HOUSE OF EUROPEAN HISTORY

An initiative of the European Parliament

Annual Activity Report 2024



Foreword



Meeting of the museum's Board of Trustees.

The activity report is an opportunity to highlight the breadth and depth of the work the House of European History has carried out over 2024.

Both the volume and the quality of work achieved are impressive and show just how far the museum has come since it first opened its doors to the public in May 2017. It was a year, during which the museum spread its wings with exhibitions beyond Brussels thereby truly enhancing its European character.

Of course, 2024 was also a year of elections. It would be unthinkable for the museum not to have participated in the efforts to maintain and uphold European democracy. Thus, it developed a new multimedia guided tour explaining the history of democracy, which runs though the permanent exhibition, and a new guided tour about the Pursuit of Democracy.

At the heart of all these efforts are the visitors and the citizens who engage with the museum and they seem to have warmly embraced it and its offer.

By October 2024, one million people had seen a post on one of the museum's social media platforms, this being achieved without the use of paid promotion or advertising. On 12 November 2024, the House of European History welcomed its one millionth visitor. European Parliament President Roberta Metsola was there to greet 20-year-old Portuguese university student, Raquel Correia.

It is often argued that maintaining success is more difficult than achieving it. Based on the results of 2024, the Board of Trustees is confident this museum will continue on its successful path for years to come.

Hans-Gert Pöttering

Chair, Board of Trustees, House of European History; former President, European Parliament

Diana Wallis

Vice-Chair, Board of Trustees, House of European History; former Vice-President, European Parliament

To Brussels and beyond

In 2024, the House of European History took an important step toward fulfilling its European mission. For the first time in its history, it displayed its work far from its Belgian base, namely in Greece, Bulgaria, and Hungary. These were the first stops in the European journey of the touring exhibition *Fake (f)or Real*.

At the same time, the temporary exhibition *Bellum et Artes* became the museum's first hosted exhibition. It was co-curated with partners and was part of a consortium of 12 museums and research institutions in an effort to understand and present the Thirty Years' War from multiple perspectives.

Together with the *Throwaway* European Partnership project, which ended in early 2024, the museum successfully completed other partnerships with museums across Europe, thus expanding its European reach.

Partnerships with European museums

Bellum & Artes

Museum of the University of Wrocław (Wrocław, Poland)
Leibniz-Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (Leipzig, Germany)
Dresden State Art Collections (Dresden, Germany)
Silesian Museum (Görlitz, Germany)
House of European History (Brussels, Belgium)
National Museum (Gdańsk, Poland)
The Royal Armoury, National Historical Museums (Stockholm, Sweden)
Carolina Rediviva Uppsala University Library (Uppsala, Sweden)
Olomouc Museum of Art (Olomouc, Czechia)
The National Gallery Prague (Prague, Czechia)
Ducal Palace Museum (Mantua, Italy)
The Prado Museum (Madrid, Spain)

Throwaway

Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art (Vienna, Austria)
Estonian National Museum (Tartu, Estonia)
Ettore Guatelli Museum Foundation (Ozzano Taro, Italy)
Museum of European Cultures – National Museums in Berlin (Berlin, Germany)
Celje Museum of Recent History (Celje, Slovenia)
National Museum of the Romanian Peasant (Bucharest, Romania)
Museum of Natural History Vienna (Vienna, Austria)
National Ethnographic Museum (Warsaw, Poland)

Touring exhibithion

Teloglion Fine Arts Foundation (Thessaloniki, Greece)
National Ethnographic Museum (Sofia, Bulgaria)
Open Society Archive (Budapest, Hungary)
Museum of the Second World War (Gdansk, Poland)
The Regional Museum Skåne (Kristianstad, Sweden)



The museum has developed partnerships with other cultural institutions across Europe.

Next to the focus on the history of democracy, and in order to do justice to one of the darkest chapters of history, the museum developed a new tablet tour about the history of the Shoah and an iWalk, which guides people through locations in Brussels, retracing the lives of children who survived the Holocaust.

It is important to mention that the year started with the launch of the museum's new branding and its new website, while during 2024, several participatory projects were established or completed and, after an in-depth evaluation, the family offer was enriched with a new family trail and kiosk.

Internally, the museum's Sustainability Working Group presented its proposals to improve the museum's carbon footprint, new storage was rented for the growing collection, and the museum's auditorium was renovated.

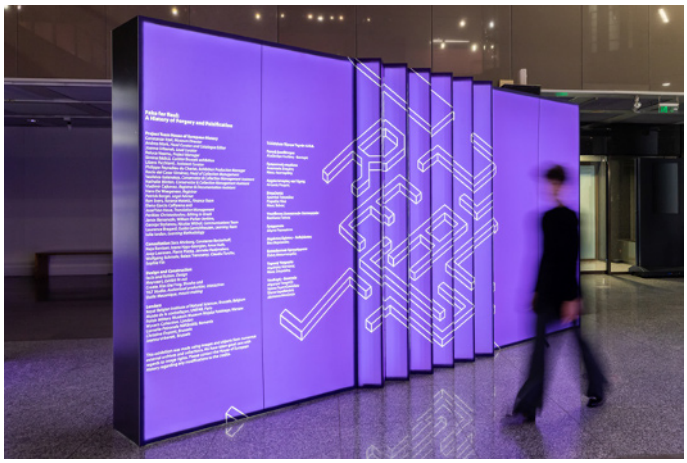
The effort to attract visitors was rewarded in November when the millionth visitor crossed the museum's doors. Quite an accomplishment given the adverse effects the Covid-pandemic had on the young museum's development.

Overall, 2024 can be seen as a successful year for the House of European History: Seven years after it opened its doors in Brussels, it was able to open exhibitions elsewhere in Europe.

It was a kind of second opening for a museum with a European mission.



The Eastman Building, originally used as a dental clinic, houses the museum in Brussels.



General aspect of the touring exhibition opening at the Teloglion Foundation of Fine Arts, Thessaloniki, Greece, © Meyvaert, facts and fiction.

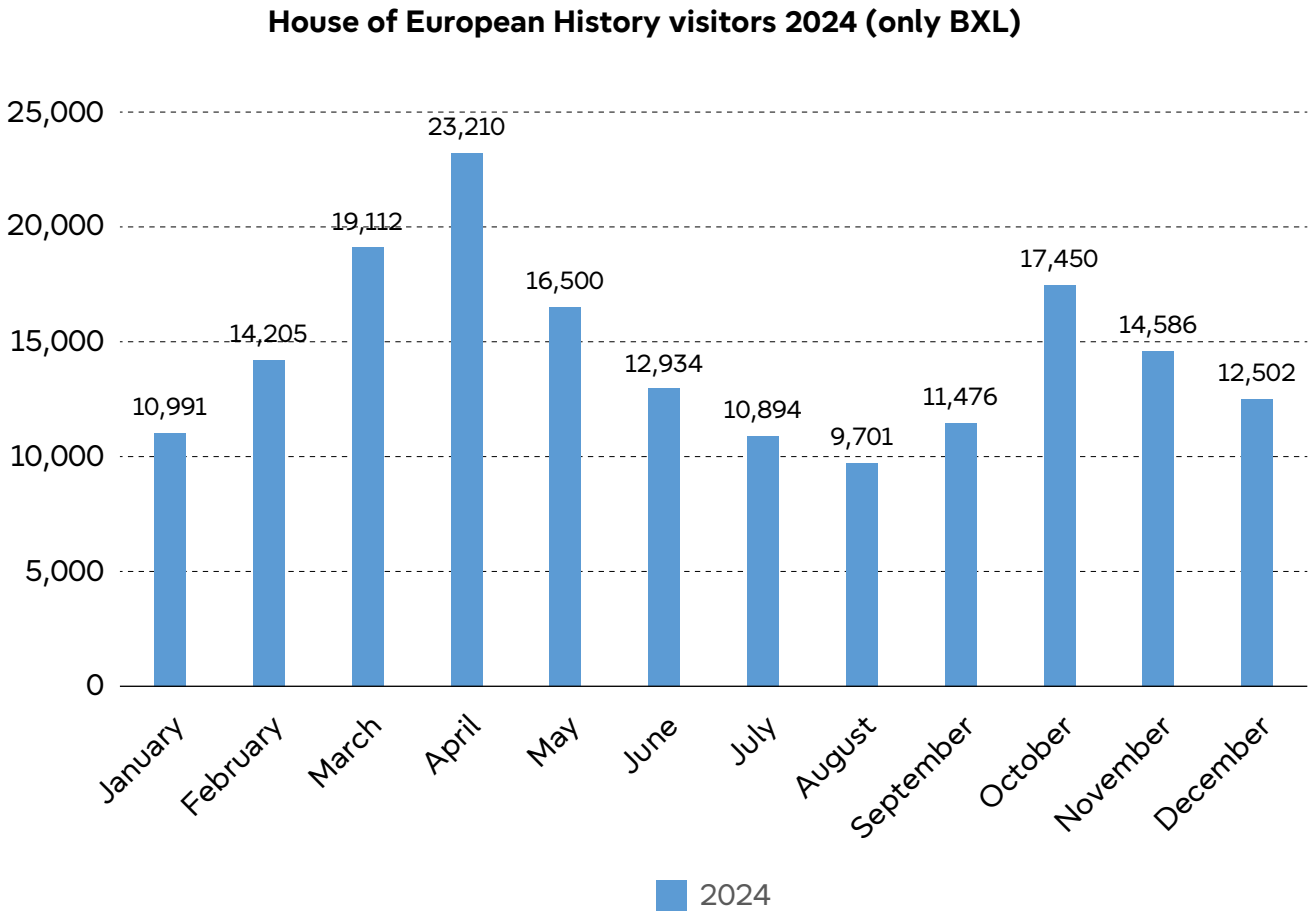
Visitor numbers

General table – 2024

ONSITE AUDIENCE			
INDIVIDUALS	GROUP VISITORS	ON TOUR (*)	**TOTAL**
84,391	89,170	16,939	**190,500**

(*) Figure concerns visitors to the touring exhibition *Fake* (f)or Real in Greece, Bulgaria and Hungary.

ONLINE AUDIENCE			
EVENTS	WEBSITES	SOCIAL MEDIA	**TOTAL**
22	138,911	2,225,823	**2,364,756**



Curatorial

Curatorial work is a multifaceted mosaic. Curators update the permanent exhibition and prepare temporary exhibitions. They work on building up and documenting the museum's collection, including its online presentation. They also prepare catalogues and guidebooks, and they represent the museum in conferences across Europe.

In 2024, the curatorial team worked on four temporary exhibitions: *Bellum et Artes. Europe and the Thirty Years War* was the result of a partnership project with 12 European museums and research institutions. It opened on 27 April and closed in early January 2025.

It will be followed, in March 2025, by the photo exhibition *Presence of the Past*, which in turn will give its place, in March 2026, to *Living Legacies*, which will explore the long-lasting effects of colonisation. In February 2024, the touring exhibition *Fake (f)or Real – A History of Forgery and Falsification* embarked on its journey. Starting in Thessaloniki, it continued in July to Sofia and in November it made its way to Budapest.

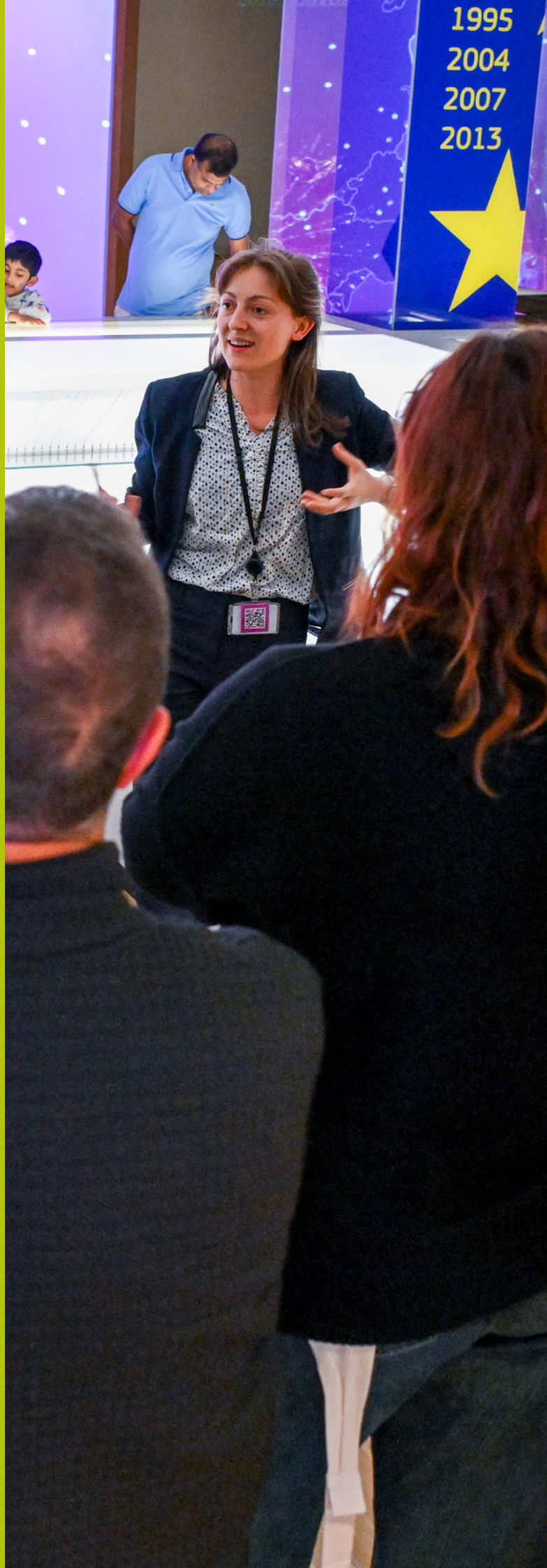


Learning

The Learning and Outreach team develops and organises educational programs, guided tours, and learning materials for a diverse museum audience and various stakeholders. The learning activities and events, aim to encourage the museum's various audiences to remember, reflect and respond to the social developments then and now. These activities and events are always shaped by the museum's collection, the permanent exhibition's themes or a new temporary exhibition on show.

In 2024, alongside its regular activities, the team launched new initiatives such as the guided tour *The Pursuit of Democracy*, the *IWalk* app tour outside of the museum, a welcoming *kiosk* for families in the Fables Room, and the creation of the youth group, *Echoes*.

During the course of the year, the team also strengthened existing networks, built new partnerships, and co-organized stakeholder events to continue its work on remembrance, peace, and democracy education.



Communications

The team is responsible for communicating the museum's message, its news and initiatives, both with external and internal audiences. It has done so through a variety of channels.

Throughout 2024, the House of European History broke two new 'records'. Firstly, its social media channels reached one million organic impressions faster than any year so far. Secondly, the amount of traditional media coverage was approximately double the previous year, thanks to the openings of the museum's first touring exhibition *Fake (f)or Real* in Greece, Bulgaria and Hungary.

At the same time, the launch of the new branding in January 2024 has taken the museum to a new level of professionalism, impact and visual coherence. This was accompanied by the creation of a brand book and a branding team, to help colleagues bring the new visual identity into their day-to-day work. The bold design has been implemented successfully and has been well received both internally and externally.



Collections

The Collections Department is involved in almost every aspect of the museum's activity.

It participates in the creation, installation and de-installation of exhibitions (in 2024 that included the three venues of the touring exhibition), it manages the museum's database and it documents its collection and digital images with their licenses.

The Collections team also handles the acquisition, and the loans, of objects to the museum, which require detailed agreements with third parties. Equally important are the team's conservation work and its work with other units.

Throughout 2024, the team worked on various other projects. Those included a Study Day for the Flemish Community Commission, a one-day training on exhibition organisation, and the first meeting of museum Registrars and collection Managers in Belgium with representatives from museums across the country.



Facilities

The Facilities/IT-AV/Visitor Service Department ensures the technical, security and logistics support for the museum's daily operations and for its ordinary and extraordinary activities and projects.

The team also provides expertise for digital projects, renders local support and liaises with DGCOMM/IT, ITEC, EC/DIGIT and external providers.

Throughout the year, the team overcame successfully a series of challenges. Among those were the handling of the financial resources for the floor staff and the management of the building and its facilities and of various tasks and projects, ranging from temperature and humidity control to renovations (e.g. of "Learning Room 2").

The team handled successfully the security for regular and extraordinary events, such as the one in November where President Metsola welcomed the museum's millionth visitor.

The logistical support for group booking services and tours also proved to be challenging. In several occasions, the team managed last minute changes (e.g. delays, cancellations).



Looking into 2025

In 2024, the House of European History reached a peak both in its physical reach to other places in Europe, and in terms of the wide diversity of its outlets and channels.

It is now time to focus on the activities that yield the best results. To achieve this goal, the museum carried out evaluations of its current practices. The permanent exhibition, temporary exhibitions, the touring exhibition, learning offers, and social media activities all came under evaluation in 2024.

In 2025, the museum will renew its Audience Development Plan, which together with the aforementioned evaluation results, will form the basis of the museum's strategic direction for the years to come.

In 2025, parallel to this strategic reflection process, the museum will pursue the following objectives:

- Open its temporary exhibition *Presence of the Past* in March
- Continue to tour Europe with *Fake (f)or Real* with stops in Poland and Sweden
- Reflect on updating the Permanent Exhibition based on the visitor evaluation
- Launch a Digital Learning Toolbox for teachers in 24 languages in spring 2025
- Improve visitor services by launching the re-opening of the museum's Cafeteria and by creating better entrance conditions
- Publish guidebooks and the website in more EU languages
- Make the museum's works more sustainable
- Carry out an audit on Decolonising the museum in the run-up to the 2026 Colonialism exhibition
- Enhance the museum's participatory practices through special activities such as the Echoes project
- Improve the website and social media offers and solidify the new visual identity
- Deepen relationships with key partners
- Finalise a new storage arrangement and further improve museum documentation, archiving, records management, and library management

This non-exhaustive list indicates that while the museum is still relatively new, its team is fully committed to delivering high quality work across a range of operations, and to enhancing the museum's quality standards. It also demonstrates that the museum is ready to innovate its practices and to make itself more relevant for diverse audiences.