

Belgrade, July 2008.

EUSTORY History Competition in Serbia  
*Meeting the Past 2007 - 2008*

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***“SITES OF MEMORY”***

Competition Report

The fourth round of EUSTORY History Competition in Serbia was organized by the Association for Social History-EUROCLIO and the Young Researchers of Serbia. It was officially announced at the beginning of October under the official title *MEETING THE PAST 2007/2008*. The topic for this year's competition was **“Sites of memory”**. High school students, aged from 15 to 19, were invited to choose one site of memory, to describe it and to research the meaning as well as the importance of that specific site in collective memory and in the process of shaping the national or local identity. It turned out that this was a very serious topic and that our demands and expectations were on the highest level ever since the EUSTORY competition is organized in Serbia. Nevertheless, the results of this years competition were also very far from our expectations.

We received 170 contributions by 31 March - the deadline for submission the papers. As no group work was allowed, we had 170 participants as well: 116 of them were girls and only 54 were boys. They all came from 87 different high schools placed all over Serbia, supervised by 109 tutors. In comparison to previous years' statistics, this was almost twice as much as we ever had!

Because of that amount of papers, we had to increase the number of jury members, so this year we elected 12. Moreover we launched a new jury procedure and slightly changed the criteria. So, this year we had three eliminatory stages and, thanks to the new criteria,

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much sharper and discriminative tools for qualitative analysis of received papers. Nevertheless, our jury had not an easy task. Almost 25% of total amount of papers, that have reached the third, final stage of the jury procedure, were really good research papers, among which they should choose only six to be awarded. Authors of some of those papers managed to shake, even overthrow, some national myths in their researches, which we all consider as a great success. Apart from that, we had a certain number of essays and, generally speaking, papers, which were not that good, but the new procedure allowed us to exclude them during the first stage.

The most frequent and also very successfully covered subtopics were:

- Monuments and memorial centers
- Significant buildings
- (Re)naming of streets, squares, schools...

Like in former rounds, this year we awarded 6 students:

No	Award	Name (age)	Title
1.	First award	Jelena Jezdimirovic (1991)	<b>The light shines from the river</b> (about the first hydro-electric power plant in Uzice)
2.	Second award	Dusan Radovanovic (1991)	<b>The story about Milutin – history of the bronze soldier monument in Kraljevo</b>
3.	Second award	Kristina Jorgic (1990)	<b>The memorial complex “Sumarice” in the memory of citizens of Kragujevac</b>
4.	Third award	Danica Mirosavljevic (1989)	<b>A life through the time – tenement, school...</b>
5.	Third award	Ilija Rilakovic (1990)	<b>Museum, school – school, museum</b>
6.	Third award	Ana Vukmirovic (1989)	<b>The old water-mill in Trstenik</b>

Apart from these six, we commended 15 students and invited all 21 of them, together with their tutors, to the award ceremony.

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The award ceremony took place in Belgrade, on 14 June 2008. The idea was to hold an open air ceremony, on the location of “The Old Fair” in Belgrade, the place that used to be a concentration camp during the Second World War. Apart of one monument dedicated to those who were killed in the camp, the history of that location is nowadays completely neglected and forgotten. Some people even live in the former barracks, while other buildings are either ruined either turned into the art studios or a night club! By choosing this site for the award ceremony we wanted to draw the public attention and to do something to preserve this part of our common past in the common memory.

Therefore, together with the awarded students, we prepared a declaration that was signed by the students during the award ceremony and, afterwards, sent to all individuals and institutions that might be interested in supporting the initiative to turn “The Old Fair” into a memory centre.

On 14 June the organizers met the awarded students in front of the main entrance of former camp and, after a short “warming-up” game; we all went to a guided tour. It was the first time that an organized group of youngsters had a chance to see the place, to enter the buildings and to hear the whole story about the past of “The Old Fair”. Unfortunately, the weather did not allow us to proceed as we planned. Because of the rain, we had to go to the main hall of the New Belgrade Municipality House for the afternoon activities.

Prior to the award ceremony, organizers asked students to prepare the poster presentations of their research works, so the poster exhibition was set up in the hall during the early afternoon hours. At 5 o’clock in the afternoon, the award ceremony officially started. In behalf of Körber Stiftung and EUSTORY Network, Tina Gotthardt handed over the awards to students and their tutors, and then students signed the Declaration. When the official part of the program was finished, all invited guests had a chance to see the poster exhibition and to talk with the students about their researches, but also about their impressions on “The Old Fair”.

The whole event, from the beginning to the very end, was well covered by the media. The TV B92 (the media house with national frequency) was with us for the whole day,

recording all activities and interviewing the students and organizers. They prepared two

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reports and broadcasted them in their news on Saturday afternoon and evening. We were also invited to be the guests in the “News at 10” on the Info channel B92 on Saturday, as well as in their morning TV talk-show and in the youth radio show on Sunday. A couple of local radio stations also had their journalists at the ceremony.

All awarded and commended students were invited to apply for the EUSTORY academies. We received 15 applications and passed them to EUSTORY team. After Tina Gotthardt has interviewed all candidates during the award ceremony, EUSTORY invited seven students from Serbia to participate in academies in Berlin, Engadine and Belgrade.

This year’s experience made us feel very proud and content for several reasons: we received the greatest number of entries ever; the new jury procedure and criteria turned out to be more efficient and precise in process of evaluating the quality of papers; the media showed high interest for our work; with the students’ Declaration we approached the public in Serbia. We are now hoping to be equally successful in organizing the EUSTORY Youth Academy in Belgrade, this October.

For Organizers:

*Jelena Popovic, ASH-EUROCLIO*