



BUILDING A HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

A PROJECT OF
THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT



THIS DOCUMENT

This document is an overview of the work undertaken and progress made, since early 2011, on the project to create a House of European History. It sets out in some detail a description of aspects of the evolution of the project, including the architectural developments, progress on the interpretive process and the visitor experience, and the development of the contents and the narrative of the permanent exhibition.

At the same time, it offers insight into aspects of the process of building the House of European History such as the exhibition design, educational and outreach programming and the future collection policy. It sets out the rationale of key areas of its activities, such as museological and historical research, so that the genesis of the project to its current status can be understood. It also maps out in clear terms the future vision of the House, as of its scheduled opening in late 2015.

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European Parliament

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PREFACE

‘The study of history is the beginning of political wisdom.’ This is how Jean Bodin, the French jurist and political philosopher, defined the unquestionable bond between history and politics.

My predecessor, Professor Hans-Gert Pöttering, affirmed that the House of European History would be the place where the memory of European history and the process of European unification would be jointly cultivated so as to provide an environment for reflection on the meaning of European identity. The establishment by the European Parliament of a House of European History in Brussels constitutes a significant innovation in the way in which an advanced democratic system approaches its relationship with the past.

It is in this light that the Parliament’s Bureau unanimously backed the creation of the House of European History and appointed a committee of experts to give flesh to this project. The members of this committee have emphasised how the House of European History would enable Europeans of all generations to be in a place where the European idea comes alive. The creation of a public space, a ‘House’ — the former Eastman dental clinic — will become a platform where the politician plays the role of facilitator in the democratic debate and where the historians and the curators freely carry out their function to convey their knowledge and reading of European history. It is this principle which underpinned from the very beginning the basis for a broad political consensus in our Parliament, a consensus guaranteed by two important consultative bodies: the Board of Trustees, chaired by Professor Hans-Gert Pöttering, and the Academic Committee, chaired by Professor Włodzimierz Borodziej.

According to Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, it is also the duty of the European Union to contribute to the improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples. As President of the European Parliament, it is therefore an honour and a duty to introduce a project which will act as a bridge between the academic world and the general public. The design and operation of this House will reflect the latest museological thinking and will also seek to be at the forefront of the debate not just about the past, but also on the future of Europe.

In 2012 the Union won the Nobel Prize for Peace for its decennial work towards reconciliation and democracy in a continent which had been ravaged by war and totalitarianism. This award was not only for the European institutions, but above all for the European citizens. The Nobel Peace Prize medal and certificate will therefore be placed in the future permanent exhibition at the European House of History as a symbol of the recognition of six decades of work. The House will be the perfect place for the public to freely access their award.

I am convinced that the House of European History will engage visitors in critical reflection on what the European integration process means for our common present and for our future together. The House of European History will provide a space necessary for debate, knowledge and exchange of views regarding the history of Europe, its people and its institutions. We are building our European project on solid common roots, but our political union is all about the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Martin Schulz".

Martin Schulz
President of the European Parliament

INTRODUCTION

The objectives and mission of the House of European History are based on a first concept paper, the 'Conceptual basis for a House of European History', which was drawn up in 2008 by a committee of renowned historians and experts from various European countries, chaired by Professor Hütter — President of the Foundation of the Haus der Geschichte in Bonn — and in response to the initiative of former President of the European Parliament Hans-Gert Pötering, announced in 2007, to create the House of European History.

The House of European History will be a resource open to the general and specialised public from across Europe and beyond. It will take its place at the heart of the visitor services policy of the European Parliament in Brussels. It will be located in an historic landscape on an important architectural site of the Belgian capital. Over time it will have a web presence, develop partnerships and cooperation, and build a cultural profile that will extend far beyond the physical boundaries of its actual location.

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The focus is on ensuring the best possible quality of experience for all of its future visitors.

In building a House of European History, the focus is on ensuring the best possible quality of experience for all of its future visitors. It is of great importance to the project that the development of the exhibition is accompanied by openness, communication and dialogue with the wider public, with its stake in the successful implementation and long-term sustainability of the House. This is a core aim of this document, in that it constitutes one of the earliest opportunities for public information about the project.

Just as is the case for the House of European History venture as a whole, this document has been built upon the continuing and valued work of past and present members of its Academic Committee and of its Board of Trustees, of the consistent and valued support of the Bureau, the Secretary-General, many Directorates of the General Secretariat of the European Parliament, and of the sustained work of the Academic Project Team. It represents a small but significant step in the challenging and exciting process of delivering what it is hoped will be a lasting European cultural landmark.

SUMMARY

The House of European History has drawn up a mission and objectives that underpin its vision of becoming an enduring platform for exchange about European history and the history of the European Union.

It is planned to open the House at the end of 2015 in the renovated Eastman building in the Leopold Park at the heart of the European quarter in Brussels. The architectural plans will enhance the building by providing open exhibition spaces, complementing the original building.

The House will be visitor-centred and open to all, in line with the Parliament's policies on equality of access. It will also cater for groups of visitors who are visiting the European Parliament. Particular programmes will be devised for groups, young people and schools.

On offer will be permanent, travelling and temporary exhibitions, events and cultural programmes, as well as a cafe and a gift shop.

The narrative of the permanent exhibition will guide the visitor through an outline of European history, beginning with the early myth, multiple perspectives on identity and the cultural heritage of Europe. For the visitor to understand the tumultuous events of the 20th century, the exhibition will focus beforehand on the convictions and belief in progress that defined the 19th century — Europe's 'entry into modernity'— before moving on to consider Europe's descent into war and destruction. This will be followed by a thematic section on the search for a better life through an increasingly united Europe. The visitor will be encouraged to think about the Europe of today, the status and position of the European Union, and the part that can be played by everyone in shaping its future.

Three main criteria determined the choice of the decisive aspects of European history which would shape the narrative of the House: firstly, they must be events or processes which originated in Europe; secondly, they must have spread across Europe; and thirdly, they must still be relevant today. Throughout the permanent exhibition the historical approach will be largely chronological, but where apt and necessary, a thematic approach will be taken.

The House of European History has drawn up a mission and objectives that underpin its vision of becoming an enduring platform for exchange about European history and the history of the European Union.

The concept of 'shared memory' will permeate the historical narrative, forming a basis for the interpretation of history, including the passive and the active sides of this phenomenon, formed as it is in a social context — and which both characterises and binds groups of people together.

A number of museological tools and techniques, including the use of 'connectors', various leitmotifs and 'red connecting threads', as well as the visual metaphor of a 'house' will be deployed throughout the exhibition to assist orientation and recognition. For example, the concept of 'centre and periphery' will function as a leitmotiv of the exhibition, while visual landmarks will guide the visitor and provide additional information on the narrative of the exhibition.

The collection that is being assembled for the permanent exhibition will play the central role in communicating the messages of the House. It will be supplemented by multimedia technology, opportunities for visitor interaction and areas where visitors will be able to obtain further information.

A HOUSE FOR EUROPEAN HISTORY

In setting up a House of European History, the European Parliament aims to offer the visitor the opportunity to learn about European historical processes and events and to engage in critical reflection on what these processes mean today. It will be a resource for exhibitions, documentation and information, which will situate past developments and events within a wider historical and critical perspective, bringing together and juxtaposing the contrasting experiences of Europeans in history.

The House of European History will be a cultural institution with a very specific scope, that of conveying a transnational overview of European history that is inclusive of its diversity, its varied interpretations and differing perceptions.

The House aspires to increase knowledge about European history and its implications. It aims in addition to enable the broadest possible public to understand the context of earlier centuries in the course of which so many of its ideas and values were shaped. In so doing, the House plans to empower the visitor to understand European history, taking into account the wider global context, and to facilitate discussion and debate about Europe and the European Union.

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INSTITVT DENTAIRE GEORGE EASTMAN

The House of European History will be located in the heart of the European quarter in Brussels.



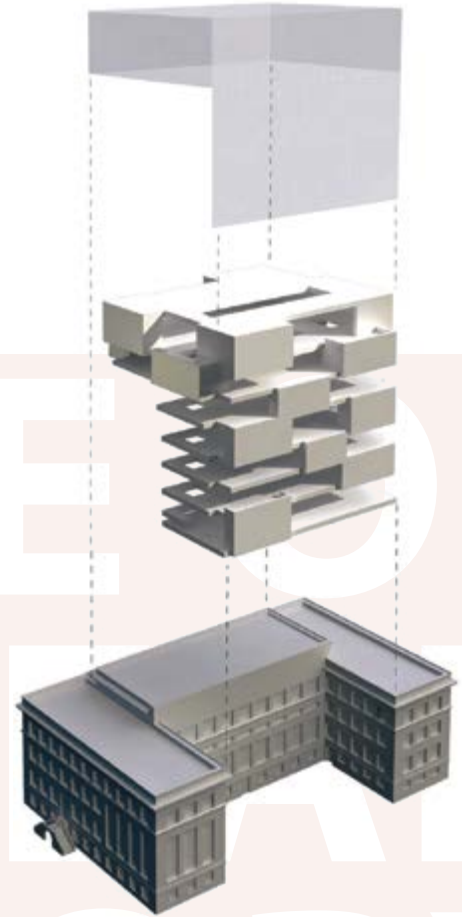
@ University of Rochester Medical Center, Eastman Institute for Oral Health



*The renovation will also
respect original features
of the building.*



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A WELCOMING HOUSE

The House of European History will be located in the heart of the European quarter in Brussels, next to the European Parliament and close to the buildings of the main European Union institutions.

The future museum building is situated in the Leopold Park, created in the 19th century on the grounds of a former private domain. It was built in 1934-35 to host a dental clinic for disadvantaged children, financed by a donation in 1931 from the American philanthropist George Eastman, the inventor of the Kodak camera. In the same period, similar Eastman dental clinics were established in London, Paris, Rome and Stockholm. The plans for the original building were drawn up by the architect Michel Polak.

A contract was signed in 2011 with the architectural group practice composed of Atelier d'architecture Chaix & Morel & associés from France, JSWD Architekten from Germany, and TPF from Belgium, winners of the international architectural competition for this project. The architects have designed a contemporary extension in the courtyard and on the roof. Their plans include the renovation of the original façades and of some rooms, thereby maintaining the historic aesthetic. The renovation will also respect original features of the building, such as the former clinic waiting room, decorated by the painter Camille Barthélémy with representations of animals from the fables of Jean de La Fontaine: these wall paintings will be restored and form part of the future foyer.

The House of European History building will also welcome those who do not plan to visit the exhibitions: the cafeteria and shop, for example, will be open to people who are not visiting the House. Educational rooms and conference facilities will host public events and educational programmes.





THE VISITOR – AT THE CENTRE

Situated at the heart of the European district in Brussels, the House of European History will form part of a triangle of visitor facilities in line with the visitors' policy of the European Parliament. This policy is based on a public itinerary or pathway between three locations which will together comprise the full information service for visitors to the European Parliament. Currently, the visitor can visit the parliamentary debating chamber, the 'Hemicycle', in one of Parliament's buildings, while the second major visitor facility is the European Parliament's visitors' centre, the 'Parlamentarium', which presents the European Parliament and its functions and powers in the context of the European Union's institutional framework and decision-making processes.

The House of European History will be a further facility for visitors within this public itinerary: its function — complementary to the existing visitor facilities — will be that of contextualising the history of Europe and the European Union in the light of the passage of time and memory.



EVALUATION AND SURVEYS

In placing the visitor at the centre of all the activities of the House of European History, it is essential that its facilities and activities actually meet its visitors' expectations and requirements. Therefore, the House of European History will base its offer on quantitative and qualitative research into the profile of potential visitors and their aspirations.

Central to the concept of the House is the belief that, for the visitor to understand the content of the museum, it will not be necessary to have extensive prior knowledge of European history.

The most recent research indicates that most of the visitors will come as members of a group. On this basis, the House will develop advanced logistics for the organisation of group visits. Analysis of the profile of existing visitors to the European Parliament suggests that the greatest proportion of visitors will come from two age groups: young people of up to 25 years of age and people of 56 years and above. A free entry policy will be an important inclusive factor in attracting and involving certain groups of the population. There will also be educational programmes for particular target groups.

For the visitor to understand the content of the museum, it will not be necessary to have extensive prior knowledge of European history.

As well as catering for group visits, the House will cater for individual visitors, such as city trippers, cultural tourists and students, as well as for family visits.

In this context, it is important to stress that the House of European History is committed — in line with the policy of the European Parliament — to the values and practice of equality and non-discrimination, and to supporting diversity in an open and inclusive environment. The aim is therefore to offer the same museum experience and equal opportunities for learning and engagement to all users.

HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

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SERVICES FOR THE PUBLIC

The House of European History aims to provide a coherent range of services for its visitors.

At the heart of the House there will be a permanent exhibition on European history, focusing mainly on the 20th century, with retrospective insights into processes and events from earlier centuries. Particular emphasis will be placed on contextualising the history of European integration.

There is also scope for temporary exhibitions in the project and, in principle, one temporary exhibition will be organised each year. The subject matter of the temporary exhibitions will be closely tied in to the main focus of the House of European History's mission and objectives.

Travelling exhibitions will provide an important further means of outreach and of strengthening cooperation with other museums at the national, regional or local level.

While the exhibitions will form the nucleus of the House of European History, they will be complemented by a variety of actions and activities online and offline. It is planned to develop online exhibitions that could be used by other institutions in order to place their own exhibitions in a wider European context.

Extensive educational programmes which will target children, young people, adults and families will be organised to accompany the exhibitions. Based on the conviction that history education is not simply a matter of general historical knowledge but is also concerned with the acquisition of skills such as research, criticism, analysis of historical documents, contextualisation and communication, these educational programmes will aim to inspire critical thinking. They will also provide opportunities for cooperation with educational institutions at a local level and also with networks further afield.

HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

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will be organised to accompany
the exhibitions.*

MULTILINGUALISM

The House of European History will provide its main services in at least 24 languages, corresponding to the official languages of the European Union at its scheduled opening date. Multimedia devices will enable visitors to explore the museum in the official language(s) of their home country.

Multilingualism being understood as an expression of cultural diversity in Europe, the House of European History wishes its visitors to experience its multilingualism as one of its main assets.



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A PLACE IN CONSTANT DEVELOPMENT

The House of European History is a project which will be developing continuously. The aim is to build up, over time, a key source of information and a wealth of expertise on European history. To this end, the permanent exhibition and collection will be regularly updated and enriched. This process will be backed up by evaluations of the House of European History's products and activities, in the light of new trends and evolutions in museology and history.

In order to become a central point for research and debate on European history, the House of European History will create links with all kinds of initiatives and debates throughout Europe.

The House of European History will also seek to become an integral part of the local and international cultural landscape, with strong links and cooperation alliances with existing networks and partner institutions.

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THE PERMANENT EXHIBITION

The scope of the House of European History transcends national, regional and local boundaries. Its permanent exhibition will present a broader perspective than the summation of national histories. It will also reveal the diversity of European history and its interpretations and perceptions: knowledge of this diversity will be clearly communicated to the visitor.

The development of the House of European History, in particular of its permanent exhibition, is based on a dichotomy of objectives: on the one hand, the exhibition will convey a coherent historical narrative which will be easy to grasp for any interested visitor; on the other hand, it will raise awareness of the existence of a variety of different historical interpretations, points of view, nuances of perception and memory, so as to stimulate reflection and debate.

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MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES ON HISTORY

The House of European History will offer a permanent exhibition narrative on European history. The selection of historical events to be presented in the main exhibition narrative has been made on the basis of three criteria: there will be particular focus on events and processes which have originated in Europe, have expanded across Europe and which are relevant until today. These three criteria have allowed the examination of large periods of history without losing analytical focus.

Based on up-to-date historical research, the House of European History will focus on phenomena which are considered to be significant in the history of Europe. Different memories and opposing interpretations of history will be portrayed and their interrelationship shown by juxtaposing them, using to the full the museological potential of the setting.

The House of European History will highlight the way in which the presentation of history is a construct defined by individual values and perceptions. It will use the concept of 'shared memory' as a basis for the interpretation of history, encompassing the passive and the active side of this phenomenon — which is formed in a social context and which both characterises and binds groups of people together. The House of European History will reflect on how core factors and decisive developments in European history could contribute to the formation of a European historical consciousness. Moreover, the concept of a 'shared memory' should contribute to the development of a critical perspective, one that seeks to uncover the intentions and motives which lead to the construction of history.

The House of European History will highlight the way in which the presentation of history is a construct defined by individual values and perceptions.



The House will present European history as a process that is constantly evolving. For this reason, the permanent exhibition will contain some sections in which the visitor's awareness of sensitive questions and of issues still under debate will be heightened, at which point he/she will be invited to step back and reflect on the diversity of historical interpretations. In this way, the visitor will be encouraged to engage in debate about different perceptions of historical events.

EXPANDING EUROPE

The House of European History will focus on presenting and interpreting the various and sometimes tortuous processes of the 20th century history of the continent. The development of the European integration process will be presented in its broad historical context. Links with global history and with the position of Europe on the international scene will be shown.

The House of European History is committed to an understanding of Europe in the broadest sense — east and west, north and south. Its scope will extend beyond geographical and psychological boundaries and limitations. It will also recall that the enlargements of the European Union have involved a constant review of the dimensions of Europe, physically and psychologically.

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CHRONOLOGY AND THEMES

The core narrative, as defined in the 'Conceptual basis' document, will comprise the history of Europe with an emphasis on the 20th century. This storyline will be backed by timelines and divided into several interconnected themes, topics and subtopics.

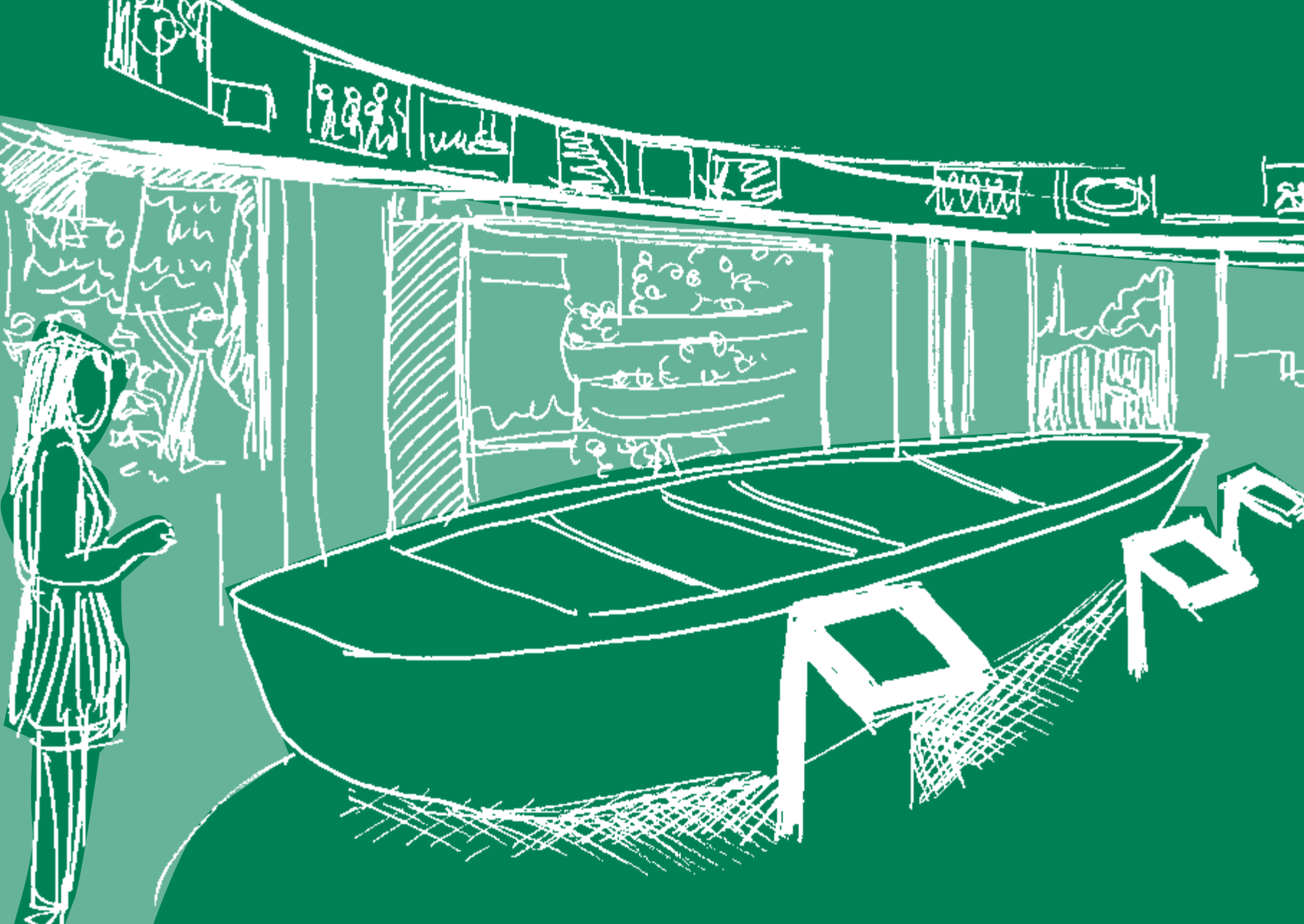
The overall structure of the permanent exhibition will be chronological, starting on the second floor of the building and taking the visitor up to the top floor. This chronologically based narrative will be paired with a thematic approach, which will allow the visitor to acquire an overview by means of retrospectives and broader appraisals, in which the internal chronology of events, causes and consequences will be presented in the wider historical context.

The first theme will provide an introductory section and a guide to the exhibition, while the last theme, situated on the top floor of the exhibition space, will offer a space in which the whole visit may be evaluated and knowledge deepened in an interactive and questioning environment. The other themes will be devoted to European history of the last two centuries.

LAYERING THE CONTENT

The main storyline is divided into six themes, subdivided into topics and, where necessary, subtopics. These will be supplemented by examples which will give greater substance to the main narrative and will illustrate different processes and events by means of small or more personal stories. These will give the visitor a 'flashback' perspective through time and space.

A guiding principle of the development of the exhibition is that of offering different types of visits adapted to the various expectations and differing availability of the visitor. For example, some visitors will have only a limited amount of time in which to take in the main messages of the exhibition.



In order to take account of the diversity of visitors and of the time they are able to spend in visiting the House, the exhibition will be layered in a way that will enable them to follow a recommended or given itinerary, but will also give them the freedom to decide how much time to take and how deeply into the substance they wish to go. The way in which the exhibition will be layered will also take into account the constraints encountered by group visits.

The content will be presented in layers, using differing means of communication, ranging from the exhibiting of original objects to multimedia displays. The aim is to arrive at a well-balanced exhibition in which multimedia does not dominate or overwhelm but, instead, is used aptly and effectively in supporting the content: this principle will also be applied to interactive tools.

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HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

CONNECTING THE CONCEPTS

Throughout the exhibition there will be a recurring leitmotiv, that of the concept of 'centre and periphery'. It is an enduring topic in European history which even today remains central to the debate about the development of the European Union. Over time, different parts of Europe have occupied the role of the centre or of the periphery, spatially and psychologically. It could be said that Europe has developed mainly through these processes of shifting borders, centres and powers. The sense of belonging or of marginalisation is important for every European individual, for example in his/her relationship to the development of the European Union.

Recurrent visual elements will be located near to the starting point of each theme, providing landmarks for the visitor. Their main purpose is to introduce the visitor to the theme, to act as orientation points and to explain the timeline of the theme. These points will also enable tour guides to adapt the graphics, sound and lighting to the needs of particular groups, thus giving them a customised introduction to the nature of the content and experience on each floor.

The exhibition narrative will be complemented by a spatial installation which will take its inspiration from metaphors about the house. This will rise up through the five levels of the permanent exhibition and will feature a vertical showcase on each exhibition floor — visible from the staircase — which will contain iconic objects connected to the theme presented on that floor. An area located behind this showcase will provide a further opportunity for interpretation of the house metaphor in a way that illustrates the theme exhibited on that level.

THE MAIN STORYLINE OF THE PERMANENT EXHIBITION

SHAPING EUROPE

The function of the first theme, entitled 'Shaping Europe', is to engage and familiarise visitors with core issues in European history. As the starting point of the permanent exhibition, it will also provide an introduction to the subject matter of the House of European History and will explain that, as a reservoir of European memory, the House of European History will transcend national and regional perspectives in depicting and describing a shared European past. It will be seen to be a bridge, mediating between research into European history and the public.

Europe is not a self-evident entity — the perceptions, images and conceptions of Europe have changed throughout the ages. Nevertheless, it has a common heritage, being characterised by particular attributes, traditions and achievements that distinguish its culture from that of other continents. The introduction to this theme will make the visitor aware that, for humankind, memory is constitutive in that it is the basis of self-understanding and learning, whether as individuals or as members of a social group. It will be revealed in this way that memory is inextricably intertwined with oblivion: to bear something in remembrance means, ineluctably, to lose sight of something else or to ascribe another meaning to it. Current interests always drive the selection of the remembered past. Memory is never fixed and changes continually. That is why any reflection on cultural identity and any description of history are essentially constructs.

One of the most powerful ways of representing the continent has been by means of its personification. The ancient myth of Europa and the Bull became emblematic for the continent, acquiring a multiplicity of interpretations throughout history. Viewed from a modern standpoint, the myth refers to the fact that European culture has ancient roots outside Europe.

In addition, mapping is an important tool in the presentation of the image of Europe and the political self-definition of the continent, which has changed radically from antiquity to the present day. Rather than being defined by sharp-edged geographical boundaries, the map of Europe is based on cultural, political, social and psychological characteristics and trajectories.

The philosophy of the House of European History will be explained throughout this theme: the focus on European history; questions of national and transnational identity; the multiplicity of perceptions; and the question of a European memory, as well as the leitmotiv of the 'centre and the periphery' which will highlight the changes in the centre of gravity over time.

EUROPE ASCENDANT

The second theme focuses on the 19th century, which was a revolutionary and rebellious age. Europe underwent radical changes in the political and economic sphere as well as in the societal and cultural spheres, transforming a traditional feudalistic society into a modern social order. The French Revolution put firmly on the map the ideas of freedom, equality, self-determination and human and civil rights all across Europe.

New political visions arose. In this process, the revolutions of 1848–49 constitute a turning point, opening the way to new forms of political representation through parties, trade unions and diverse other associations, and leading to a gradual expansion of democratic participation and constitutional rights. Nationalism, viewed as the basis of sovereignty and as the only legitimate basis of the state, was on the rise. Industrialisation radically changed both working patterns and societal structures. New social strata, those of the bourgeoisie and the working class, emerged.

In the second half of the 19th century, Europe became the centre of world finance and commerce. The capitalist organisation of work created unprecedented productivity, but also gave rise to new levels and dimensions of social unrest. As populations moved from rural surroundings to overcrowded cities, appalling living conditions resulted. In this new, class-based society, the question of social justice became one of the central issues of political discourse. The advent of a Marxist-oriented labour movement created a new political factor, opposing liberalism with a set of revolutionary goals. The need to provide protection against the risks of unregulated wage labour brought into play a new definition of the duties and responsibilities of the state, creating the basic elements of a welfare state. Modern definitions and understanding of instrumental and rational science were established, accompanied by improvements in the educational system and increases in knowledge and technical innovation.

There was no more obvious gauge of progress, in the eyes of the European elite, than the expansion of European colonial power. The sheer scale of imperial expansion bolstered the self-held European sense of superiority compared to the rest of the world. Nationalism and the vision of European civilisation were permeated by racist and social Darwinist ideas. Before World War I, Europe was at the peak of its global power.

On the eve of World War I, the majority of Europe's population was still rural. The asynchrony with the processes of social development led to mass migration from the countryside to the city, from poorer regions to richer ones, as well as to large-scale overseas emigration. As the 19th century came to its close, social friction and international competition accumulated to generate a multifaceted potential for conflict.

EUROPE ECLIPSED

The following theme considers Europe's downward trajectory in the first half of the 20th century. The outbreak of World War I was a terminating point for the ascendant Europe of the 19th century. The conduct and technology of war had changed; as well as the unprecedented killing of millions of young men on both sides, mass war had devastating human consequences on society at large. It changed the political landscape of Europe and had a profound impact on the European memory.

All of the states, old and new, which emerged from the 'great war' were basically representative parliamentary democracies, with the exception of the Soviet Union. Over the next 20 years however, in more than half of these same European states, democracy proved to be too fragile to survive the powerful social and political tensions which were on the rise across the continent. The October Revolution of 1917 was a world-shaking event, imposing an alternative order to that of capitalism, liberalism and parliamentary democracy. Marxist ideology was used to legitimise the communist regime in the Soviet Union, a regime based on omnipresent mass terror.

National socialism was a reaction against both liberalism and the rising socialist working-class movement in general, and against the October

Revolution in particular. Under the leadership of the Nazi party, Germany — although considered to be among the most culturally and economically advanced countries — built up a totalitarian regime founded on an ideology of race hatred, and planned a war which would culminate in the occupation of large parts of eastern and western Europe and in the mechanised mass murder of millions of Jews.

The 'break of civilisation' of the Shoah is the beginning and the nucleus of the European discourse of memory. For a long time, states were silent about their failings. In the meantime, the recognition of the Shoah as a singular crime against humanity has become the negative reference point of European self-consciousness.

World War II became a 'total war', in which civilians became targets of warfare. Thus, Europe became the scene of unprecedented violence and murder. This led to the definitive decline of Europe's position in the world and the division of the continent, shaping its history for the rest of the century.

In 1944, the gradual liberation of the continent began. However, the suffering of civilians did not come to an end; it continued and reached a peak in the chaos of displacement and retribution. Liberation could not be perceived in the same way by everyone; for some, it brought a surge of tremendous joy, while for others it brought only fear, dread and tragedy. With the end of the war, Europe — and the world — looked back in horror and sought to make a fresh start based on the conviction that the catastrophe of another war should be prevented by all means. However, yesterday's allies were becoming today's opponents and enemies.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

In this theme, it will be seen that, after World War II, Europe had hit rock bottom. It had turned from being a leading global power into a continent devastated, divided and dependent on the two superpowers, even in decisions on its own future. Many of its people could focus only on survival. The reconstruction of housing, the rebuilding of infrastructure and, indeed, of political structures, was paramount. Millions of Europeans were seeking to return to their old homes or to find new ones.

The Iron Curtain became the historical divide of the continent. The United States and the Soviet Union developed antagonistic programmes, with economic liberalisation and democratisation on the one hand, and modernisation via state planning and the leadership of the communist party on the other. Very soon, their struggle for spheres of influence polarised the world and divided Europe sharply into two camps. Few countries could stand aside, or take or maintain a neutral or non-aligned position. The decolonised countries became another arena in which this power struggle was played out.

In this situation of competing strategies and bipolar rivalry and under the threat of nuclear weapons, Europe engaged in an astonishing new direction. On both sides of the Iron Curtain, the economies grew at a similar rate, despite the fact that two completely different political and economic systems had been installed in east and west. Vast differences and unexpected convergences between east and west marked Europe at this time. Western Europe experienced a phase of international reconciliation, economic prosperity, the development of the welfare state, and democratic and institutional consolidation, while the socialist states under Soviet control underwent a period of forced industrialisation, increasing social security and mass literacy campaigns, enforced by partly brutal dictatorships, which were in turn supported militarily by the Soviet Union. Based on different ideological foundations and embedded in different socioeconomic regimes, the establishment of social security systems grew across Europe. The competition between the systems reinforced the pressure to reform.

In western Europe, the beginning of the European integration process set the course of a development with far-reaching consequences. Visionaries from very different backgrounds expressed — with great persuasive effect — the idea that the maintenance of peace and the pursuit of reconciliation required new political solutions. The foundation of the European Economic Community, an entirely unique form of organisation aimed at integrating the economies and, to some extent, the legal systems of a number of independent nation states, marks a turning point in the history of the continent. It prevents western Europe from regressing to earlier chauvinistic, aggressive and imperialistic mechanisms.

The exhibition here focuses on the key events in this process, ranging from the Hague Congress of 1948 to the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community, the failure of the European Defence Community, the Treaties of Rome, the establishment of a common agricultural policy, the Elysée Treaty, the 'empty chair crisis' and the first enlargement of the European Community in 1973.

BREAKING BOUNDARIES

Moving to the next theme, it will be seen that 1973 marks the end of the period of general prosperity and the beginning of a time of long-term economic instability, as a result of the worldwide economic recession, exploding energy costs and increased competition from overseas. With the oil crisis, Europe became aware of its energy dependency — and of the limits of its progress. The decline of the iron, coal and steel industries, which had formed the basis of the post-war boom and which had given rise to the European integration process, led to growing rates of unemployment in western Europe for the first time in 40 years, necessitating economic restructuring. Moreover, in the 1970s, widespread debate about 'guest workers' was to be heard, reflecting major social change and the deficiencies in the integration of migrants. Socialist countries, already concerned by their relative economic backwardness, proved to be inefficient and incapable of structural reform; the standard of living of their people worsened.

From the perspective of western Europe, the 1970s can be considered to be an age of mobilisation, driven to a great extent by the new generation who had not experienced World War II. The claims from all sides for greater participation and the voicing of new concerns for individual rights combined to undermine the democratic consensus which had characterised the previous years. The fall of the last western dictatorships in southern Europe finally brought the isolation of these countries to an end and led to their membership of the European Community.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe was a turning point in the constant confrontation of the two antagonistic camps in Europe, bringing about 'change through rapprochement'. The Helsinki Final Act of 1975, which, largely through the initiative of the European Community, established human rights as a basic norm, became a reference point for dissidents and opposition movements in eastern Europe: in the exhibition it serves as the starting point of the portrayal of the final decade of the socialist countries. Stagnation, the growing discrepancy between promise and reality and the erosion of public authority were palpable. People mobilised for more freedom, social justice and political reforms. These movements ultimately led to the 1989 revolutions and to the symbolism of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Cold War, which had dominated and immobilised the political situation in Europe for 45 years, came to an end.

The collapse of the Soviet Empire accelerated the European integration process. This is seen most clearly in the enlargement 'marathon', in the deepening of the supranational structures and the expansion of competence to more and more domains, thus enabling the erosion of political, geographical, economic and psychological boundaries. Europeanisation encompasses both integrative elements — the strengthening of intra-European connections and similarities — and disintegrative elements — the processes of delimitation and fragmentation.

The developments falling within the scope of 'breaking boundaries' are reflected in the milestones of European integration, ranging from 1974, when the European Council was established, to the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979, the achievement of the single market, the enlargement rounds of 1980–86 and 1995, and from the Treaty of Maastricht to the implementation of the Schengen Convention in 1995, the debate on a treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe and the enlargement marathon of 2004–07 and onwards to the future.

LOOKING AHEAD

This last theme differs from those which form the core of the visitor's historical itinerary through the House of European History. Whereas the first theme offered an introduction to the House, the last theme will offer a space in which the visit can be evaluated and deepened. It will engage and immerse the visitor in an active questioning process about the shared responsibility for important decisions and choices that continue to shape the history of Europe and its relationship with the rest of the world.

This theme will pose the following overall question to the visitor: what are the differing perceptions of the future held by Europeans? In response, it will explore with the visitor, for example, the role to be played by the nation state in the future: it will look at how Europe deals with diversity and will consider which issues are best dealt with at a European level. Topical and critical questions relating to the European Union's Member States will be tackled in the context of topics such as the economy, human rights, democracy, nationalism and diversity, all of which have deep roots in Europe and most of which visitors will have encountered frequently during their visit of the House of European History.

The visitor will be invited to immerse him/herself in the cultural sources of Europe by using a variety of interactive tools as sources of further experience, learning and research. To a greater extent than in the other parts of the exhibition, the visitor will here be encouraged to look more deeply into both historical and current issues, such as questions of European heritage and of what might contribute to a European identity. These questions will have been present as 'red threads' throughout the exhibition and, here, the visitor will be invited to get involved and answer the questions in a more interactive, hands-on and even playful setting.

Finally and crucially, and throughout the permanent exhibition of the House of European History, it will be shown that there is not one single, predetermined way of defining Europe — and that many combinations and permutations of factors are possible as well as differing individual and collective perceptions.

HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

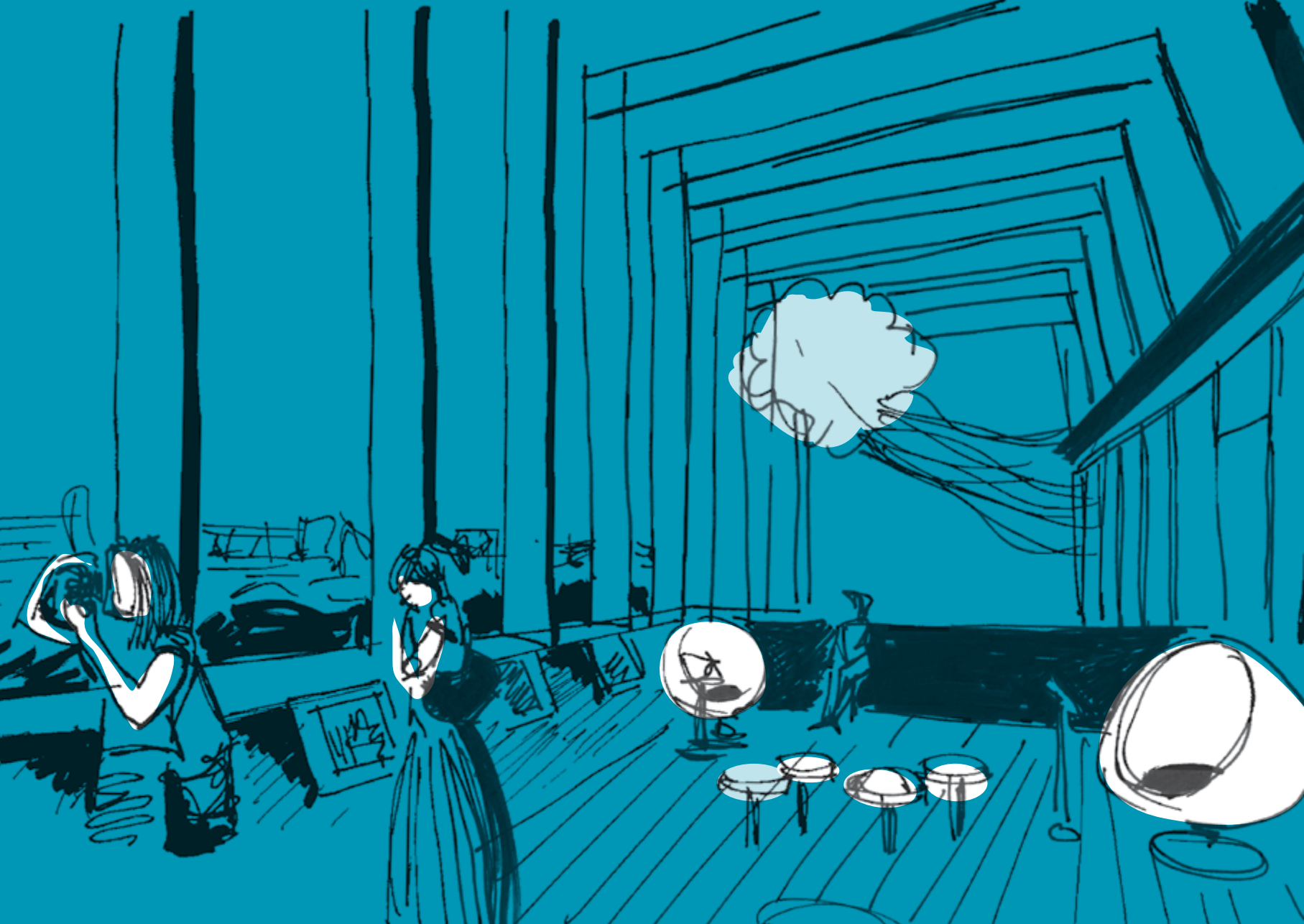
AN EXPERIENCE FOR ALL THE SENSES

The House of European History understands exhibitions to be communicators of ideas. The exhibitions will function as a medium which will allow visitors to understand the messages by means of a multisensory, participatory experience, while retaining the option of selecting their own physical or conceptual pathway. In order to provide a comfortable and inspirational setting for learning and enjoyment, the needs of the visitor will be central to the structure of the exhibition.

To facilitate this, repetition of a number of structural elements will be necessary, in order to assist visitors in finding their way around the exhibition and in devising their own pathway through it.

In order to offer visitors a varied experience, the atmosphere of the six main themes, laid out over the five floors of the building, will be developed using different moods. In this context, the first and last themes have specific functions: the first should inspire and motivate curiosity in a welcoming atmosphere, while the last theme should enable visitors to end their visits and reflect on their experience.

Different models of spatial typology have been defined for each theme. These conceptual models indicate the intuitive type of spatial organisation that at this stage seems most appropriate for the different chapters of the story. This typology will help guide the development of the concepts in space and ensure that each level possesses a spatial identity as well as a different thematic focus.



Variation of experience will be developed through changes in the density of objects and in the level of interactivity for each theme: the use of multimedia and technology will be varied according to the content. Taken together, these factors will help to create a more engaging and richer experience for all types of visitors.

HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

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FUTURE COLLECTIONS

As a new institution, the House of European History does not possess its own, pre-existing collection and it will have to build one, from the ground up.

The collection policy of the House of European History focuses on relevant tangible and intangible material from the 20th and 21st centuries, but will also seek to acquire suitable available material from previous centuries. The House of European History has a broad approach to the term 'collection', comprising objects, documents and archival material as tangible heritage, to be completed by records of intangible heritage.

The first phase of the building up of this collection, from 2012–14, will be focused on collecting material, on the basis of long- and short-term loans, which will directly support the permanent and the first temporary exhibition: during this period, the focus will be on evidential research into relevant material in European collections (and where necessary into collections outside Europe), as well as on collecting the objects needed for the permanent and the temporary exhibition.

A pilot project which looked into the possibilities for long-term loans was carried out in the summer of 2012. In the autumn of the same year, the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the European Union provided an opportunity for a collection exercise covering all of the official and unofficial events surrounding the award ceremony in Norway, as a result of which the first objects for the House of European History's collection were brought to Brussels.

*The new collection
will become the 'nucleus'
for a permanent reservoir of
shared European memory.*

The House of European History aims to use, insofar as possible, original objects to support the exhibition narrative. These will be selected for their capacity to convey meaningful messages and to offer an enriching visitor experience. In addition, recorded testimonies and personal stories will play an important role in conveying memories and depicting particular perspectives on historical events. The new collection will become the 'nucleus' for a permanent reservoir of shared European memory.

Items of evidence will be sought that have a proven association with a particular known individual, event, process or period in the history of Europe (a wide range of themes and items ranging from those used in everyday settings to objects of high cultural or artistic meaning and value) and that are considered significant by the House.

Visitors and institutions alike will be invited to contribute to future collections and projects: for this initiative, the online facility of the House of European History will play an important outreach and collection role.

A particular collection policy is being developed for collecting material and immaterial assets that will document the history of the European unification process.

The House of European History's collection policy will comply with the different regulations in force in the European Union on tangible and intangible heritage, and the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for Museums.

*Visitors and institutions alike
will be invited to contribute
to future collections and
projects.*

A CULTURAL LANDMARK

The House of European History will become a place for exploration, engagement and enjoyment. Its vision for the future is to become a permanent forum that offers everyone involved and interested in European history a platform to reflect, to learn, to debate and to share opinions and ideas. The House of European History will be a connecting link for institutions as well as for visitors and researchers.

It will be a centre of excellence, from which Europe's future will be envisaged in the context of its past, and in which reflection on the history of European integration and its position in our daily lives will be encouraged, enabled and sustained.



*The House of European History
will become a place for exploration,
engagement, and enjoyment.*

MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT

Responsibility for the House of European History is borne by the Bureau of the European Parliament, which steers several institutional structures.

The Bureau Contact Group for the House of European History, chaired by Vice-President Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, and composed of Vice-Presidents Isabelle Durant MEP, Georgios Papastamkos MEP, Gianni Pittella MEP, Alejo Vidal-Quadras MEP, Roberta Angelilli MEP and Bogusław Liberadzki MEP, provided early oversight of the project.

The relevant parliamentary committees are closely involved in the realisation of the House of European History. All financial aspects are dealt with by the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Budgetary Control. The Culture and Education Committee has supported the project and regularly monitors its progress.

The Board of Trustees, chaired by the former President of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering, is a body made up of high-level politicians and well-known public figures, bringing together several European institutions and the Brussels authorities. The major political families and the most important bodies of the Parliament are represented on the Board, which supervises the general management of the project and is advised by Harald Rømer, formerly Secretary-General of the Parliament. The Board has an advisory role and supervises the general management of the project.

The members of the Board are: Włodzimierz Borodziej, Étienne Davignon, Hans-Walter Hütter, Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Gérard Onesta, Doris Gisela Pack, Chrysoula Paliadeli, Charles Picqué, Alain Lamassoure, Wojciech Roszkowski, Peter Sutherland, Androulla Vassiliou, Diana Wallis and Francis Wurtz.

The Academic Committee, chaired by the historian Włodzimierz Borodziej and made up of historians and professionals from internationally renowned museums, plays a follow-up and advisory role on historical and museological transcription issues.

Its members are: Norman Davies, Hans-Walter Hütter, Matti Klinge, Anita Meinarte, Hélène Miard-Delacroix, Mary Michailidou, Oliver Rathkolb, Antonio Reis, Maria Schmidt, Jean-Pierre Verdier and Henk Wesseling.

The Academic Project Team of the House of European History is a unit within the General Secretariat of the Parliament, Directorate-General for Communication (Juana Lahousse-Juárez, Director-General), Directorate C for relations with the citizens (Stephen Clark, Director). The unit is led by historian and curator Taja Vovk van Gaal and is responsible for preparing the exhibitions and for structuring the future museum.

Its members are: Michèle Antoine, Erika Aronowitsch, Nicolas Auzanneau, Kieran Burns, Perikles Christodoulou, Étienne Deschamps, Hans de Waegeneer, Christine Dupont, Nathalie Duquesne, Ronald Evers, Martí Grau Segú, Anna Huth, Constanze Itzel, Pirjo Kemppainen, Sonia Marconi, Raili Minkinen, Andrea Mork, Françoise Petit, Elisabeth Pluijmen, Ollivier Rocher, Tessa Ryan, Raivis Simansons and Zofia Wóycicka.

The Building Team, responsible for the Eastman building, is part of the General Secretariat of the Parliament, Directorate-General for Infrastructure and Logistics (Constantin Stratigakis, Director-General), Directorate for Buildings Projects (Diogo Quintela, Director), Unit for Brussels Building Projects. This unit is headed by staff architect Xavier Lacroix who organised the initial architectural competition and is now charged with overseeing the execution of the renovation and extension project by the external architects.

Its members are: Dave Baudoux, Charalampos Chaitas, Florence Decrop, Andrew Kabelis, Philippe Masson, Jean-Pierre Pamart, Ricardo Quiros Lazaro and Danièle Van de Lanotte.

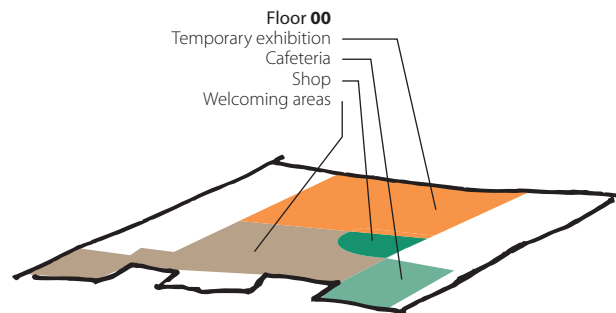
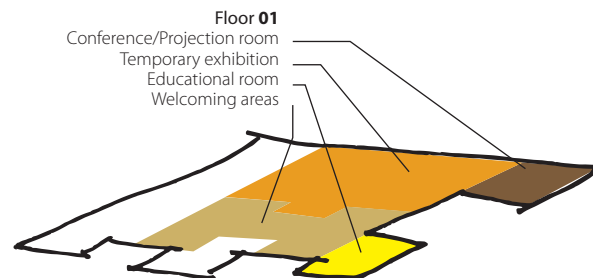
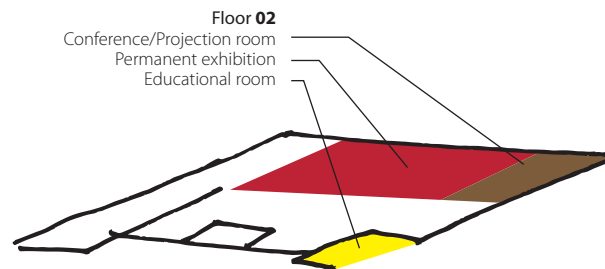
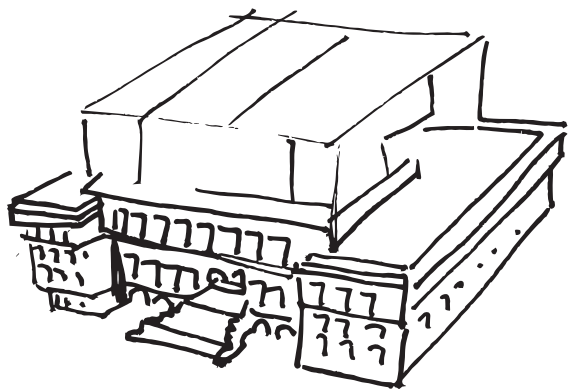
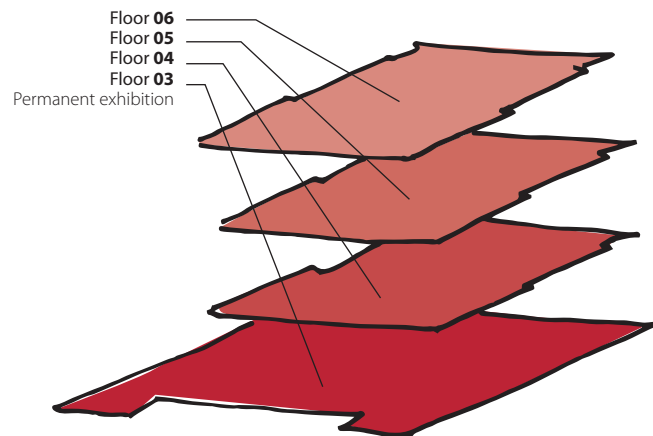
The House of European History works closely together with the other Directorates-General of the Parliament's General Secretariat — especially the Directorate-General for Finance, the Directorate-General for Translation, the Directorate-General for Personnel, the Directorate-General for Innovation and Technological Support and the Directorate-General for Interpretation and Conferences.

The European Parliament has been assisted by BL Associates (France) in its work on the museography. The preliminary concept design has been developed with studioDiem (United Kingdom).

On 26 March 2013, the European Parliament signed a contract with General de Producciones y Diseño, a museum design company based in Seville, Spain.

HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY





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