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## OBCT Final report - Implementation of activities

To contribute to achieving the project's expected results and successfully implement the activities planned as part of the project, OBCT recruited as project officer the researcher Marco Abram, historian with solid expertise in the field of memory and remembrance, specialized in the history of Yugoslavia and involved on the OBCT project "We were striving for peace" between 2013 and 2014.

From 15th November 2016 to 31st December 2017, Marco worked on the project's activities supported by Luisa Chiodi, OBCT scientific director, who provided her scientific supervision and by other OBCT's staff members as described in the following paragraphs.

### **Building the an interactive archive of testimonies**

In December 2016, Marco took part in Fruska Gora two-day workshop, presenting OBCT's projects devoted to the history of the Italian peace movement and the collection of interviews with people who were involved in peace initiatives during the Yugoslav wars. During workshops and discussions Marco contributed to the definition of the structure of the new common archive and to the dialogue with exhibition's curators and artists.

He elaborated **30 deep interviews** with anti-war activists in Italy that fed into the interactive archive of testimonies set up by the Testimony's project network. Every single interview was divided in different thematic sections and provided with related tags in three languages (Italian, English and Serbian) that will help to search the online archive.

### **Hosting the exhibition in Italy and organising side events**

The exhibition "Testimony - truth or politics" was hosted by the Boccanera Gallery in Trento from the 17th of November to the 8th of December and attracted **around 200 visitors**. Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso – Transeuropa presented the initiative as an important step forward the inclusion of the memories of the Yugoslav wars in a transnational confrontation with the past at the European level, often obstructed by common and stereotyped perceptions that describe the "Balkans" as not fully European region. Italy has strong historical relations with South-East Europe and the wars of Yugoslav dissolution had an important impact on Italian civil society and in the development of the Italian antiwar movement. Moreover, Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol is a border region historically inhabited by people who speaks different languages and recognize themselves

as part of different national groups. The history of XX century has produced conflicts and traumas also in this territory, where is important to keep a constant confrontation with the issue of identity, nationalism, divided memories and discrimination.

The exhibition was opened by the Gallery director Giorgia Boccanera, the curators Noa Treister and Zoran Erić, with the participation of OBCT director Luisa Chiodi and OBCT projects director Chiara Sighele. Some of the artists involved in the exhibition (Nikola Radić Lucati, Vlada Miladinović e Mersid Ramičević) were present at the opening, introducing and explaining their artworks to the public. In particular, Mersid Ramičević presented his sound art performance "A Word Is Not A Word, Not That Word: Children's Song". On the occasion of the opening, national and local media (press and radio) covered the event with articles and interviews. In the following weeks, Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso -Transeuropa organized several guided tours for visitors and in particular for groups of museum workers. One special guided tour was organized at the end of the event "Remembering the Yugoslav wars: art and testimony" (30 persons took part in the guided tours).

A magazine presenting the project and the exhibition was printed in 1000 copies and distributed, before and during the initiative, in several formal and informal venues of Trento and Rovereto, including meeting points particularly visited by citizens of post-Yugoslav countries now living in Trentino.

OBCT organized two round tables aimed at discussing the topics at the core of the project "Testimony – art or politics". The event "Remembering the Yugoslav wars: art and testimony" was promoted in collaboration with the Fondazione Museo storico del Trentino and held at the "Officina della Storia" in Trento on the 1st of December 2018. The event was opened by the welcoming remarks of Mario Raffaelli – the President of the Centre for International Cooperation – who stressed the importance of the dealing with the past within reconciliation processes in different countries.

The first round table "Europe, war, memory and testimony: the Yugoslav wars" was animated by historians and museum curators: Marco Abram (Osservatorio Balcani Caucaso – Transeuropa), Mila Orlić (University of Rijeka), Alessandro Cattunar (Associazione 4704) and Michele Toss (Fondazione Museo Storico del Trentino). The discussion moved from a problematization of the idea of "European memory" and analyzed the space given to the Yugoslav wars in the disputed building of a European narrative on the past. Much attention was also devoted to the way Yugoslav wars are remembered in the post-Yugoslav states, highlighting common dynamics and specifics, and focusing in particular on the case of Croatia. The discussion was then extended to the role played by testimonies in the definition of both public and collective memories of conflicts. A particular focus was devoted to significant examples of online-archives which collect and make available to the public a great number of interviews on past wars.

The second round table focused on the relation between "War, testimony and art" from different

perspectives. The topic was discussed by Noa Treister, a researcher and activist of the Centre for Cultural decontamination (Belgrade), Claudia Zini who is a Phd candidate at The Courtauld Institute of Art (London) and Elena Tonezzer, a historian and curator of the Fondazione Museo Storico del Trentino (Trento). The participants discussed the way single artists from South-East Europe, and in particular from Bosnia–Herzegovina, deal with Yugoslav wars in their artworks. The framework and the realization of the exhibition “Testimony – truth or politics” were introduced to discuss the possibilities to address the issue in a collective way. The last part of the round table took in consideration the potentialities of artists’ involvement in history exhibitions and in museum work.

The event was attended by university students and professors, teachers, museum workers and members of local ngos involved in post-Yugoslav countries (around 60 persons). The round tables stimulated interesting debates concerning both local and post-Yugoslav memory issues, revealing how memory dynamics often replicate themselves across the European memory space.

Along with Marco Abram, other OBCT staff members worked on the project’s events. Chiara Sighele, OBCT project director, and Chiara Cont, event organiser and financial assistant, dedicated time to the preparation of the exhibition, to the attempt to raise additional funds for the project (applying as lead partner to CEI - Knowledge Exchange Programme Italy in Spring 2017) and to the organisation of Testimony events in Trento. Early contacts were established with the three local museums - Museo Storico Italiano della Guerra (MSIG), Fondazione Museo Storico del Trentino (FMST) and Museo di Arte moderna e contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto (MART) - which were initially proposed to host and co-organise the exhibition; for different reasons none of the museums could accept the whole proposal, but agreed to engaging in the dissemination of the project activities. In particular, the FMST hosted and joined the two round tables; the MSIG co-organised one guided tour and promoted the exhibition and its events among its group of history teachers and educators.

Nicole Corritore, OBCT press officer, promoted the project activities among the Italian press and civil society sector, by releasing news alert and press releases related to the exhibition, its side-events; and some of the articles being part of the information campaign.

Finally, even if not included in costs reported in the financial report, it is worth mentioning that valuable contribution to the set up and promotion of the exhibition in Trento was provided by OBCT colleagues, such as Giuseppe Lauricella, who greatly helped with the technical set-up of the exhibition at Galleria Boccanera in Trento, and Roberta Bertoldi, web and graphic designer who realised the graphic layout and composition of the bilingual exhibition magazine.

After the exhibition in Trento, Marco Abram attended the international conference “Testimony. Poetry. Language” held in Belgrade (Serbia) in December 2017 as part of the project Testimony -

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truth or politics". He was involved with the role of chair in one of the panels and attended as OBCT representative the opening of the exhibition in Belgrade.

### **Animating an information campaign to raise knowledge of the Yugoslav wars as part of a common European history**

As planned, OBCT information campaign resulted in the publication of regularly posts and articles giving an overview of the flourishing literature on memory studies in pre & post Yugoslav time produced by local scholars, thus helping integrate it in the broader European academic reflection on the cultural heritage of war. Luka Zanoni, OBCT editor-in-chief, discussed with Marco Abram, Chiara Sighele and Luisa Chiodi the editorial plan for the information campaign, facilitating whenever relevant the engagement of OBCT freelance contributors. Several analytical articles in Italian and English were written by Marco Abram and other OBCT's collaborators, covering news and events related to the memory of the Yugoslav wars in the SEE region but also investigating the relation between the European memory framework and the local dynamics.

To circulate Testimony contents among the Italian/European public sphere, OBCT press officer Nicole Corritore, distributed several news alerts among OBCT press contacts about new publications of OBCT Testimony information campaign, and regularly posted Testimony contents on OBCT social media in ITA and ENG, reaching out to its around **50.000 followers**.

The information campaign on OBCT website reached out to an online audience of over **17.141 pageviews** (Google Analytics as of March 2018).

In addition to the publications on its website, OBCT engaged in various offline initiatives to disseminate the project. For instance, in June 2017 Marco Abram attended the 1st Conference of the "Associazione Italiana di Public History"/ 4th IFPH Annual Conference Program in Ravenna (Italy), presenting and discussing some of the most relevant aspects of the project in the paper "Public History and "European Remembrance": A Transnational Project on the Memories of the Yugoslav Wars". Moreover, the issues investigated by the project were presented by Marco Abram on the occasion of lectures at the Department of Sociology and Social Research of the University of Trento. Some of the analysis were reported in the book chapter "L'allargamento dell'Ue, i paesi post-jugoslavi e la memoria dei conflitti degli anni novanta", included in the edited volume "La questione orientale. I Balcani tra integrazione e sicurezza" (Donzelli forthcoming 2018).

In the run up of and during the exhibition period, OBCT co-organized different public events on

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related topics, with the aim to take advantage of meaningful initiatives organised by others to further maximise the visibility of Testimony and its specific perspective, and to encourage more people to visit the exhibition. This additional awareness raising effort, carried out with resources external to this project, included the engagement in events such as the presentations of the Italian translation of the book *The Art of Survival*, realized by the Bosnian artist collective Fama; the screening of movies related to the memory of Yugoslav wars (as for example “Dobra Žena” (A Good wife) by Mirjana Karanović) and public meetings with war testimonies, such as the meeting with Jovan Divjak who visited Trento in early December 2017 (meeting introduced by Marzia Bona for OBCT).