



Annual
Conference 2026

Hope MANIFESTO

#HISTORYANDHOPEMANIFESTO



HOUSE OF
EUROPEAN
HISTORY

An initiative of the European Parliament

About this Manifesto

As part of the 32nd EuroClio Annual Conference 2026, *History and Hope: Learning for Change*, the House of European History and EuroClio created collaborative spaces for reflection and exchange around this year's theme. Initiated by the House of European History and drawing on the many contributions gathered through the Wall of Hope, a visual timeline initiated by EuroClio, as well as participatory workshops and written reflections throughout the conference, this collective process gave rise to the final **Hope Manifesto**.

This Manifesto brings together the reflections, experiences and commitments of around **250 history teachers and educators**, who contributed to its development through a structured participatory process during the conference.

The Hope Manifesto is a collective expression of the history education community and a shared point of reference for wider dialogue. Rooted in professional practice and shaped through exchange of ideas, it is addressed first and foremost to educators and students across Europe and beyond, while also being shared with institutions and organisations engaged in questions of democracy, education and social cohesion.

It was conceived as a collective and teacher-led text on the role of history education in times of uncertainty. Its purpose is to express, in a concise and accessible form, how educators understand the contribution of history teaching to critical thinking, democratic life and plurality of perspectives, as well as highlight the role of hope as a meaningful pedagogical orientation.

Different activities made it possible to capture a wide range of practices, concerns, aspirations and commitments emerging from the conference community.

An editorial committee, comprising 10 volunteer teachers and educators, worked to consolidate and structure these contributions into a coherent final text. Its role was to ensure clarity, editorial coherence and faithfulness to the collective process from which the Manifesto emerged.

The Editorial Committee



Signature of the Editorial Committee members

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The Hope Manifesto

We teach from different histories but face shared challenges

Across Europe and beyond, our classrooms are shaped by different memories, conflicts, silences, political contexts. There are many ways of teaching the past, living the present and considering the future. Every history teacher teaches from a situated perspective, shaped by their background. This matters, because history is never taught outside its context. But the challenges we face are increasingly shared.

“The tension of finding it hard to remain hopeful rather than fearful in a world that has so much suffering and injustice, whilst also desperately wanting change (and to be part of that change).”

Outside the classroom, public debate is often polarised, individualism can weaken the sense of community, and democratic values can no longer be taken for granted. Yet history also shows that rights, freedoms and forms of solidarity have been built over time, and can be protected, reexamined and renewed. Students grow up navigating social networks, misinformation and artificial intelligence, where authority can be difficult to assess and where too much content can create confusion, fatigue and mistrust. Systemic racism, inequity, intergenerational trauma and unresolved social tensions and wars also shape how young people relate to history, to institutions and to one another.

History can be misused and abused. We fight against this in the classroom and as a community of teachers and educators.

Inside the classroom, these realities appear in students' questions, emotions, doubts, resistance, silences or disinterest but also in their curiosity, sense of justice, digital knowledge and desire to understand the world in which they live. Students bring narratives from families, communities, media and online spaces, as well as questions of heritage and identity: what is inherited, what is shared, what is contested, and what each generation chooses to carry forward or change. These moments can be difficult, but they are also openings.

These emotions cannot and should not be outside history education. They are part of the reality in which history is taught.

What hope means in history teaching today

Hope can mean different things depending on contexts, experiences and languages. For history educators, it cannot remain an abstract word. For us, hope is not naïve optimism. It's not the belief that things will simply get better.

Outside the classroom, hope can be understood as a capacity to preserve our social capital, to keep our societies resilient, to overcome difficulties, and to resist despair. It is grounded in values such as solidarity, human rights, equity, inclusivity and responsibility. It gives energy, motivation, drive and a sense of purpose. It helps people keep looking for ways to act, even when change is slow, uncertain or difficult.

Inside the classroom, hope becomes a practice. It is a tool for change.

As history teachers, **we are driven by the need to build trust:** trust that students can face complexity, and question narratives. Without it, we cannot open difficult histories, hold disagreement, or help students question sensitive narratives. Trust does not mean comfort or consensus. It creates the conditions for students to feel respected, to build confidence in their own abilities - now and for the future. And to remain in dialogue as active global citizen to contribute to an open and trustful society beyond the classroom.

The history classroom is a specific space where hope can be practised, because history teaching already carries the possibility of hope. It shows that the world has not always been as it is now. It shows that societies have changed, that people have acted, that injustices have been challenged, that rights have been claimed, that communities have rebuilt, and that narratives have shifted.

This is why hope is not something added from outside to history teaching. It can already be found in the work of history teachers: in the way we help students move from passive learners to active citizens, strengthening their critical thinking skills, encouraging students to move from reflection to action.

"I think about hope as a radical act [...] I think about hope as both a decision and a commitment, to simultaneously hold onto it and impart it to others."

For students, hope should be a tool to understand and to act.

It helps them connect the past with the present, question what seems fixed, imagine and understand that things can be different. Students do not only receive knowledge. They bring questions, experiences, emotions, capacities like digital expertise and ways of seeing the world. Hope grows when these contributions are taken seriously and become part of the learning process.

For history teachers, hope is therefore both a responsibility and a practice: a way of teaching that supports understanding, agency, community, democratic participation and the possibility of change.

Where hope takes shape in history teaching

Hope takes shape in the everyday work of history teaching: in the topics we propose, the materials we choose, the questions we ask, the stories we share, the silences we investigate, and the spaces we create for students to think, speak and take part.

Sources, facts and evidence are central to this work. Photographs, objects, oral testimonies, maps, archives, street names, museum displays, local traces of history and digital documents help students slow down and look more carefully. They learn to ask who is speaking, what is fact, what is opinion, what is missing, and what can be questioned. These skills matter far beyond the history classroom.

Some of these stories are intergenerational. They connect students with children, adults and older people from the past and present. They remind us that history is also about what is transmitted, what is inherited, and what each generation chooses to carry forward or change.

Multiperspectivity is central to this work. By using different lenses, comparing narratives and questioning dominant, national, colonial or Eurocentric perspectives, we help students understand that history is not a single story. We look for voices that are absent from textbooks and ask what has been silenced, overlooked or made invisible. This does not make history simpler; it makes it more honest.

Hope also needs space for disagreement. It does not require consensus, but it does require enough trust to hold difficult conversations. In discussion, debate and healthy conflict, students can constructively listen, argue, doubt, compare evidence and encounter different interpretations without turning disagreement into hostility.

“Without friction, there is no insight. Hope, therefore, does not mean avoiding tension, but trusting that confrontation can lead to connection [...] to collectively imagine a more just future.”

Participation turns this learning into agency. When students ask their own questions, research, debate, co-create, join a student council, build a project, speak with others or connect their classroom to their community, they move from listening to taking part. They begin to see themselves not only as learners of history, but as people who can be part of it and can act on it.

Emotions are inevitable part of this work too. History can evoke and provoke fear, anger, sadness, resistance, empathy, discomfort and care. These emotions can block learning when they remain unacknowledged; however, if they are recognised and worked through, they are essential to it. We do not replace evidence with emotion. Emotions are an undeniable part of critical thinking. We help students understand what they feel, move through it, and shift from reaction to reflection.

Imagination opens space for hope. Through role play, simulations, arts-based reflection, future-oriented questions and game-based learning, students can experience complexity rather than only hear about it. They can step into different positions, face dilemmas, test decisions, and see that the present is not fixed. Creativity can also offer another way to assess learning. These practises can connect knowledge with emotion and show how they understand, feel and make sense of history.

As teachers, we also carry a responsibility to keep learning, being actively reflexive and stay curious. This means questioning our pedagogy, our emotions, our biases and our stereotypes. We cannot ask students to engage with discomfort, complexity and difficult histories if we have not begun that work ourselves.

Hope can also grow beyond the classroom: in museums, archives, memorials, monuments, public spaces, nature, local heritage, exhibitions, fieldwork and visits. Encounters with places, artefacts and people make history tangible. They help students connect and question events, objects, memories and present realities.

Building hope

“Hope is not an ingenuous feeling, but a professional stance that acknowledges the complexity of the past while recognising the possibility for transformation inherent in educational processes”

Not all of us can do all of this in the same way. Our contexts, curricula, resources and freedoms differ. Some practices are already part of our classrooms. Some are aspirations. Some require more time, support, courage and community.

This gathering as a community of practice around the theme of history and hope is more than a conference. It is an act of collaborative thinking, a moment to draw from our shared realities, learn across our differences, and build a common awareness of what history teaching can make possible today.

Behind classroom doors, it is easy to lose sight of the wider movement we are part of. These gatherings offer an open and honest space where educators from across Europe and beyond can (re)connect, share practices, and remember why they do what they do.

This Manifesto is our collective orientation on hope as a practice of history teaching: a shared commitment to make the classroom a place where hope is not only discussed but built.

Wall of HOPE

The Wall of Hope is a visual timeline where participants were asked to share a memory from the past, or hopeful future from a personal historical point of view to a global scale. Each entry stands as a reflection of a moment, incident, reality or emotion associated with hope. This creative, interactive installation includes more than 120 contributions from the participants of the 32nd EuroClio Annual Conference: History and Hope.

The Wall helps us see how hope stands in diverse moments, shifting its focus through the timeline to meet the demands of the era. It shows that each era has been seeking its own solutions, movements and courage. Hope does not have borders, a local experience, a protest on a street, an enactment of a law, are embraced find resonance as a global encouragement. Hope serves as a drive for personal stories to become spark for a collective fire.

*“Women got the right to vote in Finland.”
-1906, European/Global*

Hope is a mean to rebuild trust, solidarity and community. moves through democratic awakenings, in the fall of regimes and the courage of collective action. Hope stands in education, in youth, in every generation that learns, questions and dares to shape what comes next.

*“All stolen heritage has been returned to the provenance communities.”
-2023, European/Global*

This interactive engagement proves that history is not just a sequence of dates, but a series of choices. We choose to remember the human chain, the rights, the progress and the classroom. The Wall of Hope symbolises a belief that the future can thrive, nourished by past experiences, a vivid imagination and the desire to transform disappointments into growth.



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historywallofhope.eu

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