

SHARED MEMORIES

learning from the past to build europe's future

METHODOLOGICAL GUIDE

DECEMBER 2025 - NOVEMBER 2027

GERMANY | SPAIN | ROMANIA | PORTUGAL | UKRAINE

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Methodological Guide

This methodological guide provides the common framework for implementing the research and data collection activities of the project “Shared Memories: Learning from the Past to Build Europe’s Future.” It is intended to support all partner organisations in collecting oral testimonies from older adults and assessing historical awareness among young people in Germany, Portugal, Spain, Romania, and Ukraine.

The guide has five main purposes:

- to ensure methodological consistency across all partner countries
- to establish shared ethical standards for collecting testimonies and youth perspectives
- to ensure GDPR-compliant data management and archival procedures
- to produce comparable qualitative and quantitative data
- to provide practical tools for interviews, surveys, focus groups, and analysis

The project foresees the collection of at least 100 testimonies and the assessment of at least 500 young people through surveys and focus groups, with the results feeding into the Digital Archive of European Memories, the Youth Knowledge Analysis Report, the workshop design in WP3 and the educational outputs in WP4.

1.2 Project Context

The project responds to a clear need identified by the partnership: declining historical awareness among young people regarding dictatorship, communism, war, and democratic transition; limited intergenerational dialogue; and the need for accessible educational resources that connect history to current democratic values. The project addresses these needs through testimony collection, youth assessment, intergenerational learning, and open-access digital tools.

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The project focuses on:

- preserving historical memory
- strengthening democratic awareness and civic engagement
- promoting intergenerational dialogue
- fostering European values and identity
- creating sustainable educational resources for formal and non-formal learning

Activities include:

- collecting testimonies from older adults and, where relevant, direct relatives of people affected by dictatorship, communism, war, or political repression
- assessing youth knowledge and perceptions through surveys and focus groups
- analyzing key themes, trends, and historical awareness gaps
- using the findings to inform intergenerational workshops and digital educational materials

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2. Research Objectives

2.1 Main Objectives

The research component of the project has the following objectives:

1. To document the lived experiences of older generations who experienced dictatorship, communist regimes, war, repression, or democratic transition.
2. To identify gaps in historical knowledge, perceptions of democracy, and awareness of authoritarian regimes among young people aged 16–30.
3. To strengthen intergenerational dialogue by creating a structured framework for exchanging memory, knowledge, and reflection.
4. To generate evidence-based educational content for the project's archive, workshops, multimedia platform, and intergenerational learning guide.

2.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guide the methodology:

- How do older generations remember life under authoritarian regimes, communism, war, or political transition?
- What themes, patterns, and differences emerge across participating countries?
- What historical knowledge do young people have about these periods?
- What misconceptions or awareness gaps exist among youth?
- How do young people perceive democracy, freedom, and civic participation in relation to the past?
- How can intergenerational dialogue improve historical understanding and democratic awareness?

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3. Research Design

The project adopts a mixed-methods design, combining qualitative, quantitative and participatory approaches.

3.1 Qualitative Methods

The qualitative component includes:

- semi-structured oral history interviews with older adults
- focus groups with young people
- optional narrative reflection activities during workshops

These methods allow the project to capture personal experiences, interpretations, emotions, and shared memory.

3.2 Quantitative Methods

The quantitative component includes:

- youth surveys assessing historical knowledge, perceptions of regimes, sources of information, and attitudes toward democracy

This enables cross-country comparison and identification of patterns and awareness gaps.

3.3 Participatory Methods

The participatory component includes:

- intergenerational workshops
- collaborative storytelling
- reflection activities using testimonies and youth findings

This ensures that data collection is not only extractive but also educational and socially meaningful.

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3.4 Rationale for the Mixed-Methods Approach

A mixed-methods design is particularly suitable because the project aims both to preserve personal memory and to measure current awareness among youth. Oral histories provide depth, context, and lived experience, while surveys and focus groups provide measurable insights that can inform workshop design and educational materials.

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4. Ethical Principles and GDPR Compliance

4.1 Ethical Framework

All activities under this methodology must be conducted in line with:

- Erasmus+ principles
- the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights
- the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR – Regulation EU 2016/679)

Given that the project addresses politically sensitive and emotionally charged topics, including repression, censorship, war, and trauma, interviews and surveys must be conducted with dignity, sensitivity, and care.

4.2 Informed Consent

Before participation, all participants must be clearly informed about:

- the purpose of the project
- the type of activity involved
- the expected duration
- whether the activity will be recorded
- how the data will be stored and used
- whether the material may appear in the Digital Archive of European Memories
- their right to refuse, pause, skip questions, or withdraw

For elderly interviews, e-form informed consent is mandatory before recording begins.

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Participants should be able to choose among three consent options:

1. **Full consent:** interview may be recorded, archived, and made publicly available in the Digital Archive of European Memories
2. **Restricted consent:** interview may be recorded and used internally for research and educational development, but not published publicly
3. **Anonymous consent:** testimony may be used only in anonymized form, with identifying details removed

4.3 Voluntary Participation

Participation must always be voluntary. Participants may:

- decline participation
- skip any question
- request a pause or break
- stop the interview or survey at any time
- withdraw consent, subject to the limits explained in the consent form

4.4 Emotional Safety and Trauma Sensitivity

Because some testimonies may involve painful personal memories, interviewers must:

- avoid confrontational or pressuring questions
- allow participants to move at their own pace
- offer breaks whenever needed
- stop or redirect the conversation if the participant shows distress
- use calm, respectful, non-judgmental language

4.5 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Participants may choose whether they are identified by name, partially identified, or anonymized.

If anonymity is requested:

- names must be replaced with pseudonyms/codes
- identifying personal details may be removed from transcripts and metadata
- publication of video may be restricted or replaced by audio/text only

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4.6 GDPR and Data Protection

All data must be processed in accordance with GDPR. This includes:

- collecting only the minimum personal data necessary
- storing recordings and transcripts in secure, access-controlled folders
- keeping consent forms separate from interview files where possible
- using encrypted digital storage or password-protected institutional servers
- restricting access to authorized project personnel
- applying agreed retention and deletion procedures

Partners must ensure that interview files, transcripts, notes, and survey data are stored securely and transferred only through secure channels.

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5. Digital Archive of European Memories

The testimonies collected will contribute to the **Digital Archive of European Memories**. The archive is intended as a long-term educational and cultural resource that preserves personal narratives and makes them accessible for learning, reflection, and intergenerational dialogue.

5.1 Archival Principles

Only testimonies for which participants have given explicit archival consent may be published in the archive.

The archive must follow these principles:

- respect for participant rights and dignity
- transparency regarding access and use
- categorization by country, theme, and historical period
- ethical handling of sensitive content
- data protection and controlled publication

5.2 Participant Rights in Relation to the Archive

Participants must be informed that they may:

- request restrictions on publication
- request correction of metadata
- request withdrawal of their publicly available testimony, where technically and legally feasible

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5.3 Accessibility and Inclusion

The project application foresees accessible and inclusive digital outputs. The archive should therefore, where feasible, include:

- clear and simple navigation
- multilingual presentation
- subtitles or transcripts for audiovisual content
- accessible design aligned with digital accessibility standards

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6. Participant Selection

6.1 Elderly Participants

The project targets older adults and, where appropriate, direct relatives of those who experienced authoritarian regimes, communist rule, war or democratic transition. The application refers to older adults as a key target group and sets the project goal for at least 100 testimonies across the partnership countries.

Suggested eligibility criteria:

- aged 55+ as a general methodological threshold
- direct lived experience of relevant historical periods, or direct family memory in justified cases
- willingness and ability to participate in an interview

Sampling should aim for diversity in:

- gender
- areas of the country
- rural and urban background
- professional and educational background
- type of historical experience
- minority or marginalized perspectives where relevant

Each partner should aim to contribute approximately 20-25 interviews.

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6.2 Youth Participants

Youth participants should be aged 16–30, in line with the project application. The target is approximately 500 young participants across the project countries.

Sampling should aim for diversity in:

- age range
- gender
- education level
- urban and rural background
- areas of the country
- prior civic or historical engagement

Each country should aim for about 100 youth respondents, using surveys and, where possible, focus groups.

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7. Standard Interviewer Training Protocol

To ensure methodological consistency across partner countries, all individuals responsible for conducting interviews will participate in an internal interviewer training session organised by the project partners before the start of data collection.

This training ensures that interviews are conducted using the same methodological standards, ethical procedures, and documentation practices across all participating countries.

7.1 Training Purpose

The interviewer training protocol aims to ensure that all interviewers:

- understand the objectives of the project and the role of Work Package 2 (WP2)
- are able to conduct semi-structured oral history interviews using the approved interview framework
- apply ethical principles and GDPR requirements correctly
- follow consistent procedures for recording, documentation, and metadata collection
- handle sensitive historical topics with care, respect, and professionalism.

The training contributes to the reliability, comparability and ethical integrity of the testimonies collected for the Digital Archive of European Memories.

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7.2 Training Objectives

After completing the training, interviewers should be able to:

- explain the project objectives and obtain informed consent from participants
- conduct interviews using the approved semi-structured interview guide
- avoid leading questions and encourage open narrative storytelling
- respond appropriately if participants show emotional distress during the interview
- record interviews and manage digital files according to project standards
- correctly label, store, and transfer recordings and related materials
- complete interview metadata sheets and field notes.

7.3 Training Modules

The interviewer training should include the following modules:

1. Project overview and WP2 objectives
2. Ethical principles and informed consent procedures
3. GDPR requirements and digital archive protocols
4. Oral history interviewing techniques
5. Practice interviews and role-play exercises
6. Recording standards, metadata documentation, and file management
7. Debriefing procedures and quality assurance

The training may be organised online for all partners or locally by each partner organisation, using the methodological guide as the reference framework.

A recommended duration for the training session is 2–3 hours.

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7.4 Interviewer Principles

All interviewers must follow a set of common professional principles during the interviews.

Interviewers should:

- remain neutral, respectful, and non-judgmental
- avoid political debate, confrontation, or personal interpretations
- respect participants' emotional boundaries and moments of silence
- encourage participants to share experiences through storytelling rather than short answers
- distinguish clearly between neutral prompts and leading questions.

The interviewer's role is to facilitate the participant's narrative rather than to direct or evaluate their account.

Examples of neutral prompts include:

- "Could you tell me more about that experience?"
- "What do you remember most clearly about that time?"
- "How did that affect your daily life?"
- "How was that discussed in your family or community?"

These prompts help encourage reflection and allow participants to elaborate on their memories in their own words.

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8. Data Collection Protocols

8.1 General Principles

All data collection across countries must follow the same principles:

- standardized tools and instructions
- ethical and inclusive recruitment
- clear consent procedures
- secure storage and transfer
- common metadata and coding conventions

8.2 Interview Procedure for Elderly Participants

Each interview should follow the same basic sequence:

Preparation

- identify and contact participants
- explain the project in advance, prepare symbolic anchors to give to participant - pen, flyer, book mark, pin, cups with project logo
- prepare consent forms and equipment
- check the interview environment

Opening

- introduce the interviewer and project
- explain recording, use, and participant rights
- review and sign the consent form
- confirm the participant's preferred consent level

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Interview

- conduct the interview following the approved semi-structured guide
- allow flexibility for narrative flow
- take brief field notes where appropriate

Closing

- thank the participant
- ask whether they wish to add anything
- explain the next steps
- confirm contact preferences for any follow-up

8.3 Recording Standards

Interviews may be recorded in audio or video format depending on consent and technical conditions. Good practice includes:

- recording in a quiet environment
- checking sound before starting
- ensuring the participant is comfortable with the recording mode
- backing up files securely as soon as possible,

8.4 Metadata and File Naming

Each interview should include a metadata sheet with:

- country
- interview code
- date
- interviewer name
- participant age group
- consent level
- recording format
- main themes covered

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Example file naming format:

Country_InterviewNumber_Date

Example: PT_INT07_2026-03-14

8.5 Youth Survey Procedure

Youth surveys should be distributed in a standardized format, preferably online using a platform such as Google Forms. Survey administration should include:

- a short introductory information note
- confirmation of voluntary participation
- no unnecessary collection of personal identifiers
- standardized question order across countries
- country-specific adaptation only where historically necessary

8.6 Focus Group Procedure

Focus groups should be used to complement survey data and deepen understanding of youth perceptions. Each focus group should have:

- 6–12 participants
- one moderator and one note-taker where possible
- a duration of 60–90 minutes
- a semi-structured discussion guide

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9. Interview Guidelines for Elderly

The interview model used in this project is a **semi-structured oral history interview**, designed to encourage narrative depth while ensuring cross-country comparability.

9.1 Interview Format

- type: semi-structured oral history interview
- duration: 45–90 minutes, and be prepared for longer budget of time if emotional breaks are needed
- recording: audio or video, depending on consent
- setting: calm, accessible, comfortable space

9.2 Core Interview Domains

The interview should explore the following areas:

- 0) Information provided to the participant & consent form
- 1) Personal background - Information about childhood
- 2) Political environment
- 3) Family life
- 4) Education, communication and social life
- 5) Gender roles, social norms and inclusion
- 6) Transition and change – at the end of the regime
- 7) Reflection and take home messages

9.3 Full Interview Guide

Annex 3. Elderly interview script and guide

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10. Youth Survey

The youth questionnaire is designed to assess factual knowledge, perceptions, information sources, confidence levels, and openness to intergenerational learning.

10.1 Survey Purposes

The survey measures:

- awareness of historical regimes
- understanding of basic characteristics of authoritarian systems
- perceptions of democracy and freedom
- sources of historical knowledge
- intergenerational contact and interest in testimony-based learning

10.2 Survey Administration

The questionnaire should be distributed online where possible, using the same structure in all countries. Country-specific examples may be adapted for historical periods or national references, but the core indicators should remain identical.

10.3 Full Youth Survey

Annex 4. Youth questionnaire

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11. Focus Group Methodology

Focus groups will complement the survey by providing deeper insight into how young people understand historical regimes, democracy, and intergenerational learning.

11.1 Structure

- 6–12 participants
- 60–90 minutes
- one facilitator and, where possible, one note-taker
- audio recording only if participants consent

11.2 Objectives

Focus groups should help explore:

- what young people know and do not know
- where their knowledge comes from
- how they interpret democracy, freedom, censorship, and authoritarianism
- whether and how they engage with older generations
- what kinds of educational approaches would interest them

11.3 Example Focus Group Questions

- What comes to mind when you think about dictatorship, communism, or authoritarian rule?
- What do you know about the historical period in your country related to this project?
- Where have you learned most of what you know?
- Why do you think many young people know little about these periods?
- Have you ever spoken with an older person about life during those times?
- Do personal testimonies help you understand history better than textbooks? Why?
- What should schools or youth organisations do differently to teach this history?
- What should young people today learn from these historical experiences?

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12. Coding Scheme for Testimonies

Interview transcripts should be analyzed using a shared thematic coding framework to ensure comparability across countries.

12.1 Core Coding Themes

Code	Theme	
EL	Everyday Life	Work, school, food, daily routines
PR	Political Repression	Surveillance, arrests, fear, control
CM	Censorship Media and propaganda	Media control, school messaging, official narratives
SR	Social Relationships	Trust, silence, community support
RA	Resistance and Adaptation	Coping, hidden dissent, survival strategies

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TR	Transition to democracy/change	End of regime, new freedoms, uncertainty
IM	Intergenerational memory	What should youth know, transmission of memory
HI	Historical interpretation	Nostalgia, criticism, ambivalence, myths
WA	War and conflict	Displacement, violence, resilience
DV	Democratic values	Freedom, human rights, civic lessons

12.2 Coding Principles

- each transcript should be coded by theme and, where useful, subtheme
- coders should use a shared codebook
- where possible, a sample of transcripts should be double-coded to improve consistency
- country-specific themes may be added, but core project codes should remain standard

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13. Data Analysis Methods

13.1 Qualitative Analysis

Interview and focus group data will be analyzed using:

- thematic analysis
- narrative analysis where appropriate
- researchers should identify:
 - recurring themes
 - country-specific patterns
 - similarities and differences across regimes and memories
 - reflections on democracy and European values

13.2 Quantitative Analysis

Survey data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, including:

- frequencies and percentages
- cross-tabulations by country, age, and education level
- average scores for perception and confidence items

If capacity allows, partners may also use simple comparative analysis across countries.

13.3 Analytical Output

WP2 should generate:

- a structured testimony corpus for the archive
- a Youth Knowledge Analysis Report
- a summary report synthesizing qualitative and quantitative findings for WP3 and WP4

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14. Indicators for the Youth Knowledge Analysis Report

The Youth Knowledge Analysis Report should include three groups of indicators.

14.1 Knowledge Indicators

- percentage of youth who correctly identify the regime type
- percentage who recognizes key regime characteristics
- percentage who knows approximate dates or historical turning points
- percentage who can identify key restrictions such as censorship or repression

14.2 Perception Indicators

- confidence in one's own historical knowledge
- agreement that democracy must be protected
- perceptions of freedom of speech, media freedom, and state control in the past
- interest in testimony-based learning

14.3 Intergenerational Indicators

- percentage of youth who have spoken with older people about the past
- frequency of such conversations
- willingness to participate in intergenerational activities
- interest in hearing or viewing archived testimonies

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15. Quality Assurance

To ensure high-quality implementation across the consortium:

- all partners must use the same core tools and procedures
- pilot interviews and pilot survey testing should be conducted before full rollout
- interviewer training should be documented
- regular internal check-ins should be held during WP2
- a sample of files, transcripts, and survey outputs should be reviewed for consistency

The project application also foresees continuous monitoring, mid-term review, and partner feedback to ensure quality and usefulness for later work packages.

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16. Limitations and Ethical Reflection

The methodology should acknowledge several possible limitations:

- memory is selective and may be shaped by time, trauma, or later reinterpretation
- national differences in historical education may affect comparability
- youth responses may reflect confidence rather than actual knowledge
- publicly archived testimonies may require balancing authenticity with privacy and protection
- some participants may prefer silence, partial disclosure, or ambivalent memories rather than clear judgments

These limitations do not weaken the project; rather, they reflect the complexity of memory work and the importance of a careful, ethical, and pluralistic approach.

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17. Annexes

The following annexes should accompany the guide:

1. Annex 1. Short GDPR Consent Form
2. Annex 2. Ethical Protocol and GDPR Compliance
3. Annex 3a. Interview SCRIPT
4. Annex 3b. Interview Form Shared Memory
5. Annex 4. Youth questionnaire
6. Annex 5. Focus group guide
7. Annex 6. Interview metadata sheet
8. Annex 7. Interviewer training checklist
9. Annex 8. Coding framework/codebook

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Annex 1. Short GDPR Consent Form

Project: Shared Memories: Learning from the Past to Build Europe's Future

I confirm that I have received information about the project and understand that:

- my participation is voluntary
- I may refuse to answer any question
- I may stop the interview at any time
- the interview is audio-recorded
- my testimony may be used for research and educational purposes
- if I give separate permission, my testimony may be included in the Digital Archive of European Memories
- I may choose whether my testimony is public, restricted, or anonymized

Consent option:

- Full public archive consent
- Restricted research-only consent
- Anonymous use only

Participant name:

Signature:

Date:

Interviewer name:

Signature:

Date:

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Annex 2. Ethical Protocol and GDPR Compliance

(For the Digital Archive of European Memories)

1. Ethical Principles for Testimony Collection

The collection of oral testimonies from older adults is a central component of the project and contributes to the creation of the **Digital Archive of European Memories**, an open-access repository designed to preserve personal narratives related to historical experiences under authoritarian regimes, wars, and political transitions.

Because these testimonies may contain **personal memories, sensitive experiences, and identifiable information**, strict ethical and data protection principles must guide the research process.

The project follows the ethical standards of:

- the **Erasmus+ Programme**
- the **EU Charter of Fundamental Rights**
- the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR – Regulation EU 2016/679)**.

2. Informed Consent for Archival Use

Participants must be clearly informed that their interview:

- will be **recorded (audio or video)**
- may be **transcribed**
- may be **published or stored in the Digital Archive of European Memories**
- may be used for **educational and research purposes**.

Before the interview begins, participants must sign a **written consent form** specifying:

- permission to record the interview
- permission to store the interview in the digital archive
- permission to use excerpts for educational materials (videos, podcasts, reports).

Participants must have the option to choose between different levels of consent:

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1. **Full consent** – the interview can be publicly accessible in the digital archive.
2. **Restricted consent** – the interview may be used for research but not publicly published.
3. **Anonymous use** – testimony may be used without identifying information.

3. Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw

Participation in interviews is entirely voluntary.

Participants have the right to:

- refuse to answer specific questions
- pause or stop the interview
- withdraw their participation at any time.

If a participant withdraws consent, their data must be **removed from the archive and project database**, unless the data has already been anonymized and incorporated into aggregated research results.

4. Protection of Sensitive Information

Interviews may include discussion of:

- political persecution
- censorship
- personal trauma
- war experiences
- political repression.

Interviewers must ensure:

- respectful and non-judgmental communication
- sensitivity to emotional distress
- the possibility for participants to skip topics they find uncomfortable.

If distress occurs, the interview should be paused or redirected.

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5. Anonymity and Confidentiality Options

Participants may choose whether their identity is:

- fully public
- partially anonymized
- completely anonymized.

When anonymity is requested:

- names will be replaced with pseudonyms
- identifying details may be removed
- video recordings may be replaced by audio or transcript versions.

6. GDPR Data Protection Measures

All personal data collected during the project will comply with **GDPR requirements**.

Data protection measures include:

Secure Data Storage

- Interviews stored on **encrypted institutional servers**
- Restricted access limited to authorized project researchers.

Data Minimization

Only necessary personal data will be collected, such as:

- name (optional for publication)
- age group
- country
- general background information.

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Data Retention Policy

Personal data will be retained only for the duration necessary for:

- research
- educational dissemination
- archival purposes approved by participants.

7. Management of the Digital Archive

The **Digital Archive of European Memories** will function as a curated educational resource containing selected testimonies.

Archive management principles:

- interviews uploaded only with **explicit participant consent**
- metadata will include only non-sensitive information
- access policies will define whether content is:
 - o public
 - o restricted
 - o anonymized.

Participants will have the right to:

- request removal of their testimony
- request modification of personal information.

8. Responsible Use of Testimonies

The project commits to using testimonies:

- respectfully
- accurately
- without distortion of meaning.

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Personal stories will **not be manipulated for political or ideological purposes** and will always be presented within their historical context.

9. Ethical Responsibility of Interviewers

All interviewers involved in testimony collection must receive guidance on:

- ethical interviewing practices
- trauma-sensitive communication
- GDPR compliance
- informed consent procedures.

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Annex 3a. Interview SCRIPT

0) Information provided to the participant & consent form

5. Name
6. Age (now and during the analyzed period)
7. Gender
8. Main city where you were living in this period and country
9. Historical period () Spain (Romanian) ...
10. Sign consent form

• **Personal background - Information about childhood**

- Family environment
- Going to school, aspirations, dreams during school
- Work/job of parents
- Education/Job of participant

Possible questions

- What was your childhood like?
- What kind of family environment did you grow up in?
- What did your parents or caregivers do for work?
- Where did you go to school?
- What were your dreams or aspirations as a young person?
- **Political environment** (*if necessary, give some tips*)
 - Ask for 2 concrete things/experiences
 - First becoming aware about it – from whom/how
 - Political aspects discussed in the family – yes/no, how, open/no
 - Freedom & Control:
 - Felt free or not. Examples
 - Any topics avoided.
 - Communication between them
 - Fear of being monitored, death, jailed, captured.
 - Restrictions/censorship?

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Possible questions

- What political system existed in your country when you were young?
- When did you first become aware of politics or government authority?
- How was politics discussed in your family?
- Did people openly discuss political issues in everyday life?

Freedom and Control

- Did people feel free to express their political opinions?
- Were there topics people avoided discussing?
- Did people fear being monitored or reported to authorities?
- Did you ever personally experience censorship, restriction, or pressure?
- **Family life**
 - most remembered memories
 - influence of daily life – how was it/what was a daily life like, etc
 - restriction of travel/school/work/dood
 - adaptation of people to these conditions – yes/no, speaking, etc
 - Informal networks / associations
 - Had personal experience of pressure/repression?
 - Reaction of people generally
 - Opposition forms?
 - Trusting/betraying people/neighbours/authorities

Possible questions

- What do you remember most about everyday life during that period?
- How did the political system influence daily life?
- Were there restrictions on travel, work, education, religion, or personal choices?
- How did people adapt to these conditions?
- What role did the government play in people's everyday lives?
- Did you or someone you know ever experience political pressure, discrimination, or repression?
- How did people react to government policies?
- Were there forms of resistance, disagreement, or quiet opposition?
- Did people trust the authorities? Why or why not?

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- **Education, communication and social life**

- History in school – what/how/topics
- Propaganda – what/how/events
- Information from TV, newspaper, etc – what, how, trustful/no
- Access to information
- Relationship between people/relatives affected or not by political conditions
- Safe to discuss politics? Support from community?
- Right of association. Walk in groups.
- Social life. Go out. Parties. Survive to satisfy your social needs?

Possible questions

- How was history taught in schools during that period?
- What kind of messages did schools communicate about the government or the political system?
- What role did propaganda play in education or public life?
- Did people trust the information provided by the media? Why or why not?
- How did political conditions affect relationships between people?
- Did people feel safe discussing politics with friends, colleagues, or neighbours?
- How did communities support each other during difficult times?

- **Gender roles, social norms and inclusion**

- Perception of women generally.
- Violence/discrimination against women/men.
- Expectations for women and men in family/work/education
- Treating different some groups of people (religion, ethnicity, gender, social class, rural/urban)
- Open talk about discrimination, inequality?
- LGBTI people

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Possible questions

- How were women generally seen or perceived in society during that period?
 - Were there different expectations for women and men in family life, education, or work?
 - Did women and men have equal opportunities? In what ways were they equal or unequal?
 - Were some groups of people treated differently or unfairly because of gender, ethnicity, religion, political views, social class, disability, or where they lived?
 - How were minorities, vulnerable people, or those seen as “different” treated in society at that time?
 - Did people openly talk about inequality, discrimination, or unfair treatment, or was this avoided?
- **Transition and change – at the end of the regime**
 - End of the regime and transition – how was it?
 - Changes in everyday life, education, work, etc – how are they?
 - Improved life or more difficult?

Possible questions

- How did you experience the end of the regime or the political transition?
 - What changes did you notice afterward in everyday life, freedoms, or opportunities?
 - Did life improve, become more difficult, or change in unexpected ways?
- **Reflection and take home messages**
 - Talking today about that period
 - Younger generation understand/talk/know?
 - Lessons for the young people?

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Possible questions

- How do people today talk about that historical period?
- Do you think younger generations understand what life was like then?
- What lessons should society learn from that time?
- What would you like younger people to understand about democracy, freedom, and rights?
- What message would you like to share with young people today?

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Annex 3b. Interview Form Shared Memory

0) Information provided to the participant & consent form

- **Name:** _____
- **Age:** (now: ____ / during the analyzed period: ____)
- **Gender:** _____
- **Main city and country where you were living in this period:**

- **Historical period:** () Spain (Romanian) ...
- **Sign consent form:** [] YES

1. Personal background - Information about childhood

Topics to follow: Family environment , school attendance, aspirations, and dreams during school , parents' work/job , and the participant's education/job.

- **Possible questions:**
 - What was your childhood like?
 - What kind of family environment did you grow up in?
 - What did your parents or caregivers do for work?
 - Where did you go to school?
 - What were your dreams or aspirations as a young person?

2. Political environment

Topics to follow: 2 concrete things/experiences , first becoming aware of it (from whom/how) , political aspects discussed in the family (openly or not). **Freedom & Control:** Feeling free or not (examples) , avoided topics, communication between people , fear of being monitored, jailed, captured, or death, and restrictions/censorship.

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- **Possible questions:**

- What political system existed in your country when you were young?
- When did you first become aware of politics or government authority?
- How was politics discussed in your family?
- Did people openly discuss political issues in everyday life?
- **Freedom and Control:**
 - Did people feel free to express their political opinions?
 - Were there topics people avoided discussing?
 - Did people fear being monitored or reported to authorities?
 - Did you ever personally experience censorship, restriction, or pressure?

3. Family life

Topics to follow: Most remembered memories , influence on daily life (what was a typical day like) , restrictions on travel, school, work, or food , adaptation of people to these conditions , informal networks/associations , personal experiences of pressure/repression , general reaction of people , forms of opposition , and trusting/betraying neighbors or authorities.

- **Possible questions:**

- What do you remember most about everyday life during that period?
- How did the political system influence daily life?
- Were there restrictions on travel, work, education, religion, or personal choices?
- How did people adapt to these conditions?
- What role did the government play in people's everyday lives?
- Did you or someone you know ever experience political pressure, discrimination, or repression?
- How did people react to government policies?
- Were there forms of resistance, disagreement, or quiet opposition?
- Did people trust the authorities? Why or why not?

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4. Education, communication and social life

Topics to follow: History in school (topics and methods) , propaganda (events and methods) , information from TV/newspapers (trustworthiness) , access to information , relationships affected by political conditions , safety of discussing politics and community support , right of association and walking in groups , social life, parties, and satisfying social needs.

- **Possible questions:**

- How was history taught in schools during that period?
- What kind of messages did schools communicate about the government or the political system?
- What role did propaganda play in education or public life?
- Did people trust the information provided by the media? Why or why not?
- How did political conditions affect relationships between people?
- Did people feel safe discussing politics with friends, colleagues, or neighbors?
- How did communities support each other during difficult times?

5. Gender roles, social norms and inclusion

Topics to follow: General perception of women , violence/discrimination , expectations for men and women in family/work/education , treatment of different groups (religion, ethnicity, class, rural/urban) , open talk about inequality , and LGBTI people.

- **Possible questions:**

- How were women generally seen or perceived in society during that period?
- Were there different expectations for women and men in family life, education, or work?
- Did women and men have equal opportunities? In what ways?
- Were some groups treated unfairly because of gender, ethnicity, religion, politics, social class, disability, or location?
- How were minorities or those seen as “different” treated at that time?
- Did people openly talk about inequality and discrimination, or was it avoided?

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6. Transition and change – at the end of the regime

Topics to follow: The end of the regime and transition , changes in everyday life, education, and work , and whether life improved or became more difficult.

- **Possible questions:**
 - How did you experience the end of the regime or the political transition?
 - What changes did you notice afterward in everyday life, freedoms, or opportunities?
 - Did life improve, become more difficult, or change in unexpected ways?

7. Reflection and take home messages

Topics to follow: Talking today about that period , the younger generation's understanding , and lessons for young people.

- **Possible questions:**
 - How do people today talk about that historical period?
 - Do you think younger generations understand what life was like then?
 - What lessons should society learn from that time?
 - What would you like younger people to understand about democracy, freedom, and rights?
 - What message would you like to share with young people today?

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Annex 4. Youth questionnaire

Youth Historical Awareness Questionnaire

Welcome, and thank you for taking part in this survey. This questionnaire is part of the Erasmus+ project “**Shared Memories: Learning from the Past to Build Europe’s Future**”, which brings together partners from several European countries to preserve historical memory, strengthen intergenerational dialogue and promote democratic values and active citizenship. In this part of the project, we are exploring how young people understand historical periods marked by dictatorship, war, authoritarian regimes, and democratic transition. Your answers will help us identify knowledge gaps, better understand youth perspectives, and design future intergenerational workshops and educational resources that connect past experiences with the challenges of today.

5-point Likert scale. For all statements:

- 1 = **Strongly disagree**
- 2 = **Disagree**
- 3 = **Neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 = **Agree**
- 5 = **Strongly agree**

Section 0. Background information

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Country
4. City or area of residence
5. Educational level

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Section 1. Historical knowledge and awareness

1. I consider that I have a good knowledge of my country's recent history (20 century).
2. I know about what happened in Europe under dictatorships, communist regimes, or armed conflicts.
3. I understand how these historical periods affected people's everyday lives.
4. I can identify the differences between democracy, authoritarianism, and totalitarianism.
5. Historical memory has been addressed sufficiently in my formal education.
6. I know real stories of people who experienced political repression, censorship, or war.
7. I believe many young people in my generation know little about these historical periods.
8. Understanding the past helps us better interpret Europe's current problems.

Open-ended questions

- Which sources have helped you most to learn about your country's recent history (school, family, social media, films, books, testimonies, etc.)?

Section 2. Democracy, freedom and rights

1. I know what political system existed in my country during the youth of my parents', grandparents', or older generations.
2. I know that there were restrictions on freedom of speech in public, at home, or with friends.
3. I know that the lack of basic rights and freedoms made certain topics dangerous to discuss in everyday life.
4. I know why some people avoided talking about politics in everyday life under non-democratic regimes.

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5. I understand how fear of surveillance, imprisonment, punishment, or other repression affected people's daily behaviour and communication.
6. I know what kinds of topics were censored, restricted, or considered dangerous to discuss.
7. I still have important gaps in my knowledge about how political control and lack of freedom shaped the lives of previous generations.
8. I know that under non-democratic regimes, people could be imprisoned, captured, or even killed simply for expressing political ideas that differed from those of the regime.

Open-ended questions

- What does "democracy" mean to you in everyday life?
- Which rights or freedoms do you consider most important today, and why?

Section 3. Family memory and intergenerational dialogue

1. Family stories help us understand history better than textbooks.
2. Listening to older people's testimonies can change the way we understand the past.
3. In my family, conversations about issues such as dictatorship, war, repression, lack of freedom, or political persecution took place.
4. I believe many important experiences from the past are being lost because they are not documented.
5. Young generations should have more opportunities to talk with older people about history and democracy.
6. I am interested in learning how other generations experienced censorship, fear, or lack of freedoms.
7. Personal testimonies create more empathy than purely academic information.

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8. Dialogue between generations can strengthen social cohesion and the sense of European belonging.

Open-ended questions

- Have you heard any family or close personal story related to dictatorship, war, repression, or political transition? Please describe it briefly if you wish.

Section 4. Everyday life, social control and information

1. Censorship and propaganda can deeply influence the way a society thinks.
2. I think it is important to learn how people accessed information in contexts of censorship.
3. I believe there are still risks of information manipulation today, although in different forms.
4. Social media can contribute both to informing and to misinforming people.
5. Comparing propaganda in the past with current disinformation is useful for democratic education.
6. I would like to learn more about how people reacted to surveillance, fear, or lack of freedom.
7. I am aware that the version of historical events taught in formal education may reflect the perspective of those who won wars or held power.
8. I understand that what we learn in school about past conflicts is not always neutral, and that some experiences, voices, or interpretations may be left out of official historical narratives.

Open-ended questions

- Which aspect of everyday life under an authoritarian regime raises the most curiosity or questions for you?

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Section 5. Equality, inclusion and treatment of vulnerable groups

1. Studying the past helps us better understand present-day inequalities.
2. Authoritarian regimes usually harm minorities and vulnerable groups the most.
3. It is important to analyze how these historical periods affected women, ethnic or religious minorities, or people considered “different.”
4. Discrimination and social silence are also part of historical memory.
5. Education should address the relationship between historical memory and human rights more strongly.
6. I believe that women experience less discrimination today than in the past.
7. I believe that men experience less discrimination today than in the past.
8. I believe that LGBTIQ+ people experience less discrimination today than in the past.

Open-ended questions

- Which groups do you think that suffered more discrimination, inequality, or exclusion when talking about the past?

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Section 6. Europe, citizenship and the present

1. I consider that European values such as democracy, peace, and human rights are useless.
2. Historical memory can help prevent extremism, populism, and intolerance.
3. I am aware that respect for diversity, inclusion, and the rights of minorities are important principles in contemporary European societies.
4. I know that being an active citizen involves participating in community life and democratic processes.
5. I am aware that critical thinking and intercultural understanding are important parts of active citizenship.
6. I believe that young people should take an active role in decisions that affect their communities and society.
7. I agree that defending freedom, equality, inclusion, and human rights is a shared responsibility of all citizens.
8. This type of project can strengthen young people's civic participation.

Open-ended questions

- What challenges do young people face today when trying to participate in community life or democratic processes?

Final open-ended closing questions

1. What question would you like to ask an older person who lived through a dictatorship, a war, or a political transition?
2. Is there anything important about this topic that we have not asked you?

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Annex 5. Focus group guide

- Which sources have helped you most to learn about your country's recent history (school, family, social media, films, books, testimonies, etc.)?
- What does "democracy" mean to you in everyday life?
- Which rights or freedoms do you consider most important today, and why?
- Have you heard any family or close personal story related to dictatorship, war, repression, or political transition? Please describe it briefly if you wish.
- Which aspect of everyday life under an authoritarian regime raises the most curiosity or questions for you
- Which groups do you think that suffered more discrimination, inequality, or exclusion when talking about the past?
- What challenges do young people face today when trying to participate in community life or democratic processes?
- What question would you like to ask an older person who lived through a dictatorship, a war, or a political transition?
- Is there anything important about this topic that we have not asked you?

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Annex 6. INTERVIEW METADATA SHEET

This sheet must be completed for every interview conducted and kept as a cover page for the transcript (download and print accordingly).

Administrative Details

- **Country:** _____
(e.g., Romania, Spain, etc.)
- **Interview Code:** _____
(Use format: Country Code_Interview Number | e.g., RO_INT01)
- **Date of Interview:** [YYYY - MM - DD]
- **Interviewer Name:** _____

Participant Profile

- **Age Group:**
 - [] 18–30
 - [] 31–50
 - [] 51–70
 - [] 70+
- **Consent Level:**
 - [] Full public use (Name & Audio/Video)
 - [] Pseudonym/Anonymized (Transcript only)
 - [] Restricted (Internal research use only)

Technical Information

- **Recording Format:**
 - [] Audio (.mp3 / .wav)
 - [] Video (.mp4 / .mov)
 - [] Written Notes Only

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Content Summary

Main Themes Covered (Check all that apply):

- ☐ Childhood & Family Background
- ☐ Political Awareness & System Perception
- ☐ Daily Life & Restrictions (Food, Travel, Work)
- ☐ Education & Propaganda
- ☐ Social Life & Community Support
- ☐ Gender Roles & Inclusion (LGBTI, Minorities)
- ☐ Regime Transition & Post-Regime Change
- ☐ Reflections & Messages for Youth

File Naming Protocol

Format: Country_InterviewNumber_Date

- **Example:** RO_INT01_2026-04-11

Additional Observation Notes

(Brief notes on the interview atmosphere, location, or any specific context needed for analysis)

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