

## *Rethinking the history of Europe*

### *Borders and Borderlands*

Europe's borders have both an internal and an external connotation. There are the lines separating European nation states from each other, and then there are the lines that separate Europe from other regions or continents. In both cases, they emerge over the course of centuries in historical processes of contention, conflict and peace making. The borders are not only physical demarcations of territories, but also constructions of mental barriers. Eastern Europe is a case in point, alternately seen at once as belonging to and not being part of Europe.

The aim of the Academy session in July 2003 is to analyze the processes of inclusion or exclusion by virtue of which Europe's borders were constructed as a result of ideological, military, political, economical, religious and cultural considerations. The emergence of Europe of today should be seen as a historical process, with its borders – internal and external - changing, over time, in meaning and content. The Academy's focus will be on what contemporaries at various times, in the course of often contentious processes, have defined as the borders of Europe.

In the past two decades, the borders of Europe, and the territories they enclose, have been undergoing a profound transformation. One expression of this transformation is the parallel emergence of the concept of "globalisation". Another example is offered by the case of Eastern Europe. A third case is that of Turkey as a potential member of the European Union: is it or is it not part of Europe? Even if the ongoing transformation is new, there is an enduring element in the fact that Europe cannot be clearly defined either in cultural or in geographical terms. The transformation deals as much with values as with geography.

In short, Europe as a set of values, or as a region of shared history, has no clear demarcation. There are many competing claims to constitute its historical core, while the values inscribed in the concept are often contested and contradictory. The nation states of this evasive Europe have long occupied a space that is much more clearly defined than is the broader area to which they supposedly belong. Their boundaries were historically constructed. Through a

concept of clearcut frontiers, people were divided by means of envisaged lines, where the civilisation of one “people” was unambiguously delimited from that of another.

The European construction of frontiers started early. An important step in this creative activity was taken with the great explorations in the 16th century. When the oceans and the New World were mapped, the boundaries of the Old World were drawn. The maps, which emerged in this context, were produced to control space and to dominate it conceptually. This development was reinforced by the emergence of centralised state bureaucracies that claimed physical dominion over the subjects in their demarcated territories.

Two developments contributed to the reinforcement of an abstract and more rigid demarcation of frontiers. In the first place, from the mid-19th century, political space was compressed by means of new communication technology (most importantly telegraph and railways).

Conceptually and symbolically, the periphery came closer to the centre at the same time as the extent of an often expanded *territorium* was brought under control through colonisation. The idea of territorial regime and practice – with the attending concept of a definite frontier - was further sharpened when politics was linked to the concept of nation, and, in turn, the concept of ethnicity emerged as a parallel to race in the Enlightenment classification.

This European development was in contrast to the American construction of a frontier image as a rolling zone, which marked the end of settlement and civilisation. The American historian Frederick Jackson Turner argued that it was in this borderland that the whole American way of living was moulded. An important question in the current rhetoric on globalisation and on War on the Evil is the possible meaning of these historical experiences of constructing boundaries through exclusion and inclusion.

## Terms of Award

**Eligibility:** Professors of history currently teaching in secondary schools are eligible to apply. Journalists in the beginning stages of their careers are also eligible.

**Residence:** Successful applicants will be required to take a residence in (or very near) Florence for the Academy's duration. Meetings will start the morning of **Thursday 3 July**, and will be concluded in late afternoon of **Friday 11 July**. It is now foreseen that meetings will be held every day, including of Saturday 5 July, morning and afternoon.

**Stipend:** Participants will be awarded a grant of 500 Euros, half of it paid very shortly following their arrival, and the other half towards the end of the Academy's session. All costs (including travel expenses) will be covered directly by the participants, who may solicit their home school authorities for additional subsidies. No additional allowances are offered for family members, or for contributions to national health schemes.

**Housing:** Information about housing will be made available later. It should nonetheless be understood that Fellows will be responsible for covering their housing costs.

**Facilities available to Fellows:** Academy Fellows will have access to the Institute's facilities, including the cafeteria (open for lunch), computer facilities, and the Library. Fellows will not have access to office space, or to telephone service.

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## Presentation

### **Istitutional Background**

The Academy of European History at the [European University Institute](#), founded in 2001 by professor [Anthony Molho](#), professor [Diogo Ramada Curto](#), and professor [Bo Stråth](#), aims to provide a forum for the discussion of European history among two groups of young professionals, drawn from across Europe: professors at the pre-University level and journalists. The Academy will hold its second session from **3 through 12 July 2003**. Its first, experimental, session was held in the summer of 2002. A group of some forty secondary school history teachers and journalists spent about ten days discussing, with acknowledged experts and among themselves, questions of how the past, especially the past of Europe, should be taught to pre-university students and presented to a wider public. The same format will be followed in the course of the second session.

### **Purpose**

Increasingly in the past few years, historians, and more generally educators, have been pondering a set of questions about the study of history: What is the relationship of the past to the present? What should it be? In any case, to what past do we refer and to whose present? Questions such as these have been staples of historical inquiry, from Herodotus to the present. In moments of profound change, such as the past two or so decades especially in Europe, they assume an even greater urgency. On occasion, they also generate much dispute.

For nearly two hundred years, until the second half of the twentieth century, the nation-state has been the fundamental unit of historical analysis, both in historical instruction and in discussions about the past in the popular press.

For the last half a century or more, thanks to the pioneering work of several historians, professional historical study has become less sharply focused on the nation state. Scholars across Europe have contributed to this enterprise: the *Annales school* in France, economic historians and the *Past and Present group* in Great Britain, less well organized but no less important historical groups in German-speaking Europe, the school of microstoria gathered around the journal *Quaderni storici* in Italy.

### **Context**

Yet, at all levels of instruction, teachers of history today face the difficult task of fashioning a *curriculum* that takes into account the increasing importance of the European community. How should one think about the history of Europe in relationship to the histories of individual nation-states? How has the concept of

Europe changed over time? What regions, cultures, historical traditions did Europe encompass in the remote or more proximate past? Such questioning has begun in earnest among some historians. But historical curricula - at both the university and secondary school levels - and discussions about the past in the popular press do not yet reflect the outcome of these discussions.

In creating the Academy, its founders are animated by a simple idea. Quite simply put, they are convinced that, especially in Europe today, there is a need for opening new forums for discussing the past and its relationship to the present. No credo – ideological or otherwise – will colour these discussions. Rather, as we did in the summer of 2002, we intend, also in the summer of 2003, to open invite members of the Academy to explore the challenge we all face when thinking about the history and the future of Europe.

Every session of the Academy is devoted to one theme. Last year's theme was ***Images of Europe, from Antiquity to the Present***. The theme of the second session of the Academy of European History will be ***Borders and Borderlands***. Meetings will be held twice a day, mornings and some afternoons devoted to presentations by acknowledged experts, The remaining afternoons to discussions with the assistance of these experts.

#### **AEH Address**

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## **Admission**

### **Information to Applicants**

Fellowships to the Academy of European History (AEH) are awarded to professors of History of secondary schools (lycée, gymnasium, or the equivalent), and to a small number of journalists at the beginning stages of their careers. Applications are encouraged from all countries of the European Union. A small number of grants are especially reserved for citizens of East European countries. Successful applicants will be expected to travel to Florence, and to participate actively in the Academy's proceedings, to be held from **Thursday, 3 July through Friday, 11 July 2003.**

**All documentation must be submitted in English or French.**

**Applications should include 2 copies of the following:**

- 1) **Application form** (download it here or contact [Academy.of.European.History@iue.it](mailto:Academy.of.European.History@iue.it))
- 2) **Curriculum Vitae** (with detailed information about university training and nature of teaching responsibilities).
- 3) **A statement of purpose** explaining why the applicant wishes to attend the Academy (not to exceed 3 pages in length).
- 4) **A statement about the candidate's linguistic ability.** The Academy's proceedings will be held either in English or French, and it is important for participants to have a good command of these languages.
- 5) **One letter of reference**, preferably from the applicant's superior at work, either to be annexed to the application, or to be sent directly by the referee to the AEH. Letters must also arrive at the Academy by the application deadline of **14 April 2003.**

**APPLICATIONS AND ALL RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION MUST REACH THE ACADEMY NO LATER THAN 14 APRIL 2003.**

**The application envelope should be clearly marked as addressed to the AEH.**

Applications and references are also accepted by e-mail to [Academy.of.European.History@iue.it](mailto:Academy.of.European.History@iue.it)

Candidates are selected by a committee consisting of teaching staff and of advanced researchers from the Department of History and Civilization of the European University Institute. Their decision is final. Reserve candidates are

sometimes nominated. Candidates will be informed of the outcome of their applications by post, or, where possible, by e-mail.

**Applications, relevant attachments, and queries, should be sent to:**

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**ACADEMY OF EUROPEAN HISTORY**  
**SUMMER SESSION, July 3– July 11 2003**

**APPLICATION FORM**

**Deadline 14 April 2003**

**This form and all accompanying documents to be compiled either in English or in French.**

\* Please fill in and/or circle the appropriate answers. You must respond to all questions; incomplete forms will not be processed!

First name: .....

Last name: .....

Sex: .....

Nationality: .....

Date and place of birth: .....

Address: .....

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Tel. ....

Fax ..... E-mail .....

\* Please note that a fax number or e-mail address will facilitate speedy communications

Postal address for period March-July of the year of application: .....

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Academic degrees received, with dates and Universities, and final grade in University diploma: .....

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List the courses you have taught in the last three years, and their level. If journalists the name of the journals or newspapers for which you write (or wrote in the past), and the general area of your journalistic specialisation, if any: .....

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List any publication, with complete bibliographic references. Journalists list no more than five recent articles which bespeak for interests: .....

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Give the name, address and telephone number of your referee

Name of referee: .....

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Address, telephone and fax number of referee: .....

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Language proficiency:      English    fluent / good / fair / none  
   French    fluent / good / fair / none

Your application is **complete** when you submit:

- + this completed application form
- + a typed *curriculum vitae*
- + a letter explaining your field of interest and the reason you wish to attend the AEH
- + a reference letter from a professor/employer

Please do not submit other materials, such as copies of diplomas or publications.

Signature:

Date: