungary’s use of the museum to assert its nation status during the Austro-Hungarian Empire to Scotland’s attempt at the same today; from Eastern European service to the educational aims of the socialist state to Sweden’s attempt at multicultural extra-national narratives in

the 1990s; from the grand narratives of independence told in Norway and Turkey to Spain’s growing awareness of the impact of its colonialism on its own history.

Today many museums are working to overcome nationalist master narratives in a variety of ways, including an increased focus on regional and ethnic museums, a focus on transnational entities such as German-speaking peoples, and, for the British Museum, a purposeful repositioning as a place of universal tolerance/debate. Other authors, however, document the opposite trend, as nations put a new nationalist twist on transnational narratives such as that of the Vikings.

The report emphasizes that narratives of the past are accounts constrained both by the materials or factual sources used to illustrate them and by conventions that bestow upon these materials particular values or meaning.



Voices from the Museum: Survey Research in Europe's National Museums. EUNAMUS Report No. 5.

Alexandra Bounia, Alexandra Nikiforidou, Niki Nikonanou & Albert Dicran Matossian.

Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012.

Serie: Linköping University Interdisciplinary Studies, No. 16.

ISSN: 1650-9625.

Voices from the Museum
Survey Research in Europe's National Museums

Alexandra Bounia, Alexandra Nikiforidou,
Niki Nikonanou & Albert Dicran Matossian
Linköping University Press 2012



This report documents the most extensive comparative visitor study of national museums ever undertaken in Europe.

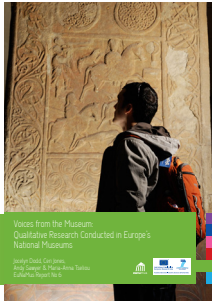
It presents the results of surveys of over 5300 museum visitors, who filled out questionnaires at nine European national museums on their expectations of the museum and its relationship to their personal identity. Between May and September 2011, EUNAMUS research teams canvassed the Estonian National Museum, the Latvian Open-Air Museum, the German Historical Museum, the National Historical Museum of Athens, the Nordiska Museet, the National Museum of Ireland, the National Museum of Scotland, the Rijksmuseum and the Museum of the History of Catalonia.

Data are presented both as an aggregate of all respondents and broken down by individual museums. Asked about their purpose in visiting a national museum, 8 in 10 respondents said that they were seeking either “pleasure/entertainment” or “education/learning”. While they weren’t explicitly there to “experience the past”, they did feel that preserving and remembering national historic heritage was the legitimate role of a national museum. Visitors also said they expected “national” museums, by definition, to present a complete story of the nation. Outside of Germany – especially in young nations and former East Bloc countries – national identity formation continues to dominate over regional or European identity.

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Similarly, visitors to the museums in each country claimed a single national identification over pluralistic alternatives such as hybrid national identity (two or more heritage roots), a transnational (European) identity, cosmopolitan ideals, universal humanity or an individualistic identity.

The visitor surveys indicate that national identity for both the museum and its visitors continues to play a central role in peoples’ conceptions of self-in-community.



Voices from the Museum: Qualitative Research Conducted in Europe's National Museums. EUNAMUS Report No. 6.
Jocelyn Dodd, Ceri Jones, Andy Sawyer & Maria-Anna Tseliou.
Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012.
Serie: Linköping University Interdisciplinary Studies, No. 17.
ISSN: 1650-9625.

This study presents the findings from interviews and focus groups carried out with visitors and minority groups at six European national museums.

It looks at the connections that can be made between national, European and minority identities and how these frame very different experiences of the national museum. Whilst visitors were, on the whole, convinced that national museums represented a shared, collective identity, minority groups' views differed discernibly.

Despite collectively forming a substantial section of the European population, minority experiences were largely absent from national museums, a situation that was recognized by less than 10% of museum visitors. Moreover, as noted by participants in the EUNAMUS focus groups, non-European minorities do not expect to be represented in Europe's national museums.

EUNAMUS data suggest that European minorities regard European citizenship positively because it allows them to retain their own identity. Non-European minorities, however, are more ambivalent. For them, aspects of European identity can help safeguard their rights, but other aspects can present further barriers to integration. Personal and national identity was especially complex and important to minorities because they were constantly negotiating their relationship with the dominant culture, but the silence in national museums and lack of recognition of their contribution to national society only confirmed their status as "Other".



National Museums Making History in a Diverse Europe.
EUNAMUS Report No. 7.

Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press (2012).
Serie: Linköping University Interdisciplinary Studies,
No. 18.

ISSN: 1650-9625.

This is the summary policy report of the EUNAMUS project. Drawing together findings from all of the other project reports and conferences, it reflects upon the way histories are constructed and deployed in Europe's national museums.

It sets out to address two questions: In what ways do national museums and their histories contribute to social division and cohesion? How might national museums be a force for greater cohesion in Europe in the future? The report discusses how national museums perform, interpret and narrate meaningful pasts so as to be politically relevant, and how these acts of communications are perceived by visitors and citizens with increasingly complex identities.

Bringing together key points from three years of research in short, clear texts and com-

pellent photos, the report covers the role of museums as a stabilizing force for the changing nation, the varied ways museums perform this role, their use of exhibition and narrative strategies, the way their histories are dependent on local political conditions, and the resultant silences that deny a complete or complex history. It includes a substantive discussion of the ways in which European national museums deal with conflict, promoting partisan division, obscurantist ignorance, or future-oriented reconciliation.

The report concludes with eight policy implications:

- National museums need to be autonomous creative institutions
- National museums need to understand and be open about their performances
- National museums need to overcome national constraints
- National museums need to develop and share tools for establishing bridge-building narratives
- National museums need to review their impact on perceptions of citizenship
- National museums need to reach new audiences
- Regional and local museums hold great potential for international bridge building
- National museums can act as forums for contested issues



National Museums and the Negotiation of Difficult Pasts. Conference Proceedings from EUNAMUS Brussels 26-27 January 2012. EUNAMUS Report No. 8.

Dominique Poulot, José María Lanzarote Guiral & Felicity Bodenstern (eds).

Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012.

Serie: Linköping Electronic Proceedings, No. 82.

ISSN: 1650-3686 (print). ISSN: 1650-3740 (online).

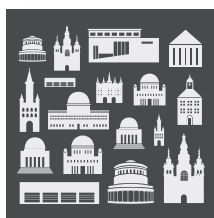
Based on the papers presented at the international conference “National museums and the negotiation of difficult pasts”, this report examines how museums attempt to represent the most contested and in some cases “unspeakable” elements of the past.

National museums are increasingly called upon to provide forums for dealing with highly sensitive issues of traumatic past events – particularly those related to situations of political violence.

The first section of the report deals with cases related to conflicting representations of “natural” and ethnic communities. With a focus on the Mediterranean, the papers examine museum policies in dealing with conflicts of displaced communities in the border lands between Italy and the ex-Yugoslavia or in the contested religious heritage of Greek Cypriots.

The second section focuses on the role national museums play in handling historical issues that are socially and politically sensitive. The Soviet rule in Estonia provides an example of the manipulation of museum policies in the context of dictatorial regime changes. A comparative study of the representation of the Holocaust in contemporary Germany and Britain and the question of the Gulag Museums in Russia provide examples of the problems inherent in representing such traumatic events.

The third section deals with cases related to restitution of anthropological remains and cultural assets. This area of research, related to the postcolonial critique, will be tackled from a theoretical point of view through case studies coming from Northern Europe. By going beyond the legal aspects of restitution issues, these studies examine the historical significance of using objects from the past as expressions of collective identity.



Entering the Minefields: the Creation of New History Museums in Europe. Conference Proceedings from EUNAMUS Brussels 27 January 2012. EUNAMUS Report No. 9. Bodil Axelsson, Christine Dupont & Chantal Kesteloot (eds). Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2012. Serie: Linköping Electronic Proceedings, No. 83. ISSN: 1650-3686 (print). ISSN: 1650-3740 (online).

Entering the Minefields:
The Creation of New History Museums in Europe
Conference Proceedings from EUNAMUS Brussels 27 January 2012
Bodil Axelsson, Christine Dupont & Chantal Kesteloot (eds)
Linköping University



Including introductions from the European Commission's directorates for Research & Innovation and Education & Culture, these conference proceedings deal with the setting up of new history museums.

All over Europe, the founding of new history museums brings to the fore questions as to which stories should be told, which objects should be put on display, for what audiences and with what results and future possibilities. New museums of history have been initiated in several European nation-states and even on a European level. Usually these initiatives are surrounded by populist debates of the pros and cons of using public funding for such large-scale cultural projects or by objections from intellectuals about the ideological nature of the projects.

This collection of papers, in contrast, brings together reflections on the nature and roles of history museums on a general level with reports from case studies in Brussels, Berlin, Warsaw and Paris. The cases dwell on the challenges and negotiations of collections, communities and citizenship that arise when polities create new museums. How to balance political and intellectual concerns? Which relationships between politics, memory and history do these initiatives pursue? Which museum for which public?

The report also includes a paper from EUNAMUS coordinator Peter Aronsson on the balancing acts involved in producing this kind of research with policy relevance.



Policy Briefs

The European Commission Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) program publishes three policy briefs to communicate EUNAMUS research results in a structured way in only a few pages.

Agents of Change: How National Museums Shape European Identity

March 2012.

Available at http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy-briefs-EUNAMUS-09-2012_en.pdf

Crossing Borders: How National Museums Define and Connect Europeans

September 2012.

Available at http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy-briefs-EUNAMUS-march-2012_en.pdf

Striking a Balance: How National Museums Can Contribute to a Socially Cohesive Europe

To be published http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/policy-briefs_en.html



Research objectives

EUNAMUS – European National Museums, Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen, February 2010 – January 2013, was concerned with understanding how the national museum can best aid European cohesion and confront the social issues which test European stability and unity.

The project's overarching objectives were to:

1. Map the development of national museums in Europe in relation to the overall cultural evolution of Europe.
2. Distinguish the active and intentional history making that takes place in national museums.
3. Make visible the material culture which itself unites and defines European sensibilities and values.
4. Interrogate the policy making and policy implementation actions of national museums. Policy is capable of mobilizing the national museum, but how does it do so, and what role do museums have in its formulation?
5. Understand museum audiences' experiences and identities.
6. Create reflexive tools and knowledge for policy makers, museum professionals and the public in order to facilitate the operation of museums as arenas for dialogue between European citizens about what it means to belong to the nation and to Europe.

EUNAMUS combined a range of methodologies for its case studies. A comparative analytical aspect was important to the project throughout.

Methodologies

1. Analytical comparative history on the development of national museums in 37 countries.
2. Analysis of great historical narratives in museum spaces and studies of the ways in which national museums deal with conflicts and transnational heritage.
3. Extensive fieldwork including an analysis of buildings and exhibitions in twelve capital cities. Analysis of online museums and studies of the interplay between national and regional museums.
4. Analysis of policy documents in a selection of national contexts.
5. Audience studies by quantitative and qualitative survey methods in nine national museums.
6. Compilations, contextualizations and cross-analyses of case studies.

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Funding scheme European Union 7th Framework Program. SSH-2009-5.2.2.
Interrelation between collective representations and uses of history and cultural evolution in an enlarged Europe.

Duration February 2010 – January 2013

Budget EU Contribution 2.64 million euros

Project no: EU FP Grant Agreement No 244305

Research area: SSH-2009-5.2.2. Interrelation between collective representations and uses of history and cultural evolution in an enlarged Europe

Contract Type: Small or medium-scale focused research project

Website www.eunamus.eu



