

## Providing Resources and Support for History Educators: EuroClio's Collaborative Projects with a Focus on *Historiana*

In the past 30 years, the European Association of History Educators, known as EuroClio, has developed numerous student-centered projects to meet its curriculum, educational, and pedagogical goals, as well as the needs and interests of history teachers in 50 countries. While many of these projects may be European based, the themes are universal ones, and the materials incorporate the latest historical scholarship and pedagogy. This article intends to acquaint readers of *World History Connected* with EuroClio's effort to provide additional resources for history educators, as well as to recruit contributors to its various projects, with emphasis on the work of EuroClio's free history education website, *Historiana*, and its Historical Content Team. *Historiana* seeks to promote transnational, multi-perspective, and representative materials as detailed on its website.<sup>1</sup> *Historiana* has sought to address this issue by identifying teaching resources that promote critical thinking through the analysis of well-chosen images and a clearly stated essential question. Over the past ten years, *Historiana* has gathered exemplary images and questions created by over 300 contributing professional volunteers—historians and history educators—from over 40 countries.

EuroClio's current projects are wide-ranging; they include consultative and advocacy work outside of the classroom, as well as methods to improve teaching and learning in the classroom. At the center of the work are the intertwined goals of providing educator-created materials that place controversy in its historical context, providing multi-perspectives to this work, and innovative strategies for active student engagement.<sup>2</sup> Its mission closely connects with the core values explained in its Manifesto. Adopted in 2014, the Manifesto includes specific student-centered 15 principles on High Quality History, Heritage and Citizenship Education that recognize the distinctive contribution of history to the development of young people. Those

principles emphasize critical thinking, comparative and contextual historical understanding, accepting and embracing diversity, developing historical competencies and historical thinking skills, and encouraging student engagement as active learners (see its Manifesto).<sup>3</sup>

Founded in 1992, EuroClio aspired to fill a niche that had developed because of the changes in European politics and to provide a clearing house of information for critical history education in all parts of Europe. These changes were connected to the Maastricht Treaty and the movement towards European citizenship and the increased exchange of ideas among member states. As founder Joke van der Leeuw-Roord explains in her reflective article “EuroClio, a Cause or Consequence of European Historical Consciousness,” the European Union and the Council of Europe worked to develop contacts among history educators in 1991 so as to bridge contacts not only in western European countries, but, as importantly, in eastern European countries.<sup>4</sup> Subsequently, Van der Leeuw-Roord and others invited teachers from 30 countries to create an organization.<sup>5</sup> Its work was to help strengthen history curriculum in the schools.<sup>6</sup> EuroClio’s original names in English, European Standing Conference of History Teachers, or in French, Conférence Permanente Européenne des Associations de Professeurs d’Histoire, did not easily form a useable acronym. Instead, the founders chose the name, EuroClio—Clio was the name of the Muse of History in Greek mythology—that captured the organization’s purpose of placing European history in a comparative and broader context and critical education better than the original name.<sup>7</sup>

During these initial years, the challenge was, nonetheless, present in terms of balancing national agendas of some of the member organizations with the European focus of the entire organization so that conferences’ focuses shifted and revolved around skills-based learning to historical content in its first decade. “Despite the clear wish to teach history in schools from a European perspective, it became evident in 1999 that in many European countries at the end of the twentieth century, the priority of history teaching was the formation of a national identity.”<sup>8</sup> Hence, Van der Leeuw-Roord concludes,

*Since 1991, EuroClio’s work has created a growing awareness that history is taught from an exceedingly narrow national perspective in many European countries. The increase of a European dimension in history education shows the impact of such awareness. However, reaching people and changing habits is a very slow process. It is a task which will certainly last longer than many politicians expect or would like it to last. EuroClio has not yet finished its work. The title of this article asks whether EuroClio is a cause for, or consequence of a European historical consciousness. The article gives evidence that EuroClio can certainly be defined because of a growing European*

*dimension. However, it should also be considered as an important cause for the growing European awareness among history educators in Europe. Whether this development leads to a European historical consciousness among history educators will have to be researched in due time.*<sup>9</sup>

Since then, EuroClio's focus has become more on how one teaches and challenges students to think than only to feed them information. Van der Leeuw-Roord expands more on these themes and issues in an updated essay, "Transformation and Endurance, an interpretation of 30 years of EuroClio. "As multi-perspectivity is currently considered a key element in school history, EuroClio shall continue its implementation policies. The planned 2023 Annual Conference in Vilnius, Lithuania under the title The Complexity of History: Unpacking the Past shall also return to this concept."<sup>10</sup> While Van der Leeuw-Roord discusses various challenges (the stated purpose(s) and focus of history education, as well as the use of English as common language) in 2001, it is evident that its current Executive Director, Steven Stegers, acknowledges that EuroClio continues to meet these challenges. As achievements of the last ten years, Stegers listed the following:<sup>11</sup>

An active network of Ambassadors to spread the word about EuroClio and advise the Board and Staff.

- The Manifesto as a guiding reference document.
- Recipient of the Global Pluralism Award, along with work in the Balkans focused on the work of joint teaching and learning resources on the Yugoslav wars.
- The creation and development of *Historiana* as a platform for cooperation, dissemination, and as a source of innovation in terms of digital education in history.
- Contested Histories as an evidenced based initiative, which involved more than 200 young researchers and identified 500+ case studies covering most of the countries in the world.
- Strategic partnerships: Evens Foundation, House of European History, and United Nations International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (MICT).
- To meet outstanding challenges, EuroClio is addressing the following issues:
- Bridging the gap between theory and practice by working on key performance indicators.

- Working with the Council of Europe on History Teaching in Europe.
- Broadening the network beyond the very committed English speakers to translate materials into other languages.
- Curating and providing quality control for both *Historiana* and for Contested Histories.
- Creating online Learning Modules that are self-paced.
- Developing global partnerships and working together with like-minded organizations from other parts of the world (such as India, Lebanon, South Africa, Sri Lanka, South Korea, and the United States).

In the last decade many of these challenges have been the focus of annual meetings, publications, and online work. Annual conferences have allowed for sharing ideas and historical thinking strategies.<sup>12</sup> Work in these years revolved around developing educational resources in the former Soviet republics, as well as the former Republic of Yugoslavia. In addition, EuroClio published numerous works in these years, ranging from national to comparative, which can be found in their office, and a partial list exists online.<sup>13</sup>

Before turning to *Historiana*, we want to share information on the other major projects EuroClio has offered since its origin and the work it now does on its own and with others. In the last ten years, its focus has revolved around six current projects except for *Historiana*, detailed on the website and summarized here briefly. All the projects center on various strategies to address controversial historical or contemporary issues from a variety of perspectives; in the last decade much work has focused on the history of conflict in different European regions, which has led to various publications.

These six projects are short-term and longer-term projects in order from longest to shortest.

**Contested Histories in Public Spaces**  
**Sharing European Histories**  
**In Europe Schools**  
**Learning History that is not yet History**  
**The Learning to Disagree Project**  
**Online Teaching in the Visegrad Region<sup>14</sup>**

- **Contested Histories in Public Spaces:** developing public history that focuses on controversies around disputes in public spaces in terms of statues and other memorials of disputed historical legacies. Hundreds of case studies are part of this project. for example, see materials on Abkhazia and Georgia, Korea, Macedonia, and Moldova.

- **Sharing European Histories:** developing strategies and a variety of perspectives on how to teach complex and conflictual historical topics from European history through a multi-perspective lens.
- **In Europe Schools:** working with students to create documentaries and exchange their work with another member school about one of the following topics: Difficult History, Migration, Climate Change, or Gender Equality.
- **Learning History that is Not Yet History:** developing material to teach about the Yugoslav Wars of the twentieth century in a sensitive and transnational manner.
- **The Learning to Disagree Project:** launched in 2017, it allows students to learn diverse ways to discuss different perspectives in the class settings so as to transfer this learning outside of the classroom.<sup>15</sup>
- **Online Teaching in the Visegrad Region:** working with teachers to enhance digital readiness in contemporary history and pedagogy.

## Overview of *Historiana*

Historiana is a major part of the current work of EuroClio; it offers a range of materials from primary to secondary sources to lessons and units to supplement national histories by emphasizing critical thinking and multi-perspectivity. Too often, history is seen through the lens of the dominant community, with little room for alternative voices. To improve this situation, over the last decade, EuroClio has been working with a group of professional volunteers—historians and history educators—to develop Historiana, a free online history education resource to promote transnational, multi-perspective, and representative materials. More than 300 people from over 40 countries have contributed so far. While we are familiar with other sites, Historiana benefits from resources in European archives and libraries, support from the European Union, and the perspective that critical thinking needs to be taught by an analysis of well-chosen images and a clearly stated essential question.

While this work started in 2007, the first version was launched online in 2012. The site revolved around key themes – conflict and cooperation, ideas and ideologies, life and leisure, people on the move, rights and responsibilities, the environment, and work and technology. The initial version did not, however, allow for as much possibility for teacher and student interaction as the current one,

*“[...] there were several issues that prevented Historiana from fulfilling its potential: (1) The thematic case studies were still national. Each case study had a ‘bigger picture’ section which showed what the case study*

*was a part of (such as other fights for independence, or other groups migrating for economic reasons), but this did not provide enough support for teachers. (2) Ideas for teaching and learning were lacking. (3) The design of the website did not enable easy comparisons between cases studies. (4) It was difficult for teachers to link the case studies to the curricula. (5) The language barrier was reduced, but not overcome. The limited budget for concept, design, testing and development and the limited capacity of the editing team proved to be additional challenges.”<sup>16</sup>*

In essence, it had accomplished a part of its mission so that the current rendition revolved around the development of instructional tools so that since 2020 it has become possible to have a more interactive model.<sup>17</sup>

*Historiana’s* original intent was to be an alternative to a European History textbook, but now it increasingly provides supplemental resources for teachers and students. *Historiana’s* unique approach provides historical content with accessible text, primary sources free of copyright limitations, and teaching strategies with possibilities for give and take among developers and users. All of these elements mean the digital source is fully adaptable, allowing users to select, edit, and omit material to meet their specific needs. The issue of choice makes the site distinctive when compared to many other open access online resources. As many readers of *WHC* are aware, there are other platforms that educators may use including,

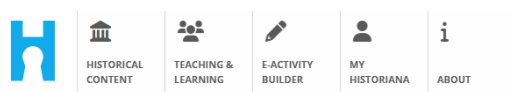
- *World History Commons*: showcases primary sources, teaching guides of particular units, teaching methodology, and website reviews.<sup>18</sup>
- *World History for Us All*: includes a wealth of lesson plans, units, and resources, as well as curriculum for teaching world history; it is, however, not an updated site.<sup>19</sup>
- *OER Project*: provides materials for teaching world history and big history.<sup>20</sup>

Should an educator wish to improve a preexisting course or unit or develop an entirely new unit, course, or entire curriculum, these sites are undoubtedly superb resources. EuroClio’s approach focuses alternatively on units and individual lessons. In doing so, it also allows educators to choose the materials that they wish to use, as well as show ways in which individual educators can supplement or even delete the materials that *Historiana* offers for their own specific classes. Its sources are all copyright-free and are downloadable; the *Historiana* profile allows users to collect sources and assemble them in user-made lessons; it also features ready-made lesson plans as well as suggestions on how to draft them.

Using materials from a variety of these websites together could allow for even more choice for individual teachers. For example, teachers can download materials from both sites to enhance a particular unit, as well as use the other site for research on other online sources. For instance, the source, “Map of Europe, 1918” on *World History Commons* could be an excellent supplement to materials on World War I that one can find on *Historiana*.<sup>21</sup> In practical terms, *Historiana* is an online platform designed to assist teachers who teach students in middle and high school settings to find transnational and multi-perspective resources to use in their classrooms. Its development is closely informed by the EuroClio Manifesto, its features are developed by professionals from Europe and beyond and are peer-reviewed and edited for coherence and contents by the *Historiana* Teams.<sup>22</sup>

*Historiana* offers two main focuses: historical content and teaching ideas. The historical content section of the website is divided into different, overlapping sections so that the content would start with Europe and move into more global directions. According to Stradling: “[...] these five key years – 1848, 1913, 1919, 1945 and 1989 – were always intended to be emblematic of wider changes that had taken place.”<sup>23</sup>

The Source Collections tab provides information on a variety of sources that allow teachers to focus on important moments of modern and contemporary history, such as the World Wars, with primary (and copyright-free) sources along with an accompanying text to place them in their historical context, and to support the learning process.



Historiana offers free **historical content**, ready to use **learning activities**, and **innovative digital tools** made by and for history educators across Europe.

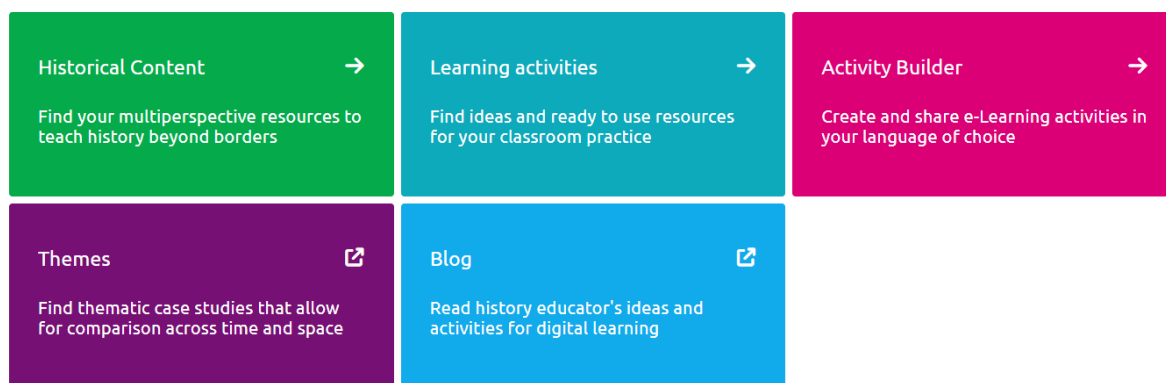


Figure 1: Homepage of *Historiana*. CC-BY-4.0 EuroClio

The above-mentioned content is currently labelled in different ways according to type (i.e., ‘units,’ key moments’), but all content shares the same underlying objective, putting historical events and subjects in a wider context. Virtually every section features a “wider context” sub-section or has one currently under development. Another category of items in the historical content section is the thematic source collection, such as one on the history of coffee or another on the history of football. In these collections, the materials develop and explain the sources with the accompanying text more focused on each of them, all the while placing them in relation to the whole collection. Source collections such as these allow for tackling more specific subjects and can also function as a repository of sources that teachers can find and use for their own classes.

The Narrative section makes the content more user-friendly and easier to navigate with users able to move forward and back from the main introductory page to the various subsections and their chapters. Sources are easier to see and analyze and are more organically presented. In the coming years, material will be transferred to this mode. This section has the following advantages:

There is an overview page to help users understand what is in the narrative.

- It is possible to read the full narrative from top to bottom without the need to click.
- While reading the narrative, user can go to different chapters, using the table of contents.
- It is possible to show multiple sources as part of a gallery/collection.

In short, the Historical Content section (which is a growing one) aspires to provide as much material as possible, with the goal of meeting the curriculum needs of teachers, in line with EuroClio’s mission to support innovative and multi-perspective history teaching and to foster cross-border historical knowledge.<sup>24</sup> Every unit, key moment, or source collection section strives to place sources, events, and explanations in their wider historical and global context. The Viewpoints Section provides materials from the Learning to Disagree Project, which includes controversial materials from 15 historical and contemporary issues.

Secondly, the Teaching and Learning section features a wealth of learning activities developed by teachers and teacher trainers; these activities are often conceived of, by both the Content and the Teaching and Learning teams, as companions to the existing historical content featured on the website, but also stand-alone. Representatives from both teams confer with each other to develop resources that enhance the content. Content and teaching and learning activities are therefore meant to build on each other. Each learning activity includes an indication of the appropriate age group and its projected length. It features an introduction explaining the rationale of the activity and its learning outcomes, so that teachers may choose their activities based on desired skills

and competences for their students. The activities also feature materials both for teachers (including a proposed lesson plan) and for students (worksheets, both in PDF and Word). The lesson plan guides the teacher through the activity and indicates which resources on *Historiana* to use for the activity (students may work, for instance, on a timeline featured in the historical content section of the website).

The E-Learning Activity is an additional type of Teaching and Learning activity developed by practicing teachers and teacher educators using sources from *Historiana* and *Europeana*, which together offer access to the digital collections of many museums, archives and libraries from Europe.<sup>25</sup> Europeana offers millions of visual and textual items to document Europe's rich and diverse cultural history.<sup>26</sup> Users who have created a free account can design their own E-Learning Activities in the language of their choice by dragging and dropping building blocks in the order of their choice using this Builder. Users can also use the Builder to edit copies of the exemplar E-Learning Activities they added to their MyHistoriana space. In the Builder, teachers can also add additional information for students, such as tips or assignments.

*Historiana* designed each building block to support students in thinking historically and critically by interacting with historical sources. The “sorting” block helps students organize information. Teachers can choose a background, select and remove sources, and add and edit accompanying texts. Students can read the texts and move the sources, using their knowledge and judgement in deciding where to place each source, that is students can differentiate between factors of major or minor importance, putting sources in chronological order, or organizing sources based on their significance. The “comparing” block is designed for students to compare visual sources by selecting parts of the sources and making annotations as part of their E-Learning Activity. Different approaches include selecting what changed over time using visual sources from different historical eras, selecting differences between artwork depicting the same scene using different styles, and selecting how official war photographers are distorting the reality through their work. The “highlighting” block allows students to analyze texts and highlight key information. For example, students can highlight the arguments that historians are using in favor of or against a certain historical interpretation, highlight parts of a textual source that students can use to make useful inferences and explain them, and/or highlight parts of a textual source that would not make it through a censor and explain why this could be the case. The “discovering” block encourages students to think about the connections between sources. They start by seeing one or a few sources and can only see the next source after selecting it, with labels attached to each source explaining the connections between them. Examples include discovering the factors that caused a historical event or development, and discovering how an idea has spread and transformed over time.

## Four Examples

The following four case studies showcase a range of the tools described above. They include two from the Historical Content section, “The World War I Unit” and the “Changing Europe” module, and two from the Teaching and Learning section, “Satirical Map: Hark! Hark! The Dogs Do Bark!” and “What was life like for frontline soldier in World War I?”

### 1. The World War I Unit<sup>27</sup>

The World War I unit is an important feature on *Historiana*, as it is part of the curricula in much of the world. A short introduction briefly summarizes the war and its aftermath. On the right side of the page users can find an interactive menu of the eight sections included in this unit. Even as the user opens any of the other sections in the unit, the menu remains visible on the right, so that all sections are always one click away.



## World War 1



It started on 28 July 1914 when Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia but it quickly escalated into a European and then a global war. It was the first ‘total war’ of the industrial era, a phrase attributed to the German General, Erich Ludendorff. It lasted for more than four years. During that time around 9 million combatants died and 7 million civilians. In all, 65 million soldiers, sailors and airmen were mobilised during the course of the war – 42 million on the side of the Allies and nearly 23 million on the side of the Central Powers. Over half of them (57%) were killed, wounded, missing in action or were taken prisoner. Some countries were particularly badly hit. In Russia 76% of the fighting force were casualties of war. In France the figure was 73%. In Austria-Hungary the figure was an astonishing 90%. Even if we allow for the fact that some of the casualties were suffering from Spanish influenza – the epidemic which swept across Europe in 1918 – it is not difficult to see how World War 1 had such a devastating effect on post-war Europe and why people talked of a lost generation – a term which came to refer not only to the millions of dead and missing in action but also those who returned but were no longer able to cope with normal civilian life. By the end of the war the German Empire and the Russian Empire were considerably smaller and the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires had been dismantled. At the Paris Peace Conference the map of Europe was redrawn with several independent nations restored or created. US President Woodrow Wilson, optimistically described World War 1 as “the war to end all wars” and the peace settlement at Versailles as designed “to make the world safe for democracy”. Sadly the optimism was misplaced. Marshall Foch, who had been the Allied Supreme Commander during the war, correctly predicted of the Treaty of Versailles, “This is not peace. It is an armistice for 20 years”. The seeds had been sown that led to the outbreak of World War 2 in 1939. But also the roots of current and recent conflicts in Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon and Libya can be traced back to many of the decisions made by the international powers in 1919-20.

### World War 1

1. The World Before the War
2. The Descent into War
3. The War Begins
4. Key Moments in the War
5. How the War was Fought
6. Experiencing the War
7. The Aftermath of the War
8. Remembering the War

### Acknowledgements

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Figure 2: World War 1 landing page. CC-BY-4.0 EuroClio.

Each section features a sub-section of sources and activities. Section 2, for instance, “The Descent into War,” features source collections arranged into a series of slides with a text to contextualize and explain various types of sources, a newsreel (in

this case, a mock video presenting the news of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand), and a timeline tool. Each activity type was chosen to deliver the best results in relation to its subject. Meaning, the source collections are used to explain complex, historical context (that is, the intertwined mobilization plans as a result of the Alliance System which triggered the war); the newsreel is an entertaining way to present a single, important event (the assassination of Franz Ferdinand); while the timeline gives the feeling of time depth and complexity.

Much of the material aligns with a corresponding learning activity. When presenting longer stretches of interconnected events, the user will see a corresponding link to a connected learning activity on the left side, below the thumbnail source marking the beginning of the sub-section. For example, “The War of Words,” subsection of Section 5 (“How the War was Fought”) focusing on propaganda, features links to four learning activities. When the subsection is a source collection, users also have the option to download it as a Power Point, with the download link listed with the learning activities.




An poster made by the Government of Australia to recruit solders (IWM PST 3242).

### The war of words

World War 1 was the first war in which the opposing sides employed propaganda on a large scale. Here we have a collection of mainly visual sources produced for propaganda purposes by the combatant countries between 1914 and 1918. At a time when there was no television or radio, and many people were not very literate, posters and postcards were often the best way of transmitting propaganda messages. They served a variety of purposes:

- to justify the nation's involvement in the war; to generate a sense of hostility and hatred towards the enemy; to persuade the soldiers and the public that the enemy is responsible for the war; to maintain morale at the front and at home as the death toll rose; to encourage recruitment into the armed forces; to raise funds for the war effort; to warn people about spies, and, as the war continued: to persuade neutral countries, particularly the USA, to join the war or remain neutral.

Although the United States came late to the war it brought with it the skills of a new industry - advertising. These were now used to “sell” to the American public the entry of the United States into the war.

The use of propaganda tools continued beyond 1918. In some cases the posters proclaimed a new future of peace and prosperity. But war propaganda was still widely used in eastern Europe, as the conflict continued between Poland and the Soviet Union and within the Soviet Union between Bolshevik and anti-Bolshevik forces. While in the west, propaganda reflected a growing fear of international communist revolution.

**Historiana**

**Learning Activities**

- World War 1 recruitment posters in the perspective of the present time
- How does propaganda work?
- The war of words
- Why did the Central Powers lose the war?

**Downloads**

- War of words

Figure 3: “The War of words” and its learning activities. CC-BY-4.0 EuroClio.

The unit’s complete title, “World War I in Wider Perspective,” is a strong indication of the editors’ aim, to avoid just adding another narrative layer, while striving

to add something valuable to the topic. As always, *Historiana* strives to give teachers the means to transcend national borders, and continuous efforts are made in the design and drafting phase to maintain a coherent transnational and multiperspective approach to the sources that are used and events that are mentioned. The effort to be inclusive also means going beyond the military and political aspects of the war, delving into social aspects such as life on the frontline, life at home, and the repercussions of the war on daily life, including after its conclusion (Sections 6 and 7, “Experiencing the War” and “After the War”). The final section is about remembrance, which is a powerful transnational tool because it transports the point of view back to present times, back to the students, and shows the complex politics of commemoration.

All resources on the website are published under a CC-BY-4.0 license, which means that the material can be shared and adapted (including remixing and transforming it) on the condition that the user give appropriate credit (including a link to the original), indicating whether changes have been made, and that no additional restrictions are added to the material.<sup>28</sup>

## 2. The “Changing Europe” Module<sup>29</sup>

While the World War I unit is typical of other units in terms of structure, the “Changing Europe” module is different, since it is not historical as the other units and yet a welcome addition to what is already available on *Historiana*. It is the product of a EuroClio project funded by the European Union’s Erasmus+ Program as a Jean Monnet Activity, named in honor of one of the founders of the European Union.<sup>30</sup> This module has a longer introduction, explaining its rationale and on the right side of the page the user will find the sections: (1) Post-war Europe (1944 – 1951); (2) The European Union in the context of the long search for stability; (3) The European Union in the context of a changing world. The three sections, while complementary, differ in their aims and focus, and are designed in a way that allows the user to experience them as a series of sequential lessons or to just choose the material needed.



## Changing Europe



Welcome to this Historiana module about Europe and the European Union. It sets the European Union in its historical context and enables students to understand that Europe faces, and has always faced, dilemmas that require decisions. The people of the continent of Europe have tried various different ways of managing conflict across the centuries. They have formed alliances, signed treaties, sometimes tried to dominate each other, and more recently have formed supranational organisations where they have common interests. By considering the European Union as one of these methods to manage conflict in Europe, students can take a historical perspective on the contemporary world. This world was very much formed by the Europeans who emerged from violent conflict in the first half of the 20th century. The diverse life stories of a variety of Europeans have much to reveal about the hopes and fears of Europe's people in the immediate post-war years. Some people decided that the way to avoid violent conflict in future was to develop a European Union. That Union tackles difficult dilemmas, such as how to keep the continent politically stable, how to manage food supplies and how to agree foreign policy needs. The decisions that have been made to find solutions to specific dilemmas often lead to the need for further decisions to deal with unexpected consequences, and of course European people are affected by world events and changes. By taking an evidence-based and problem-solving approach this module will enable students to engage with, and become more knowledgeable about, the European project.

### Changing Europe

1. Post-War Europe (1944-1951)
2. The EU in the context of the long search for stability
3. The EU in the context of a changing world

### Acknowledgements

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Figure 4: Changing Europe landing page. CC-BY-4.0 EuroClio.

The approach of the first section is a combination of micro, that is individual, histories in their broader historical contexts. A brief introduction provides the historical context, with users then selecting from several learning activities – one of which is called “Life in Europe, 1945 – 1949.” EuroClio’s network collected several sources from real people from the period and curated them into a series of life stories which serve as the basis of the activities. These sources are divided into eight subsections of challenges that people faced including changing borders, the creation of new governments, experiences of daily life, destruction of infrastructure, lack of food, destroying the National Socialist world, displaced people and refugees, and coming to terms with the war. The activities (which include sources and guidance) are downloadable as PDFs and accompany the analysis of the life stories and primary sources within the learning activities.

## Life in Europe 1945-1949

### What was it like to live in postwar Europe?

The Decisions and Dilemmas Project Learning Team



In this module, students find out about a life story from the time and then use the experience of the person they have studied as evidence to support themes relating to Europe 1945-49. They can then go on to research from evidence files to present on the topic of postwar Europe. In this activity your students will each study the life experience of a different person who lived in Europe in the period 1945-49. Students will then learn more about what life was like in Europe in these years from some textbook pages. They will suggest where their character's experiences support what is written in the textbook pages and what Europe's people needed to have a good life in the future. This central activity can be done in a lesson. There are also opportunities to extend the work to develop students' source work skills and/or to enable them to investigate life in 1945-49 in more depth.

**Indicative age**  
14-16 years

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**Approximate time**  
1-2 hours

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**Learning outcomes** ▼

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**Related**

- Живот и свободно време: историята на обикновени хора
- Football and Hooliganism
- Живот и свободно време: историята на обикновени хора
- Die Geschichte der Migration anhand des Fußballs verstehen

### Downloads

**Teacher material**

- Picture sources accompanying life stories Word,
- Picture sources for life stories
- Life stories at a Glance
- Evidence Files Grid
- Lesson Plan

**Student material**

- Useful Maps
- Textbook pages
- Table of Characters and countries
- Character profile worksheet
- Textbook pages

Figure 5: “Life in Europe, 1945 – 1949” learning activity. CC-BY-4.0 EuroClio.

The second section, “The EU in the context of the long search for stability,” begins with the Peace of Westphalia (1648) in the seventeenth century to provide a long-term view of the wider historical context in which the European Union is rooted. Many scholars consider the Peace of Westphalia to be the beginning of a coherent European political system, where European leaders of the most powerful states tried to balance competing interests among themselves. The section features a multi-strand timeline consisting of events, ideas, and the wider context from 1648 – 1845.<sup>31</sup> While the Events section deals strictly with the episodes of waging conflict and conflict management in Europe, the wider context places those events within global trends. At times, this headline will show another angle of a key event, such as “1701-1714, Wars of Spanish Succession,” which is accompanied by a Wider Context note on Religion as part of power politics. In general, however, the Wider Context headline is meant to lead the user through the evolution of politics and society, to show the discourse between stability and conflict did not happen in a vacuum. The headline Ideas visually occupies the center of the timeline and is meant to be the guide through different ways Europeans have approached peace, stability, conflict. The timeline can be downloaded (in PDF format), to make it more accessible and there are three learning activities. One activity focuses on

diplomatic history, specifically on how States tried to use alliances to stabilise the Continent; the second focuses on a life story (microhistory); the third guides students through the analysis of a timeline to show its value in the understanding of historical events in their wider contexts, in this case of how conflict was dealt with in modern Europe.

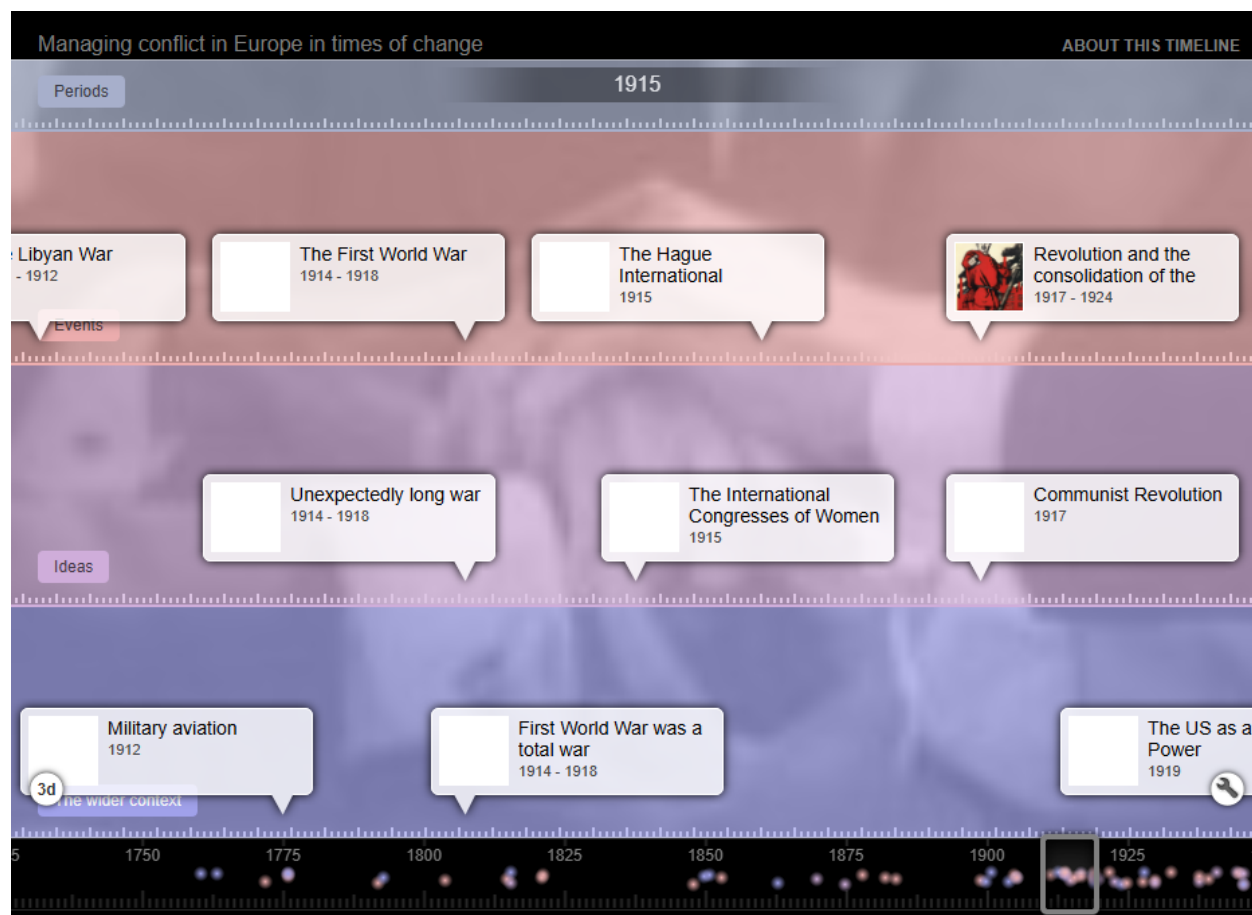


Figure 6: The Multi-strand timeline. CC-BY-4.0 EuroClio.

The third section, “The EU in the context of a changing world,” is a conglomerate of learning activities with a brief historical introduction. The section deals with post-1945 history and focuses on topics of current relevance impacted by decisions made at the EU level, such as agricultural policy, defense, energy, border control, and economic imbalance. These are all very political topics that are meant to generate discussion in the classroom and include tools to guide students in using sources and critical thinking. All activities are complemented by a short history of the European project from its post-war birth to the present, to support users in navigating a very

important part of European history that, due to the national focus of most European curricula, is often not well known.<sup>32</sup>

### 3. E-Learning Activity: “Satirical Map: Hark! Hark! The Dogs Do Bark!”<sup>33</sup>

This E-Learning activity is an example of building an exercise around a single visual source, a satirical map housed in the Gallica archive titled “Hark! Hark! The Dogs Do Bark!” produced in 1914 as, “the dogs of war are loose in Europe”.<sup>34</sup> Its design is common to all other E-Learning activities with the slides numbered and icons in the upper center of the screen allowing the user easy navigation. The user has the option to click “add to my *Historiana*” (with a “+” symbol), which adds the activity to the user’s personal page for later use or for more immediate access.<sup>35</sup>

It is a relatively brief activity of three slides to induce students to think historically and draft a historically sound commentary. The first slide presents the source and provides its historical context. The second slide asks the students to observe the source as a historian, prioritize the elements they think are the most important, and justify their choices. The third slide asks students to contextualize those elements and the entire source by drawing conclusions on European relations at the time based on the information given by the satirical map. The activity itself is extremely simple as it focuses on one source only and is meant to serve as a ready-to-use source for teachers needing one strong example for their class.

This E-Learning activity is an example of an activity where the material provided and related questions are meant to lead to other complementary work that is not online (guided research in archives, for instance, or a structured debate). It may be less interactive than the next example.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Figure 7: Satirical Map: Hark! Hark! The Dogs Do Bark! CC-BY-4.0 EuroClio.

#### 4. E-Learning Activity: “What was life like for frontline soldiers in WWI”<sup>36</sup>

This E-Learning Activity is considerably longer than the previous one and it is also more interactive. It consists of ten photographs from the archives of the Imperial War Museums depicting life on the frontlines and six associated activities. The first slide presents the activity, its key question, and the historical context. As the student navigates to the next slide, featuring the first of ten consecutive photographs, a pop-up instruction box guides the user through the activity. Instructions can also be accessed at any moment on the right of the second slide. Students can “annotate” the photograph, with the goal to do so at least two or three times per source. It is a very simple but effective tool which lets the user manipulate the picture as if it were a blank sheet of paper. The teacher can then review the annotations, for example; the annotation tool can also be used by a teacher to make notes for students to review. In general, the annotation tool was designed to allow teachers and students to interact: teachers may draft an activity (adding instructions) and students will make notes as required;

teachers may then be able to see their notes, comment on them, and assess their understanding.

The last few slides work to expand student learning by asking students to summarize their conclusions, conduct further research on the Imperial War Museums digital collections, compare elements from the photographs, as well as source sorting and analysis by using the “sorting tool” to drag pictures to different parts of the screen for visual representation of a historical assessment. A teacher can also prepare an activity by arranging sources visually in this manner. Finally, the last slide leads the student to assess the usefulness and limits of using photographs (or a specific photograph) as sources.

## The State of Our Work and Moving Forward

As many readers involved in similar projects may concur, *Historiana* will always be labor-intensive, and most developments will depend on the availability of volunteers. This is indeed where passion and expertise are essential foundations, since unpaid volunteers carry out much of the work. While the Secretariat in the Hague oversees the work of *Historiana*, much of it is actually done by two different teams: the Historical Content and the Teaching and Learning Team, each consisting of professional volunteers in different European countries and in the United States. EuroClio constantly looks for ways to include the larger community in its decisions concerning contents, activities, and its priorities via online and in-person surveys and by classroom testing of the material by EuroClio members. *Historiana* Teams and the EuroClio Secretariat meet periodically in different European locations and often involve local members in live discussions, during which they try to absorb the local needs, priorities, and feedback to integrate them into the workflow.<sup>37</sup>

The labor-intensive nature of this project is the reason we are always looking for professionals to volunteer and lend their expertise. While we always appreciate any help, we are particularly keen to enlarge our Content Team, as well as to diversify in the widest possible terms. We are aware that our Content Team is all-male and very Western European. Furthermore, while political history is prominent on *Historiana*, other kinds of history are not. There is a structural issue at play, of course, in that any volunteer-based project is prone to contingency, co-optation, and availability but we at *Historiana* want to go beyond that, to seek out different perspectives and broaden our understanding. We would like a team where everyone would bring very different expertise and ideas to the table.

We know the modern history community is much more diverse than the images and voices that reach the greater public and we want to be in a position where we reflect this situation. This is not a stale ideological move, even though principles of fairness are obviously at play; we, as historians, base our entire work for *Historiana* on the idea that

history education should be based on multi-perspectivity, inclusiveness, and innovation. We would be betraying our values if we did not endeavor to have a diverse team behind our project.

This move to widen our outreach and bring more inclusion to match our values is not limited to *Historiana* but applies to EuroClio at large. We believe that history and history education are vital to our increasingly interconnected lives. If this project sparked some interest in any *WHC* reader, we would be delighted to establish a channel of communication, to explain more about how to help, how to use *Historiana*, or even just to connect and thus make our bonds over our shared love for world history and for history education that much stronger.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> EuroClio, “Historiana,” August 12, 2025, <https://euroclio.eu/historiana/>.

<sup>2</sup> EuroClio, “Mission and Vision,” August 12, 2025, <https://euroclio.eu/association/mission-and-vision/>.

<sup>3</sup> EuroClio, “Manifesto,” August 12, 2025, <https://euroclio.eu/manifesto/>.

<sup>4</sup> Joke Van der Leeuw-Roord, ed., *History for Today and Tomorrow; What does Europe Mean for School History?* EUSTORY Series, Shaping European History, Vol. 2. (Hamburg: Körber Stiftung, 2001), 249-268. Note: Originally EuroClio was written with all caps; it is no longer.

<sup>5</sup> Those 17 organizations included the following: Verein Schweizerische Geschichte, Switzerland; Törtenelemtana'rok egylete, Hungary; Association des professeurs d'histoire et de géographie, France; Norsk Historikerforening, Norway; Association belge des professeurs d'histoire. d'expression française, Belgium; Association Luxembourgeoise des Enseignants d'Histoire, Luxembourg; Danish History Teachers' Association, Denmark; Vereinigung van Leraren Geschiedenis en Maatschappijleer, Belgium; Senter for Laererutdanning Og Skoletjeneste, Norway; The History Teachers' Association of Sweden, Sweden, Foreningen af historielærere ved Seminarierne, Denmark; Danske Historielærereforening, Denmark; L'association de professeurs d'Histoire de Lituanie, Lithuania; Verband der Geschichtslehrer, Germany; A Associação de Professores de História, Portugal; Historical Association, United Kingdom; and Vereniging Leraren Geschiedenis en Staatinrichting Nederland, the Netherlands.

<sup>6</sup> Juliette Montlahuc, “The role of EUROCLIO – European Association of History Educators – in the implementation of the 2001 Council of Europe Recommendation” (Master's Thesis, Universiteit Leiden, 2017).

<sup>7</sup> Rebecca Jackson, “The Founding of a European Association,” *Bulletin*, Spring 2022, 9.

- <sup>8</sup> Jackson, “The Founding of a European Association,” 4.
- <sup>9</sup> Jackson, “The Founding of a European Association,” 11.
- <sup>10</sup> Jackson, “The Founding of a European Association,” 6.
- <sup>11</sup> Steven Stegers, email message to James Diskant, November 8, 2022.
- <sup>12</sup> “Interview with Robert Stradling,” *Bulletin*, 19.
- <sup>13</sup> EuroClio, “Educational Material,” August 12, 2025, [https://euroclio.eu/resource\\_categories/educational-material/](https://euroclio.eu/resource_categories/educational-material/); “In Memory of Martin Roberts,” *Bulletin*, Fall 2021, 35.
- <sup>14</sup> EuroClio, <https://euroclio.eu/>
- <sup>15</sup> EuroClio, “Learning to Disagree,” August 12, 2025, <https://euroclio.eu/projects/learning-to-disagree/>.
- <sup>16</sup> Maren Tribukait and Steven Stegers, “Historiana: An Online Resource Designed to Promote Multi-Perspective and Transnational History Teaching,” in *History Education in the Digital Age*, eds. Mario Carretero, et al. (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland, 2022), 73, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-10743-6\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-10743-6_4).
- <sup>17</sup> Tribukait and Stegers, “Historiana,” 78.
- <sup>18</sup> World History Commons, August 12, 2025, <https://worldhistorycommons.org>.
- <sup>19</sup> World History for Us All, August 12, 2025, <https://whfua.history.ucla.edu>.
- <sup>20</sup> OER Project, “World History Project,” August 12, 2025, <https://oerproject.com/world-history>.
- <sup>21</sup> World History Commons, “Map of Europe, 1918,” August 12, 2025, <https://worldhistorycommons.org/map-europe-1918>.
- <sup>22</sup> EuroClio, “The Historiana Teams,” August 12, 2025, <https://euroclio.eu/association/people/the-historiana-teams/>.
- <sup>23</sup> Robert Stradling, ed., *Crossroads of European Histories: Multiple Outlooks on Five Key Moments in the History of Europe* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2006), August 12, 2025, <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680493c97>.
- <sup>24</sup> EuroClio, “Innovating History Education for All Needs Assessment,” August 12, 2025 <https://euroclio.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Lorenc-J-Mrozowski-K-Staniszewski-J-2017-IHEA-Needs-Assessment-Rep....pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> *Europeana* is a European Union initiative that aims to “empower the cultural heritage sector in its digital transformation.”

<sup>26</sup> Europeana, “About Us,” August 13, 2025, <https://www.europeana.eu/en/about-us>.

<sup>27</sup> Historiana, “Key Moments: World War I,” August 12, 2025 <https://www.historiana.eu/historical-content/key-moments/world-war-1>.

<sup>28</sup> Creative Commons, “Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0),” August 12, 2025, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

<sup>29</sup> Historiana, “Units: Changing Europe,” August 12, 2025, <https://www.historiana.eu/historical-content/units/changing-europe>.

<sup>30</sup> Erasmus+ is the main funding program of the European Union for education and culture. A “Jean Monnet action” is one of the chapters under which an organization can apply for Erasmus+ funding. Under Erasmus+ there are three “Key Actions” (KA) and the Jean Monnet Action. KA1 concerns mostly mobility projects; KA2 is broadly for Partnerships; KA3 for youth specific projects; the Jean Monnet program is focused on higher education, education, and training. A project can fall within more than one Action, but the applicant will have to choose which one would be more likely to be awarded for their project. Other specific actions might be implemented in individual calls for proposals. European Commission, “Actions Covered by the Programme Guide,” *Erasmus+*, <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/part-b-information-about-the-actions-covered-by-this-guide>; European Commission, “Jean Monnet Actions,” *Erasmus+*, <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/opportunities/opportunities-for-organisations/jean-monnet-actions>.

<sup>31</sup> The text that follows is adapted from the introduction to the timeline tool, see Historiana, “The EU in the Context of the Long Search for Stability,” August 12, 2025, <https://www.historiana.eu/historical-content/units/changing-europe/the-eu-in-the-context-of-the-long-search-for-stability>.

<sup>32</sup> Historiana, *A Short History of the European Project for Teachers*, August 12, 2025, <https://www.historiana.eu/objects/f5bf3c5c-30cb-4f20-8613-041728fe5e96/A%20short%20history%20of%20the%20European%20Project%20for%20teachers.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> Historiana, “Satirical Map: Hark! Hark! The Dogs Do Bark!,” August 12, 2025, [https://historiana.eu/ea/view/e6243f2c-f95f-43a6-894c-56ef1d7e1e62/text/bb\\_o](https://historiana.eu/ea/view/e6243f2c-f95f-43a6-894c-56ef1d7e1e62/text/bb_o).

<sup>34</sup> Gallica is the digital library of the National Library of France (BnF) and a major contributor of the *Europeana* project. Bibliothèque nationale de France, “Gallica,” <https://gallica.bnf.fr/accueil/en/content/accueil-en?mode=desktop>.

<sup>35</sup> To do so, the user must have a personal page on *Historiana* (which is free); however, it is worth noting that the activity is accessible even without a *Historiana* profile.

<sup>36</sup> Historiana, “What was life like for frontline soldiers in WWI?,” August 12, 2025, [https://historiana.eu/ea/view/fd78f924-a301-44d6-bf8f-bd70441706ed/text/bb\\_o](https://historiana.eu/ea/view/fd78f924-a301-44d6-bf8f-bd70441706ed/text/bb_o).

<sup>37</sup> Cross-borders meetings in multiple European locations are often a requirement of EU-funded projects.