

Policy Research Alert

FROM FLASH-IT, A DISSEMINATION PROJECT RELATING EUROPEAN POLICY PRIORITIES TO EU-FUNDED RESEARCH IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

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Bridge Over Troubled Waters: European Heritage and the Future of Integration

Can research into Europe's historical heritage support the process of European integration? With the right approach it can. That was the consensus among researchers and policymakers who met to explore links between European heritage and integration during a one-day workshop in Rome.

Jointly organized by the European Commission's Reflective Societies Unit and the Flash-IT dissemination project, the October 17 event brought together around 70 specialists from the fields of history, cultural heritage and identity studies. The participants - who also included policymakers and managers from the European Commission and funding bodies - addressed the complex ways that the past, present and future interconnect. Their discussions centred on the link between interpretations of the past and the willingness to share common European objectives.

Key insights gained through the workshop:

- The participatory potential of historical heritage research is underestimated; implemented properly, it can play an integrationist role in Europe and contribute to Europeanization.
- "European historical heritage" would be a useful overarching term to cover interrelated areas of research on history, cultural heritage and identity.
- Within the research community there is strong support for a reinforced anthropological perspective in research and for community involvement. This perspective can be useful for studying identification patterns and forming new cultural heritage communities and management models. It is also relevant for organising historical research (including archaeological excavations) with local community involvement.
- European diversity discourse – both in public and political spheres - is fixated on the present. European-funded research offers an opportunity to reinforce a more historical perspective on diversity.

The event yielded valuable input for defining future research needs within the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme. Presentations from the workshop are available [here](#), and a more detailed report will be published soon on the European Commission website.

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