

# IDENTITY ON THE LINE

**FINAL CONFERENCE**

**«The Migratory Experience: Adopting a three-generational Perspective»**

**Brussels, Norway House, 26th of April 2023**



Co-funded by  
the European Union

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**Project leader // Vest-Agder Museum**

# IDENTITY ON THE LINE

A large-scale cooperation project **between six cultural history museums and one university, working together to explore the long-term consequences of seven different migration processes, forced or voluntary, which took place in Europe over the last 100 years.**

Through the **collection and dissemination of experiences from former migrants and their descendants, summarised and placed in factual historical contexts, we will unfold and transmit common features of migration from past to future generations.**

**Our priority is to reinforce the sense of belonging to a common European space for contemporary migrants, to those who have settled and their hosting communities.**

**Project period: September 2019 – August 2023**

**Co-funded by the Creative Europe Program of the European Union with 1,28 Million Euro**

**Total budget: 2,56 Million Euro**

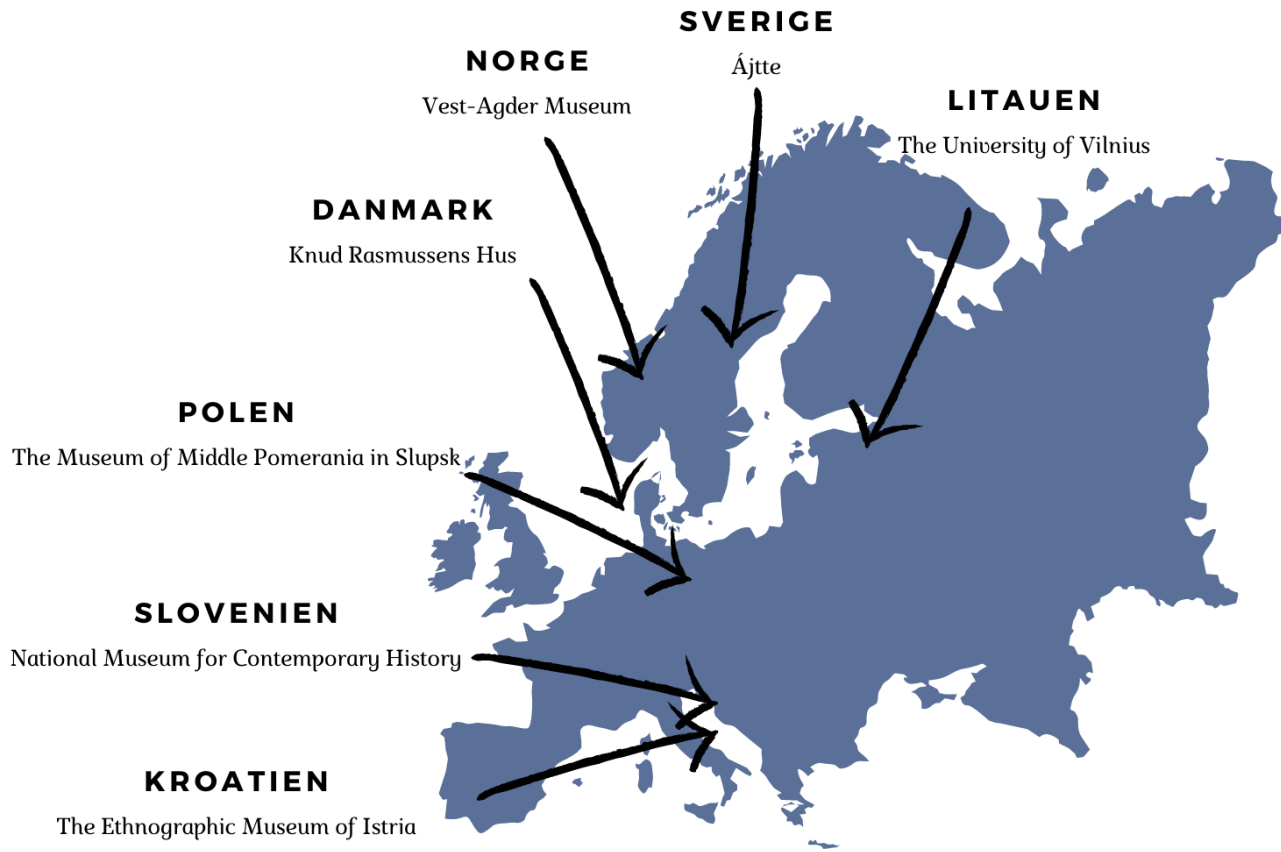


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# PE: DOCUMENTING THE HISTORY OF ISTRIA

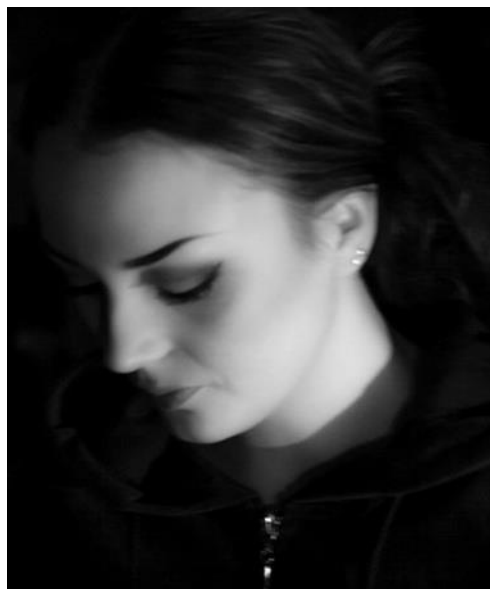
The history of Istria is a complex one, shaped by the influence of the Roman Empire, the Venetian Republic, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The impact of the 20th century's independence and the World War II migrants is also a significant part of the region's history.



# IDENTITY ON THE LINE



**1st generation**



**2nd generation**



**3rd generation**

**In sum, 164 interviews were conducted, each 2 to 15 hours long.**

**62 quotes are presented in I-ONs joint exhibition.**

# 164 PERSONAL STORIES FROM 7 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES



INFORMANT DESCRIPTION AND  
with her mother as a little girl and liv

PHOTO CAPTION: A cookbook Dr  
kept by the National Museum of Con

Prepared by the National Museum c

*"This book is almost as old as I am. My mother took it with her in  
1975 when she came to Slovenia carrying me and one suitcase. [...]*

*I think that for my mother it represents a link to her home, because  
at that time women went ... in search of a way to earn their daily  
bread ... my mother went alone and settled down here. [...]*

*[...] What I remember most about those days is the smell of home  
cooked food: chicken soup, wild cherny steudel ... the smell of home*



*"We stayed in Trieste for three days, at the Silos, we  
slept on the floor, right on the floor, without blankets,  
nothing... Just like animals... you can imagine the  
pain my mother and father experienced ..."*

*I was young, what did I know? Yes, I understand, at  
13 you can understand something, but never the pain  
of having to leave your home, your property, like your*



*"Slovenia, my new country, did not want me. Or, amidst the  
uncertainty of a newly formed country, it did not wish me well.*

*Years of complete uncertainty followed, without any valid  
documents, health insurance, or social as well as physical security.  
Gray years, years of struggle. Struggles for survival, struggles for  
identity.*

*As I was losing battle after battle against the almighty bureaucracy  
p. length, perseverance, love, empathy,  
ive. (...)"*



lived in Slovenia for eight years without

p. signed by his friends and supporters.



INFORMANT AND CONTEXT: Bo  
father, who moved to Slovenia, wher

PHOTO CAPTION: Graffiti reading  
the inhabitants of Slovenia originatin  
the left, an effigy of Rudolf Maister (a  
patriotic icon. 2014, Slovenia. Photo

Prepared by the National Museum c



*al Dane'. I had no contact with  
ot a 'real Greenlander' either. I was in  
eel that I've been in that No Man's Land*

*I [in Denmark]. I always felt like I had  
I, there were not many with an ethnic  
Southern Jutland, so people looked at*

*ay the mask and finding out who I am."*

ark). Daughter of a Greenlandic  
ited Greenland as an adult, travelling

ks with masks creatively and found out  
to by Klara-Sofie Rosing Birkeblad.



INFORMANT AND CONTEXT: Yehudit (Dita) Sperling-Zupovitz, age 99 (Lithuania).  
Survivor of the Kaunas ghetto and the Stutthof Concentration Camp.

PICTURE CAPTION: Lipstick belonging to Yehudit (Dita) Sperling-Zupovitz. 2021, Lithuania.  
Photo by Tomas Kapočius, private collection.

Prepared by the University of Vilnius, Lithuania



INFORMANT AND CONTEXT: Joanna Rutkowska, age 37 (Poland). Joanna's parents and grandparents came to  
Pomerania from different parts of Poland. Joanna's mother was born and raised in Słupsk, as was Joanna, and both  
live there to this day.

PICTURE CAPTION: Joanna Rutkowska's grandparents wedding photo. 1948, Poland. Private collection.

Prepared by the Museum of Middel Pomerania, Słupsk, Polen



INFORMANT AND CONTEXT: Woman, age 94 (Norway). She was abandoned by her family and local society  
when she married a German soldier. Back in Norway, she had to suppress her feelings in order to manage to cope  
with feelings of exclusion and loneliness. That in turn affected her daughter, who felt lonely and silenced.

PICTURE SUBTITLE: A box that contained all of the items the German soldier and the Norwegian woman ever  
shared. He kept it as sacred all his life, despite her going back to Norway a few years after the wedding. 2020,  
Norway. Private collection.

Prepared by the Vest-Agder Museum, Norway



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**POLARITIES**

**TRANSFER OF FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOUR**

THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL SOCIETIES?

ANGER

GUILT

SHAME

EXCLUSION

**RACISM**

**RESILIENCE**

HUMANITY

LONELINESS

VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR AS A COPING MECHANISM, THAT IS PASSED ON?

# Findings & Recommendations

# I-@N

Policy Recommendations

## MITIGATING THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR AND FORCED MIGRATION FROM A CULTURAL HERITAGE PERSPECTIVE



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**1** Painful memories and trauma resulting from war and forced migration can be passed down from one generation to the next, particularly when they are not openly addressed and kept a secret. They continue to impact identity formation, family relations, and societal cohesion.

**2** The transgenerational trauma transfer has been observed within families of both victims of injustice and abuse, as well as those who have committed actions that are condemned by society or law. This challenges the stereotypical victim-perpetrator dichotomy.

**3** The stereotyping and Othering that is prevalent in public discourse, contribute to continuous marginalization and disenfranchisement of migrants and their descendants.

**4** Governing bodies and local hosting communities play a crucial role in either mitigating or perpetuating the negative consequences of traumatic experiences, for example by implementing, maintaining, or terminating practices and policies that lead marginalised groups and individuals to feel lonely and excluded.

**5** Facilitating access to information through cultural heritage initiatives can play a crucial role in supporting collective healing. With public attention and a balanced display of historical events, we can contribute to the wellbeing of former migrants and their descendants, as well as promote the social integration of contemporary ones.

## OVERALL FINDINGS

**RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF WAR AND FORCED MIGRATION BY ALWAYS APPLYING A THREE-GENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE.**

This shift in perspective is necessary in all public discourse, political work, media communication, and professional approaches when dealing with individuals and societies marked by traumatic events. War and forced migration impact not only the current generation, but also future generations, inter-familial relationships, and interactions within affected societies.

**INTENSIFY EFFORTS TO PROVIDE MULTIDISCIPLINARY SUPPORT AFTER COLLECTIVE TRAUMA; SUPPORT BY CULTURAL MEDIATORS, ETHNOLOGISTS, ANTHROPOLOGISTS, HISTORIANS, SOCIOLOGIST, IDEALLY IN COLLABORATION WITH PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHIATRISTS.**

The possibilities of cultural history museums and related professions to address the silence that often follows collective trauma for decades are neither properly explored nor taken advantage of. Museums can initiate discussions based on an objective display of historical events, provide safe spaces to share personal narratives, as well as places for dialogue.

In a world where millions of people are affected by war and forced migration, all professions that can support many individuals at the same time must be set in motion.

**SUPPORT AND ENABLE PROFESSIONALS AND INSTITUTIONS WORKING WITH CULTURAL HERITAGE TO RAISE PUBLIC ATTENTION TOWARDS SENSITIVE AND CONTESTED HISTORICAL EVENTS AND APPLY A MULTIVOCAL PERSPECTIVE.**

Museums and related professions have unique possibilities to collect and display personal narratives about controversial or sensitive parts of history and provide new approaches to learning and understanding. To achieve this, adequate working conditions, proper training, and project funding are necessary.

Capacity-building initiatives and multidisciplinary university programs for cultural professionals should focus on sensitive narrative facilitation and participatory research approaches, and intensify efforts. Additionally, more effective financial mechanisms should be implemented to better support cultural institutions working with migration and sensitive heritage.

**INTENSIFY INITIATIVES ON SOCIETAL AND POLITICAL LEVELS TO DIMINISH ALL FORMS OF STEREOTYPING OF MIGRANTS**

The significant role that local hosting societies and governing bodies can play in contributing to the well-being of individuals and successful integration of all members cannot be overstated. Efforts to end the marginalization and disenfranchisement of migrants and their descendants should be intensified and included in political strategies and programs.

Minorities must be systematically included in discussions, co-created projects, and participatory approaches to ensure that a diverse range of opinions and perspectives are represented.

**INITIATE FURTHER RESEARCH ON HOW PUBLIC INTERPRETATION AND DISPLAY OF CONTESTED HISTORY CAN POSITIVELY IMPACT INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETAL PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING.**

There is a growing awareness of the crucial role art and culture can play in improving health and wellbeing for individuals and societies. However, the specific health effects of addressing the silence that follows collective trauma, for individuals and societies, have yet to be adequately examined. This work should start as soon as possible, and should be measured in light of the SDGs of Agenda 2030, especially SDG 16, but also 10, 11 and 17.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

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# Findings



1. Painful memories and trauma resulting from war and forced migration can be passed down from one generation to the next, particularly when they are not openly addressed and kept a secret. They continue to impact identity formation, family relations, and societal cohesion.
2. The transgenerational trauma transfer has been observed within families of both victims of injustice and abuse, as well as those who have committed actions that are condemned by society or law. This challenges the stereotypical victim-perpetrator dichotomy.
3. The stereotyping and Othering that is prevalent in public discourse, contribute to continuous marginalization and disenfranchisement of migrants and their descendants.
4. Governing bodies and local hosting communities play a crucial role in either mitigating or perpetuating the negative consequences of traumatic experiences, for example by implementing, maintaining, or terminating practices and policies that lead marginalised groups and individuals to feel lonely and excluded.
5. Facilitating access to information through cultural heritage initiatives can play a crucial role in supporting collective healing. Public attention and a balanced display of historical events, we can contribute to the wellbeing of former migrants and their descendants, as well as promote the social integration of contemporary ones.





# 7 LOCAL EXHIBITIONS

# 1 TRAVELING JOINT EXHIBITION



# 10 COUNTRIES

# DIGITAL JOINT EXHIBITION

IDENTITY  
ON THE  
LINE

~~YOUR STORIES~~

~~STORIES~~

~~HISTORICAL CONTEXT~~

~~ABOUT~~

~~I-ON~~



SHARE your STORY

HERE

I-@N

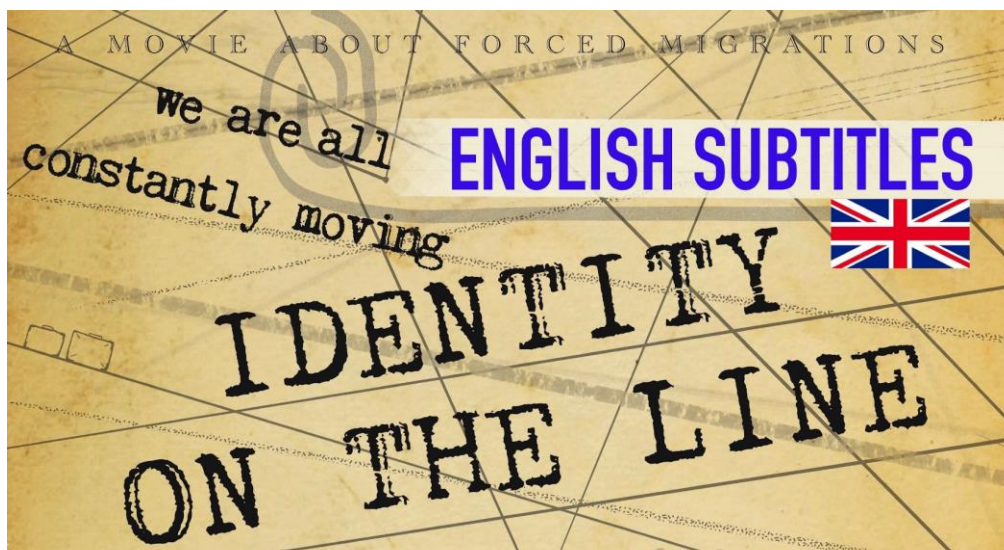
[www.identityontheline.eu](http://www.identityontheline.eu)



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**9 MOVIES**  
IN 8 LANGUAGES

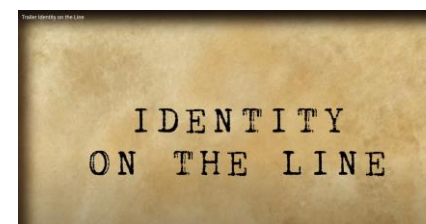
**DIGITAL**  
**PACKAGES**



**1 MOVIE, 45 min**  
*8 languages*

**1 TRAILER**

**7 MOVIES, 5 min each**  
*8 languages*



**GUIDED  
VISITS to  
places of  
Rememberance**

**WEBINARS/  
LECTURES**

**WORKSHOPS**

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# SCHOOL PACKAGES



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## 8 LANGUAGES

# SPIN-OFFs SO FAR

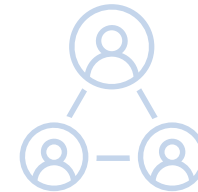
- @ A continuously increasing network of colleagues interested in the same topic
- @ New research project “What happens to the Untold?” (Norway)
- @ New concepts of collaboration with informants (Slovenia)
- @ New concepts to reaching out to children and students (Poland and Lithuania)
- @ Collaborating with an Ukrainian film producer, documenting Crimean Tatars
- @ Addressing colleagues and politicians in Brussels, 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2023

# OUTREACH

3000 professionals in Europe have learned about I-ON



1.500.000 we have reached with our Social Media



Impact

More than 60.000 visitors to the local and joint exhibitions



8.000.000 have seen our news in seven countries



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**EMA**  
**10.09.22**



*The European Museum Academy Prize recognises the outstanding results of organisations, researchers and cultural institutions in creating pioneering museums, or producing studies and carrying on projects of European relevance destined to influence the development of museological discourse at the international level.*

In 2022, the EMA Board has decided to give the EMA Prize to I-ON, pointing out that:

- The project unfolds common features of migration and its impact on future generations: children and grandchildren. It is about identities, basic human rights, discrimination. It is all about so-called difficult history.
- The impressive outcome is a joint travelling exhibition, separate exhibitions in all countries concerned, publications, webinars, school packages and so on. It shows what mid-sized museums can achieve.
- The project is for sure an important contribution to the understanding of the history of migration in the 20th century, thanks to its international exposure Europe-wide.

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# OUR TEAM



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# **«The Migratory Experience: Adopting a three-generational Perspective»**

**Main question we want to explore today:**

***Why is a three-generational perspective important to adopt, and how could this be done?***

- a) *Process & findings from Slovenia, Croatia, Norway, Lithuania, Poland, Denmark and Sweden*
- b) *Launching of «Crimean Tatars»*
- c) *Keynote by Dr. Wiebke Sievers  
Senior Researcher at the Austrian Academy of Science in Vienna*

***16:30 – 18:30: High-level roundtable at the European Parliament***

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