EUROPEAN
POLICYBRIEF

Critical Heritage and Education in Multicultural Europe
January 2019

This policy brief responds to the changing multi-cultural landscape of European education, recommending policy-makers, education and heritage professionals to take action to strengthen senses of place and belonging in classrooms through active participation in heritage practices and the use of new media.

This Policy Brief is relevant for:

POLITICIANS AND POLICY-MAKERS	because	it proposes new policy initiatives in the educational and heritage sectors that strengthens the sense of place and belonging in multicultural classrooms across Europe.
HERITAGE AND MUSEUM SECTORS	because	it presents recommendations as how to address and navigate the increasingly multicultural landscape of contemporary Europe.
EDUCATORS	because	it recommends new digital initiatives for use in the classroom in order to increase engagement with European heritages.

Recommendations – on the basis of the research undertaken by CoHERE's work package 5 on 'Education and Heritage':

- **Recommendation 1:** Implementation of specific modules on cultural heritage that emphasise multiple narratives and senses of place formal education across Europe.

- **Recommendation 2:** Facilitation of physical and digital meetings and virtual classrooms among students across Europe going beyond traditional forms of formal learning by combining networks, partners and exchanges.

CoHERE: Critical Heritages – performing and representing identities in Europe, seeks to explore and analyse productions and meanings of the European past in the present. Heritage is made in the myriad practices and cultural forms where the past is valorised for the present, from folk traditions to museums and memorials, the management of historic sites and traditions, and everyday matters such as education, political discourse, home life, food consumption and people's relations with place. Likewise, contemporary connections with events, cultures and sites from prehistory to the very recent past may all be important for the construction of identities, values and futures.

Overview – Immigration and multiculturalism are rapidly changing the educational and heritage landscapes of Europe, in the process challenging many orthodox, generic stories about the continent's historical, cultural and normative roots.

In order to respond to these changes in the educational and heritage landscape, CoHERE's work package 5 on 'Education and Heritage' has investigated how different identities in Europe are shaped within both formal and informal learning settings, conducting extensive fieldwork in Denmark, Greece, Latvia, Spain, Turkey and the UK.

The work has focused in particular on how senses of place and belonging can be strengthened through critical, inclusive approaches to heritage and the integration of new media.

A key result of this research is that **active participation** in heritage production (both in- and outside the classroom) **effectively enhances a feeling of belonging** (Lake, Treimane and Vinogradova 2018).

This policy brief presents two recommendations as how to navigate the multicultural landscape of European education and heritage.

Introduction - Education is key to developing and understanding who we are and where we belong, not least in the increasingly multicultural context of contemporary Europe (Tecmen 2018).

Indeed, in recent years immigration and multiculturalism have changed the social, cultural and religious make-up of European classrooms and heritage sites, challenging both traditional heritage education and our perceptions of heritage. Yet the established orthodox, generic stories about Europe's historical, cultural and normative roots that are presented in both classrooms and at heritage sites do not embrace this new landscape and is as such counterproductive, being exclusive rather than inclusive.

> Heritage education has the potential to enhance **a sense of European identity**. It is especially critical due to the rise of populist political discourse which often fails to acknowledge the diversity of heritages within Europe.

Based on this research, we propose a set of recommendations on how educational and heritage institutions can contribute to **enhancing senses of place and belonging across a multicultural and diverse Europe**.

Research findings – CoHERE's work package 5 has examined how cultural heritage shapes different identities in Europe, representing ideas of place, history, traditions and how sense of belonging are constructed, performed and understood in formal and informal education.

> Education constitutes the traditional setting for identity constructions in a national framework throughout Europe and as such offers **enormous potential** as the venue for enhancing a sense of different European identities and heritages.

This research shows that the changing socio-economic human geography of Europe as well as a changing idea of Europe itself has not been effectively implemented in educational resources and heritage places throughout Europe (Galani, Mavrikaki and Skordoulis 2018).

Furthermore, formal education exposes students only to a limited extent to the diversity of European cultural heritages and identities. Even the traditional, normative narratives of a common European past like the Classical Greek and Roman cultures do not automatically contribute to European identity building or belonging (Funder, Kristensen and Nørskov 2019).

Finally, the research has exposed that active participation in cultural heritage production **heightens awareness of place** and **increases the sense of belonging and European identity** (Lake, Treimane and Vinogradova 2018), showing the potential of new initiatives within this field.

On the basis of our research, we thus propose two recommendations that will contribute to a strengthened sense of belonging and identity in European education and heritage:

Recommendation 1: Implementation of specific modules on cultural heritage that emphasise multiple narratives and senses of place in formal education across Europe

Cultural heritage is generally addressed in a large range of subjects in formal education, focusing on national heritage in particular. However, CoHERE's research has shown that it is partly incidental how and how much this is included. Key notions, such as European cultural heritage and the "European Other" are largely unexplored, thus leaving little to explore the diversity of European identities and heritages.

Figure 1: Five themes of Geography and Heritage

We therefore recommend the **development of specific, formalised modules for secondary school children that focus on cultural heritage** and especially the diversity and complexities of European cultures and heritages. This would open for multiple interpretations and narratives of Europe and European history, as well as emphasise the sense of place for the students that is essential to comprehend not only the world's systemic interactions, but also historical, geographical and social interconnections between places, regions, and continents.

A geographical grounding in location and place helps students to comprehend individual components of European heritage, and how the past and present blend together in their everyday lives.

Recommendation 2: Facilitation of physical and digital meetings and virtual classrooms among students across Europe going beyond traditional forms of education by combining networks, partners and exchanges

Identity formation is not space-independent, since it also emerges through socio–spatial interactions, following a bottom-up process. **This process of identity formation should be enhanced**, especially since young people build their understandings through their personal experiences.

Contact with places and people across Europe and the participation in heritage productions have positive effects on the construction of European identity. This participation could

prevent the lack of a connection of European inhabitants with the continent (sense of place), which results in poor feelings of a European identity (Galani, Mavrikaki and Skourdoulis 2018).

We therefore recommend facilitation of such practical experiences through **active participation** in the direct interaction of students with other places and people or through an indirect interaction, **taking advantage of Information Technology (IT).**

Exchange programmes among schools should be supported and combined with a technological platform that can be used as meeting place, such as virtual classrooms.

Specificially, CoHERE's research has developed a range of prototypes th at may contribute to **strengthening senses of place, heritage and belonging in European classrooms**.

A more **interactive, new media-based contact** with European cultural heritage or even the exchange of views and thoughts among European people might develop a discourse, a personal "experience" that could increase the self-correlation of students to Europe.

Figure 2: CoHERE's "Eurocraft: Explore critical heritages through vid-maps"

"Eurocraft" is a serious game prototype that aims to promote the communication of cultural heritages between people within Europe as well as to encourage dialogue and understanding of the "European Other".

The game can be used as a research tool to investigate the regions and cultures of pupils from different parts of Europe through: [i] their "footprints" (material they upload), [ii] the games they upload [iii] the games they play, and [iv] multilayer maps of heritage distributions they create (vid-maps) by overlapping thematic layers of heritage information.

This state-of-the-art serious game in the fields of cultural heritage and education, allows the broad public to appreciate remote (in space and time) cultural content with an **immersive experience**.

Moreover, it presents **new ways of learning** based on the democratic dialogue, the respect of diversity as well as the way young people communicate ideas through social media.

Figure 3: The goal of the game is user to create his own museum

Additional sources – Funder, L.M.A., Kristensen, T.M. and Nørskov, V. (2019) *Classical Heritage and European Identities: The Imagined Geographies of Danish Classicism* (Critical Heritages of Europe), London: Routledge.

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Summary statement

This policy brief makes recommendations as to how different identities are shaped within both formal and informal education, focusing in particular on how senses of place, history and belonging can be strengthened in the multi-cultural landscape of contemporary Europe. It recommends the implementation of a specific module of cultural heritage that will increase awareness of the diversity of European heritages, and the facilitation of physical and virtual classrooms across Europe.

Policy recommendations –

Recommendations – on the basis of the research undertaken CoHERE work package 5 on 'Education and Heritage':

- **Recommendation 1:** Implementation of specific modules on cultural heritage that emphasise senses of place and geo-literacy in formal education across Europe.

- **Recommendation 2:** Facilitation of physical and digital meetings and virtual classrooms among students across Europe going beyond traditional forms of formal learning by combining networks, partners and exchanges.

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	European Network of Cultural Centres (ENCC), Brussels, Belgium
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	National Museum of World Cultures (SNMW), Amsterdam, Netherlands
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