



**UNREST**  
Grant Agreement No. 693523  
Stakeholder Newsletter  
October 2017- January 2018



# **UNREST**

## **Unsettling Remembering and Social Cohesion in Transnational Europe**

**Title of this document:**  
**Stakeholder Newsletter**  
**October 2017 - January 2018**

<b>Due Date:</b>	Month 22 (January 2018)
<b>Related WP:</b>	WP5 - Communication and training impact Sub - WP5.1: Knowledge Exchange and Dissemination of Project Findings
<b>Leading Project Partner(s)</b>	UBAT
<b>Contributing Partner(s)</b>	RUB
<b>Leading Author(s)</b>	David Clarke
<b>Contributing Author(s)</b>	Stefan Berger, Nina Weeke
<b>Dissemination Level</b>	PU: Public

**Abstract:** Description of work for Sub - WP5.1

Identify and engage stakeholders through a series of activities designed to maximise the impact of the project and its responsiveness to the needs of potential end users.

<b>Name of Research Project</b>	UNREST (GA - No.: 693523)
<b>Responsible Unit/ Project officer:</b>	REA/B/03 Cristina Marcuzzo
<b>Call:</b>	H2020-REFLECTIVE-2014-2015
<b>Topic:</b>	REFLECTIVE-5-2015 - The cultural heritage of war in contemporary Europe
<b>Type of Action:</b>	RIA
<b>Starting date:</b>	01/04/2016
<b>Duration:</b>	36 months



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## **Key Topics of the Stakeholder Newsletter October 2017 – January 2018**

### **Workpackage 2: Theory and Methodology, Workpackage 3: Mass Graves and Exhumations, Workpackage 4: War Museums, Workpackage 6: Creation of cultural events**

On 10-11 January 2018, UNREST researchers met in Bath to discuss the continuing development of the project's theoretical framework. Responding to the helpful feedback provided by European Commission academic assessors, who participated in the first annual review of the project's work, the team spent two productive days in a workshop held at the University of Bath.

Topics covered included the practical application of the project's theoretical terminology to the analysis of war museums and exhumations, and presentations from WP6, giving updates on the outcomes of the play commissioned by the project and planned exhibition at the Ruhr Museum in Essen. In particular, the team agreed to look more closely at the question of emotion in responses to various memory products, setting up a small working group to engage with interdisciplinary scholarship on the politics of emotion.



UNREST researchers discuss the development of our theoretical framework and its practical applications



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## **Workpackage 5: Communication and Training Impact**

### **Memory Studies Association Conference**

UNREST presented some of its intermediary findings at the Memory Studies Association Conference in Copenhagen in mid-December 2017. The panel was well attended by approximately 50 scholars and resulted in a lively discussion. The presentations were as follows:

First, there was a presentation on the theoretical framework of the UNREST project. Stefan Berger (Bochum) presented the basic rationale of this Horizon 2020-funded project, using a powerpoint presentation originally prepared by Hans Lauge Hansen (Aarhus). It starts from the observation that the EU has fostered the foundational myth of the union itself as a story of transnational reconciliation and peace and relies upon a consensual approach to the traumatic memories of the conflicts of the past (especially the two World Wars and the Holocaust) as the basis of social cohesion. On the other hand, populist and nationalist movements use the heritage of war and violent conflicts in opposition to the official narrative of the united Europe, in ways which risk fueling tension both within and across nation-states. UNREST pursues a third memory way, which acknowledges and engages with wide spread memory discontent without losing sight of fundamental EU ideals. We call this third way agonistic memory. It designates a new mode of remembrance which embraces political conflict as an opportunity for emotional and ethical growth. Building on the work of Chantal Mouffe, Anna Bull and Hans Lauge Hansen, he presented various modes of remembering past conflicts, distinguishing between antagonistic, cosmopolitan and agonistic remembering.

Subsequently, Marije Hristova (Madrid) presented the work that has been carried out within UNREST on mass grave exhumations in Bosnia, Poland, and Spain. She proposed to develop the dynamics behind UNREST's theoretical framework when it comes to temporality (diachronic) and scale (synchronic). On the ground the research team found that different memory agents might develop various memory strategies and plots, depending on the situation. That is, they found in their field work that the memory frameworks do not only change and develop in multiple directions over time, but that they can also coexist simultaneously in the "voice" of one memory agent and in the relationships and tensions between different memory agents. Depending on which scale is analyzed the memory discourses and debates that are surrounding the exhumations - at the site, in the media, in the parliament, etc. - the memory plots are changing. The team's ethnographic work shows that the cosmopolitan and agonistic memory regimes proposed in the theoretical framework usually do not appear in "pure" formats, but at times coexist, overlap and even merge.

To give an example based on the Spanish case-study, the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory (ARMH) employs mainly a cosmopolitan memory framework focussing on the victims of Francoism and their families while using transnational strategies related to a framework of human rights. Simultaneously, however, and in a very agonistic way, the exhumations they carry out and their memory work in general challenges the hegemonic memory narrative established during the Spanish Transition to Democracy which underlines the existence of perpetrators and victims on



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"both sides" of the conflict and maintains a discursive silence on the left-wing victims, still buried in unmarked graves. In doing so, they denounce the constructed nature of the "regime of 1978" as a politically motivated memorial plot and constantly expose its contradictions and limitations in order to promote reflexive and critical thinking and build counter-hegemony.

Exhumations of unmarked graves, in that sense, can be understood as agonistic fora (see also the relation between forensics and fora in the definition of the forensic turn in the work of Eyal Weizman). In the case of Spain, these forensic fora repoliticize the past and break the consensus installed during the transition to democracy. Contrariwise, however, when looking at contemporary exhumations of the so-called Cursed Soldiers in Poland, we see that this is not always the case. In Poland, the exhumations are used to construct a mainly antagonistic and nationalist discourse of belonging in which the Cursed Soldiers are the heroes embodying Poland's anti-communist and catholic essence, challenging Polish and European cosmopolitan memory discourses. Yet they do so by using some of the arguments usually utilized in cosmopolitan frameworks, mostly those related to human rights and the primacy of victimhood and mourning. The contradictions in the field therefore show us that the three memory modes do not exist independently, but in a relational way reacting to the specific type of hegemonic discourse. That is why the research team sees cemeteries and exhumations sites as potential agonistic spaces, which however can also be deployed in all kinds of modes.



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### **Public Workshop at the University of Bath**

On 9 January 2018, a public workshop, ‘The UNREST project: Testing modes of memory in war museums and sites of mass exhumations’, was held at the University of Bath, featuring presentations from UNREST researchers, followed by responses from Bath colleagues.

The event was attended by researchers and doctoral students from UK universities including Bath, Bristol, and Nottingham Trent University, who engaged in a lively discussion with the UNREST team. The audience were particularly interested to hear how the UNREST theoretical framework might be productively applied beyond the case studies that are part of the UNREST project, which is a very positive sign for the potential impact of UNREST’s work.



Presenters and discussants prepare to discuss the results of the UNREST project so far.