

A Multi-Stakeholder Roundtable on Memory, Prevention and Social Cohesion in Europe

CLOSING THE GAPS

Europe House
Sarajevo

24-25 March
2026

ORGANIZED BY:



International Coalition of
SITES of CONSCIENCE



ICIP

INTERNATIONAL
CATALAN
INSTITUTE
FOR PEACE

Since World War II, memory policies and practices have grown out of the need to confront atrocities, honor survivors, and prevent their repetition. From the Holocaust to Bosnia, these efforts sought not only to remember but also to challenge denial and embed lessons in public life.

Today, those lessons are under strain. Across Europe, patterns of hatred, violence, and historical revisionism are resurfacing, while remembrance too often remains symbolic and disconnected from prevention, social cohesion, and democratic resilience.

CLOSING THE GAPS responds to this challenge by creating space for critical reflection and dialogue. It asks why “never again” has so often failed to translate into action, and how memory can be reclaimed for its original purpose—not as a passive act of remembrance, but as an act of courage, resistance, and justice.

Convened by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, the War Childhood Museum, and ICIP (International Catalan Institute for Peace), the roundtable takes place in Sarajevo, a city where the consequences of failure and the possibilities of prevention are tangible.

The purpose of this two-day roundtable is to bring together civil society actors, grassroots organizations, scholars, and policymakers working on memory, peacebuilding, and violence prevention, to critically assess existing memory policies and practices, develop recommendations, and foster collaboration to make memory a tool for prevention and democratic resilience.

PROGRAMME

TUESDAY MARCH 24

LOCATION:

Europe House, Sarajevo,
Maršala Tita 62

8:30 **Registration and Welcome Coffee**

9:00 **Opening Session**

- Welcome remarks
 - **Luigi Soreca**, European Union Ambassador to BiH
 - **Amina Krvavac**, Director for Bosnia and Herzegovina, War Childhood Museum Foundation
 - **Kristian Herbolzheimer**, Executive Director, International Catalan Institute for Peace
- Objectives and overview of the day
 - **Silvia Fernández**, International Coalition of Sites of Conscience

9:30 **Keynotes Framing**

The keynotes will explore the role of memory as a form of reparative justice and as a tool for cohesion, resilience and prevention. They will invite participants to critically examine the limitations of current memory policies and practices, critically reflecting on where they have fallen short. The presentations will prompt participants to consider why memory work risks fueling competing narratives and polarization, and why emotional connections to past suffering have not consistently translated into meaningful action to prevent discrimination and violence. The keynotes aim to inspire participants to rethink their work, envision new strategies, and foster new connections.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

- **Hasan Hasanović**, Survivor of the Srebrenica genocide, Author, Head of Oral History Program, Srebrenica Memorial Center (BiH)
- **Mô Bleeker**, United Nations Secretary General Special Advisor on the Responsibility to Protect (Switzerland)

FACILITATOR:

- **Ajnura Akbaš**, Research Coordinator, War Childhood Museum Foundation (BiH)

10:00 **Roundtable Discussion I – Mapping Gaps and Limitations**

This session will provide a focused examination of the current shortcomings in memory policies and practices. Key gaps to be discussed include the risk of reinforcing dominant narratives, sidelining marginalized histories, and contributing to competing narratives and social polarization; the reliance on identity-based approaches that lead to fragmentation and compartmentalized histories; and the weak connections between memory work and contemporary efforts to address discrimination and prevent violence. The session aims to create a shared understanding of where memory policies and practices fall short, setting the stage for subsequent sessions that will explore new ideas and approaches.

SPEAKERS:

- **Zilka Spahić-Šiljak**, Academic Director of Feminism and Religion (FER) School, Transcultural Psychosocial Educational Foundation (TPO) and University of Sarajevo (BiH)
- **Emmanuel Achiri**, Policy Advisor at ENAR - European Network Against Racism (Regional-Europe)
- **Dr. Marije Hristova**, Ramón y Cajal Researcher, Department of Anthropology, Institute of Language, Literature and Anthropology (ILLA), Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) (Spain)
- **Shada Islam**, Managing Director, New Horizons Project Geopolitical Strategy Advice and Analysis (Belgium)

MODERATOR:

- **Refik Hodžić**, Strategic Communications and Transitional Justice Specialist (BiH)

TUESDAY, MARCH 24

10:50 **Small Group Discussion I**

In small groups, participants will be encouraged to reflect on how their own work or frameworks may unintentionally reproduce the gaps identified during Roundtable I. They will share experiences and examine shortcomings in policies, practices and frameworks, fostering a shared awareness that can guide more inclusive and effective approaches in subsequent sessions.

11:40 **Plenary**

12:30 **Lunch & Informal Networking**

14:00 **Roundtable Discussion II**
Building Inclusive and
Cross-Community Memory
Policies and Practices

This session will explore how memory policies and practices can become more inclusive, ensuring that marginalized histories are recognized and integrated without contributing to fragmentation or polarization. Participants will examine strategies for designing memory initiatives that go beyond single-identity narratives, acknowledging the multiple, overlapping experiences of oppression, marginalization, and victimhood. The discussion will focus on how an intersectional approach to memory can encourage dialogue, mutual understanding, and collaboration among diverse groups.

SPEAKERS:

- **William Blair**, Director of Collections, National Museums Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland)
- **Nikola Kandić**, Head of Local Branch Office-Sarajevo, Regional Youth Cooperation Office - RYCO (BiH)
- **Nayat Karakose**, Director of Programs, Hrant Dink Foundation (Turkey)
- **Sanela Bešić**, Director, Kali Sara – Roma Information Center (BiH)

MODERATOR:

- **Maria Fanlo**, Peace Advisor at the Civil Peace Service (CPS), The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) - Ethiopia (Spain)

TUESDAY, MARCH 24

14:50 **Small Group Discussion II**

Participants will reflect on strategies for making memory policies and practices more inclusive and intersectional. In small groups, they will discuss ways to recognize marginalized histories, and address overlapping experiences of oppression. Groups will identify practical approaches and key insights to share in plenary, informing collaborative solutions and next steps.

15:40 **Plenary**

17:00 **Visit of the War Childhood Museum**

18:30 **Group Dinner**

WEDNESDAY MARCH 25

LOCATION:

Europe House, Sarajevo,
Maršala Tita 62

9:30 **Welcome**

9:45

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

- **Alma Mustafić**, Survivor of the Srebrenica genocide, Lecturer and Researcher, Access to Justice, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences (the Netherlands)

FACILITATOR:

- **Justine Di Mayo**, Senior Program Manager, International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC)

10:00 **Roundtable Discussion III – Memory as a Tool for Prevention: Linking Memory to Action**

This session will explore how historical memory can move beyond awareness and education to become a practical tool for prevention. While memory work fosters understanding and empathy, ritualized or symbolic approaches often fail to inspire meaningful action to address ongoing discrimination and prevent violence. Participants will discuss strategies for translating memory into civic engagement and embedding it in concrete anti-discrimination and prevention mechanisms. Participants will also explore how memory initiatives can be strategically linked to policies and actions that prevent discrimination and polarization.

SPEAKERS:

- **Branka Vierda**, Independent Researcher and Educator (Croatia)
- **Yoav Shemer-Kunz**, Political Scientist, Affiliated Faculty - Syracuse University and Co-founder of European Jews for Palestine (France)
- **Edina Bećirević**, Professor of Security Studies at the University of Sarajevo
- **Jaclyn Streitfeld-Hall**, Deputy Executive Director, Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (USA)

MODERATOR:

- **Amra Hadžimuhamedović**, Director, Centre for Cultural Heritage of the International Forum Bosnia (BiH)

10:50 **Small Group Discussion III**

Participants will reflect on strategies for translating historical memory into practical prevention efforts. In small groups, they will discuss ways to connect memory initiatives to anti-discrimination and prevention actions and identify key insights to share in plenary for collaborative solutions.

11:40 **Plenary**

12:30 **Lunch & Informal Networking**

14:00 **Working Groups - Toward Practical Strategies and Policy Roadmap**

Working Group 1: Transforming Memory Policies and Practices for Inclusion and Intersectionality

Participants will work together to identify concrete policy actions that could make memory initiatives more inclusive and intersectional. The group will work to propose actionable models or pilot ideas to embed participatory and cross-community approaches into memory initiatives to promote dialogue, collaboration, and collective responsibility.

MODERATOR:

- **Kristian Herbolzheimer**, Executive Director, International Catalan Institute for Peace - ICIP (Spain)

Working Group 2: Designing Practical Tools to Link Memory with Prevention

Participants will work to identify concrete ways memory initiatives can feed into early-warning systems, anti-discrimination policies, and civic engagement strategies. The group will propose actionable mechanisms that connect memory to prevention and will consider ways to measure the impact of memory initiatives on public attitudes, civic behavior, and intercommunity dialogue.

MODERATOR:

- **Teresa Vazquez**, Senior Director of Operations, International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC)

Working Group 3: Establishing Collaborative Spaces for Rethinking Memory

Participants will focus on identifying concrete steps to establish collaborative spaces where civil society actors working on memory, peacebuilding and violence prevention and policy-makers can jointly design and pilot new approaches to memory.

MODERATOR:

- **Lejla Gačanica**, Human Rights Officer for Transitional Justice, UN OHCHR (BiH)

15:30 **Plenary and Next Steps**

16:30 **Closing Session**

- Closing remarks

17:00 **Visit of Memory Sites in Sarajevo** (Optional)

SUPPORTED BY:

