

SHARED MEMORIES

learning from the past to build europe's future

YOUTH HISTORICAL AWARENESS QUESTIONNAIRE

DECEMBER 2025 - NOVEMBER 2027

GERMANY | SPAIN | ROMANIA | PORTUGAL | UKRAINE

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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.)?

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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.
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?

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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.
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.

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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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