

# 1. PUBLISHABLE SUMMARY

## **Summary of the context and overall objectives of the project (For the final period, include the conclusions of the action)**

TRACES sets out from the assumption that the current economic and political crisis of Europe is also a crisis of values and identities, and therefore a cultural crisis. TRACES investigates the challenges and opportunities raised when transmitting complex pasts and the role of difficult heritage in contemporary Europe. European cultural heritage is inherently complex and layered. In the past, conflicting or controversial perspectives on different historical memories and experiences have been colliding in the rich cultural landscape of Europe and continue to do so in the present. These contentious heritages are often particularly difficult to convey to a wide public and can impede inclusivity as well as prevent the development of convivial relations. Nevertheless, if transmitted sensitively, they can contribute to a process of reflexive Europeanisation, in which the European imagination is shaped by self-awareness, on-going critical reflection, and dialogue across different positions.

The multi-disciplinary project team develops a rigorous, creative and all-round investigation on contentious cultural heritages, and to experiment with innovative research methodologies. In order to achieve these objectives, TRACES has initiated a series of “Creative Co-Productions” (hereinafter CCPs) in which artists, researchers, heritage agencies, and stakeholders collaborate on long-term projects researching selected cases of contentious heritage and developing new participatory public interfaces. Theoretical investigations pertaining to different research fields and disciplines support and complement these art-based research actions with the aim to identify new directions for cultural institutions and museums to effectively transmit contentious cultural heritage and contribute to evolving European identities.

## **Work performed from the beginning of the project to the end of the period covered by the report and main results achieved so far (For the final period please include an overview of the results and their exploitation and dissemination)**

TRACES has promoted a series of meetings and debates among the partners, to further broaden the disciplinary, cultural, and geographical perspective. As TRACES was built on the idea of co-production between researcher, artists and practitioners/educators on one hand and the critical investigation on these approaches on the other hand. It was crucial that the whole project develops bases of debate and exchange.

Following measures have been taken

\* The Kick-off Meeting (Klagenfurt, 9-11 May 2016) was based on several workshops for TRACES team members to get to know each others approaches and ideas.

\* Field visits as “critical friends”

\* The two ethnography based WPs (WP2, WP4) established in close collaboration:

a) within the process of co-production: WP4 developed guidelines to conduct (art based) self-ethnography and recording of the process development.

b) on the process of co-production: WP2 established a group of external researchers who were trained within a workshop.

WP1 has started developing in close collaboration with the CCPs a participatory questionnaire that functions as a research tool in the context of these art practices. Its main purpose is to analyse and develop cross-disciplinary communication and collaborative research methods within TRACES.

WP2 established first collaborations with Italian museums. In order to explore the possibility of involving immigrant communities, they also visited the Oriental Museum in proximity to the Chinese quarter around Piazza Vittorio near the Central Station.

In close collaboration with the educational department of Weltkulturen Museum Frankfurt WP3 set up an action research based project. WP3 has also been conducting a broad field research on “conflict learning” in educational sites of contentious heritage (eg memorials, ethnographic museums).

WP4 conducted field research on the art production by UNIKUM as an example for consistent long-term cross-border cooperation with artists and local institutions in a contentious heritage settings.

WP5 extends the inventory beyond the case studies of the individual CCPs and develops a general European understanding of these collections.

Ethical considerations have been addressed in several workshops. Additionally an ethical advisory board was installed. We also submitted an overview over the possible ethical issues we could identify and addressed the topic in our Data Management Plan.

## EXPLOITABLE RESULTS

Activities like local workshops were promoted within the CCPs programmes, public seminars, scientific publications, project website, facebook, the TRACES Journal and exhibitions. The participation to conferences and lectures has been used to disseminate the project and the preliminary findings, as well as broaden the debate about key questions.

TRACES partners have started working on two open-access resources: the edited volume *Art, Ethnography, Contentious Heritage* (working title), edited by Arnd Schneider (WP2), which will contain contributions from the five ethnographers involved in the project and members of the CCPs;

TRACES Contentious Heritage Manual, an extensive volume offering a comprehensive overview of the pivotal findings resulting from project activities, critically outlining best practices and policies addressed to the transmission of contentious cultural heritage, and thus raising awareness and nurturing the debate on reflexive Europeanisation.

The consortium has been cooperating with other EU funded sister projects (e.g. CoHERE, UNREST) to organise joint events and share the preliminary findings.

## **Progress beyond the state of the art and expected potential impact (including the socio-economic impact and the wider societal implications of the project so far)**

The way of working in mutual co-productions rather than interventions in the field of heritage practices e.g. museums commemoration sites and community engagement leads beyond the state of the arts in the field of heritage transmission. This achievement is met in two perspectives

a) transmission practices of one local case of particular contentious heritage is challenged, dealt with and changed in a deep way

b) through the accompanied research and supervision of these local attempts by the WPs TRACES manages to distract and condense overall methodological approaches of co-production and Europeanisation in the context of contentious heritage transmission.

The early activities of stakeholder inclusion and the implementation of educational activities and their self-research lead the CCP work clearly beyond the state of the art. In that perspective e.g. in collaboration with WP3, CCP1 developed research questions on their own way to engage communities in their way of dealing with “neglected heritage”; CCP3 conducted a workshop in which they managed to bring curators and educators from different local heritage institutions together to discuss learning effects on contentious objects in their collections. WP5 provided an open workshop in collaboration with WP1, WP6 and CCP4 in Edinburgh including stakeholders and scholars from the field of museological studies and museum practice. Including researchers from WP4, WP1, WP6 a conference with stakeholder in Belfast on the issue of dealing with difficult, conflicted memories was conducted by CCP5. These examples show that steps beyond the state of the art in the field of local stakeholder work and heritage transmission was already achieved in the first research phase. Parallel the external ethnographers (lead by WP2) started to accompany the CCP research activities and WP researchers started their visits and investigation. Hence the next research phase will be dedicated to the development of overall insights in the context of reflexive Europeanisation.

**Address (URL) of the project's public website**

<http://www.tracesproject.eu/>

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