



Memory Lab - Workshop

**“Wake up Europe, Sarajevo Calling”  
Connecting Local History and International Perspectives**

Sarajevo 26-29 June 2017

Organized by the History Museum Bosnia and Herzegovina,  
in cooperation with the Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft

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**A. Background and aims of the project**

In the year 2003 the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina inaugurated its permanent exhibition *Besieged Sarajevo*.<sup>1</sup> The exhibition deals with the daily life of Sarajevo and its inhabitants during the 1992-1995-siege, focusing on creativity, resilience and survival in most difficult circumstances. The story of Sarajevo and its citizens is told through various documents, photos, articles, and objects, from which many have been donated to the Museum following a public call to the citizens of Sarajevo to bring objects they had used during the siege. In last fourteen years many school classes, groups and individuals, both from Bosnia and Herzegovina and from abroad, have visited and worked with the exhibition.

Twenty-five years after the beginning of the war and fourteen years since the exhibition inauguration, the Museum team has decided to revisit and rethink the exhibition. The core

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina see <http://muzej.ba/>

topic – the life and survival of the inhabitants of Sarajevo during the siege – will be maintained, nevertheless, there is undoubtedly a potential to develop the exhibition further, particularly regarding its content, structure, design and educational uses. Having in mind new socio-political context and time-distance to the war, it would be worth discussing the aims of the exhibition and how it can contribute more to a constructive dialogue about the war and the siege. At the same time, the museum team is convinced that the experiences of the siege of Sarajevo have, beyond Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, also European and universal importance, and this is to be more emphasized at the exhibition. Sarajevo's war experience and experience in dealing with its past can be widely used, and the status of Sarajevo in the international culture of memory can help to illustrate and to teach about different aspects of dealing with war and post-war societies and challenges within a rapidly changing world.

The development and rethinking of the exhibition « Besieged Sarajevo » is a process which will include different steps and is currently in its initial stage. The Memory Lab-workshop „*Wake up Europe, Sarajevo calling*“- *Connecting Local History and International Perspectives* is conceived to be part of this process. The aim of this two-days-workshop in June 2017 is to gather curators, historians, educators and architects from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the region and wider Europe, in order to elaborate concrete recommendations for the development and rethinking of the exhibition “Besieged Sarajevo”.

History Museum of BiH in Sarajevo is an active member of *Memory Lab – Trans- European Exchange Platform on History and Remembrance* and has in this framework developed a lot of contacts with other organisations in the Western Balkans and in Western/Central Europe, as with the *Memorial de la Shoah* in Paris, *Buchenwald Memorial* or *EUROM (European Observatory on Memories)*.<sup>2</sup> By developing different projects and activities with international partners, seminars, trainings, workshops, the Museum is continuously seeking to find its place and relevance in the international context.

The title of the workshop „*Wake up Europe, Sarajevo Calling*” refers to a postcard created during the siege by the design group TRIO from Sarajevo which constituted a call for solidarity of the besieged city to the European public. This postcard illustrates the European dimension of the siege of Sarajevo, and also how important it remains today to involve Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Western Balkans actively in the field of dealing with the past. Therefore, the title “*Wake up Europe, Sarajevo calling*“ - *Connecting Local History and International Perspectives* – best summarizes how this workshop aims to link international and local dimensions in two respects: on one hand, by bringing together experts from the local, regional and international level, with their respective knowhow, experiences and perspectives, and on the other hand, by working on the question how the history and the memories of the siege of Sarajevo can be embedded in the European/international context.

The local-international cooperation in the framework of this exhibition may also go beyond the workshop in June. At the end of the workshop it will also be discussed in which forms the cooperation could be continued in the next steps of redesign of the exhibition. One possibility could be that participants of the workshop become members of an international advisory board, which the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina intends to constitute.

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<sup>2</sup> For more information about Memory Lab see <http://memorylab-europe.eu/>

The importance of the Memory Lab-workshop „*Wake up Europe, Sarajevo calling*“ - *Connecting Local History and International Perspectives* consists not only in the fact that it will very concretely contribute to the development of the exhibition « Besieged Sarajevo » but it will also contribute to more general discussions such as: How to bring together local and international perspectives in exhibitions on historical topics? How can young people be stimulated to critically reflect on history, and how can the work on historical topics be linked to current issues? How to deal with difficult and sensitive historical topics so that they do not deepen existing divisions but contribute to a constructive dialogue? Therefore, a report about the results and experiences of the workshop will be published at the Memory Lab-website, making it in that way accessible to a larger public.

## **B. Participants**

15 persons – museum professionals from the History Museum of BiH, and curators, historians, educators and architects from the Western Balkans and from the European Union. Participants of the workshop will be directly invited by the organizers; interested candidates can also apply through an Open Call published at the Memory Lab – website <http://memorylab-europe.eu/>.

## **C. Dates and working venue:**

26-29 June 2017, History Museum Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo

## **D. Working steps:**

1. Prior to the workshop, the participants will receive information and material about the exhibition « Besieged Sarajevo »

2. Inventory analysis of: a) existing exhibition, b) experiences with the exhibition since its opening 2003, for example concerning visitors, challenges, work with the local community, etc. c) the socio-political context and its evolution from the siege until today.

3. On the basis of the inventory analysis: discussion about desirable /possible evolution of the exhibition, especially regarding the following points:

- the main message of the exhibition
- the aims of the exhibition
- the content of the exhibition
- the structure of the exhibition
- the design of the exhibition
- the methods of presentation

The following questions will be discussed in particular:

- How to deal with sensitive and controversial topics which concern the history of the siege?

- How could the international dimensions of the siege be (re)presented (as the presence and role of the UN, or solidarity actions of committed international citizens with the besieged city)?
- How can the siege of Sarajevo be connected with other historical/current events in other countries / regions?
- How can the exhibition be connected with pedagogical activities?

4. Elaboration of concrete proposals / recommendations for the development of the exhibition.

### **E. Preliminary program:**

#### Monday 26 June:

Arrival of the participants

#### Tuesday 27 June

##### *Morning session:*

- Presentation of the project, mutual presentation of the participants
- Inventory analysis of the existing exhibition and the current state of affairs (on the basis of material sent before and visit of the exhibition) – first part

Lunch

##### *Afternoon session:*

- Inventory analysis of the exhibition and the current state of affairs / Second part
- Discussion (in parallel groups) about the possible development of the exhibition – first part

Dinner

#### Wednesday, 28 June:

##### *Morning session:*

- Discussion (in parallel groups) about the possible development of the exhibition – second part

- Presentation of the working results of the different groups / gathering and synthesis of the different results

Lunch

##### *Afternoon session:*

- Formulation of proposals / recommendations for the development of the exhibition
- Evaluation of the workshop and discussion about possible next steps

Dinner

#### Thursday, 29 June:

Departure

### **F. Working language:**

English

**G. Practical information:**

Hotel-accommodation and the meals during the program will be covered by the organizers.

**H. Coordination / Contact:**

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Postcard created by TRIO, Sarajevo, 1993