

13th European Remembrance Symposium and International Conference on the 50th Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act

The Spirit of Helsinki
Then and Now

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



HELSINKI
10–13 JUNE 2025

INTRODUCTION

During the 13th European Remembrance Symposium and International Conference, we will reflect on the Helsinki Final Act, signed on 1 August 1975, to honour the diplomatic achievement of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Helsinki and contemplate the current state of security in Europe and the world. Fifty years ago, the Conference brought together representatives of 33 countries, including western and eastern European states, the USA, Canada and the Soviet Union, to develop a framework for détente in Europe. This strongly influenced the development of social and dissident movements in some of the Eastern Bloc countries and, in the long term, influenced the end of the Cold War.

On the 50th anniversary of this good faith dialogue, the European Network of Remembrance and Solidarity (ENRS), in collaboration with Historians without Borders in Finland (HWB), the University of Helsinki, the Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Germany, the Leibniz-Institute of European History (IEG), Religion and Cold War Network (ReCoNet) and the Aue Foundation, will explore what became known as the 'Spirit of Helsinki'.

Venue

FINLANDIA HALL AND UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI
HELSINKI, FINLAND

DAY 1

TUESDAY 10 JUNE

Finlandia Hall Helsinki B-Hall + Foyer

17:00–17:45 **REGISTRATION**

17:45–18:05 **WELCOME ADDRESS**

Rafał Rogulski, Director of European Network Remembrance and Solidarity

Katharina Kunter, Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki

H.E. Maria Ligor, Embassy of Romania

H.E. Klára Breuer, Embassy of Hungary

H.E. Tomasz Chłoń, Embassy of the Republic of Poland

Mr Christoph Peleikis, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany

18:05–19:00 **PANEL DISCUSSION**
THE SPIRIT OF HELSINKI – THEN AND NOW
A discussion between

Markus Meckel and **Michael Žantovský**

Moderation: **Laura Kolbe**, University of Helsinki

19:00–21:00 **Cocktail Reception**

DAY 2

WEDNESDAY 11 JUNE

Finlandia Hall Helsinki B-Hall + Foyer

09:00–10:00 **REGISTRATION**

10:00–10:20 **WELCOME SPEECHES**

Rafał Rogulski, Director of ENRS

Anna Kaminsky, Director of Bundesstiftung Aufarbeitung

Katharina Kunter, Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki

Erkki Tuomioja, Historians without Borders

Petri Hakkarainen, Head of the political department at the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

10:20–10:25 **Johannes Paulmann**, Leibniz Institute of European History
introducing keynote speaker

Michael Cotey Morgan, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

10:25–10:45 **KEYNOTE SPEECH**

Michael Cotey Morgan

10:45–11:00 **Coffee Break**

11:00–13:00

OPENING PANEL Helsinki and Diplomacy: Power and Limitations

What role did diplomacy play during the Cold War? What significance did the Helsinki Final Act have for diplomatic actors as well as activists and dissidents East and West? This panel will also discuss the possibilities and constraints of diplomacy in current conflicts.

Sia Spiliopoulou Åkermarck, Åbo Akademi, Turku

Jaakko Laajava, Ambassador and former Under-Secretary of State, Helsinki

Michael Cotey Morgan, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Henryka Mościcka-Dendys, Undersecretary of State,

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw

Martin Palouš, signatory of Charter 77, Czechia

Kristina Spohr, Department of International History, London School of Economics and Political Science

Chair: **Johannes Paulmann**, Leibniz Institute of European History, Germany

13:00–14:00 Lunch

14:00–15:30 Religion and the Helsinki Process

Massimo Faggioli, Villanova University

Réka Földváyiné Kiss, Committee of National Remembrance of Hungary

Katharina Kunter, Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki

Katharina McLarren, Max Planck Institute, Heidelberg

Erik Sidenvall, University of Lund

Speaker: **Sarah B. Snyder**, American University, Washington, DC

Chair: **Riho Altnurme**, University of Tartu

Leon van den Broeke, Theological University Utrecht

15:30–16:00 Coffee Break

16:00–17:30 TURBO PRESENTATIONS

During turbo presentations, participants showcase their organisation or project to the symposium's audience. Each speaker has up to 90 seconds. Topics of the turbo presentations will be connected with the general theme of the symposium.

20:00

CONCERT The Spirit of Helsinki in Song and Culture: 50th Anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act

Place Café Cajsan Helmi (Kaisaniemenranta 6, 00170 Helsinki)

Ieva Akurātere, Latvian singer, songwriter and political activist in the Latvian independence movement

Vratislav Brabenec, Czech musician and writer, member of the band The Plastic People of the Universe, former dissident and human rights activist (signatory of Charter 77)

Stephan Krawczyk, German writer and songwriter, former GDR dissident

Eva Turnová Czech underground musician and former member of The Plastic People of the Universe

Chair: **Jenny Baumann**, Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship, Berlin

Katharina Kunter, Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki

08:00–09:00 **REGISTRATION**

09:00–10:30 **PANEL DISCUSSION 1 Freedom, Security and Human Rights – Then and Now**

What did security mean at the time of the Helsinki Final Act compared to today? How does the feeling of being secure influence our freedom of mind, speech and expression? How, in turn, does this influence economic activity and perceptions of democracy? As an overarching question, this panel will address how the Helsinki Final Act has changed our view of human rights and their potential consequences.

Maria Axinte, Pitesti Prison Memorial Foundation

Agnieszka Kosowicz, Polish Migration Forum Foundation, Warsaw

András Mink, Blinken OSA Archivum, Budapest

Douglas Wake, former Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) official

Hermann Wentker, Institute of Contemporary History, Munich

Chair: **Bradley Reynolds**, Historians without Borders, Helsinki

10:30–11:00 **Coffee Break**

11:00–12:30 **CASE STUDIES Courage, Bravery and Leadership: Dialogue Then and Now**

How do institutions/museums teach and encourage constructive debate? How do they engage young people and audiences in meaningful discussions? Are they able to connect historical examples with contemporary challenges and, conversely, how are they able to erase the past through creating a new future? What is needed from institutions, museums and individuals to support peace and dialogue today?

Maciej Bator, For Your Freedom & Ours, Belfast

Ieva Česnulaitytė, DemocracyNext, Vilnius

Ville Kivimäki, The Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki

Joanna Matera, The New Community Foundation, Warsaw

Joan Morrison and Mairead McCann, Atlantic Technological University, Sligo

12:30–12:45 **Coffee Break**



12:45–14:15

PANEL DISCUSSION 2 Truth and Reconciliation Processes

Reckoning with the past is important for successful transitions from conflict and to foster trust in the present. Throughout history, this has taken multiple forms, from faith-based dialogues to truth and reconciliation commissions. An overarching goal is to heal relations by uncovering facts and unearthing marginalised testimonies concerning the past. Nevertheless, truth and reconciliation processes do not always result in the intended outcome due to lack of political will, joint leadership and accountability, or because of continued violations of rights. How can reconciliation processes be better utilised to address historical injustices, foster historical reconciliation and promote joint ownership of the past? Can or should the past be reconciled ‘for good’ and, most importantly, when having a dialogue on the past, how do we deal with the present?

Taina Máret Pieski, Sámi Museum Siida, Inari

Áron Máthé, Committee of National Remembrance Hungary

Katalin Miklóssy, University of Helsinki

Marek Mutor, Platform of European Memory and Conscience, Prague

Chair: **Ion Ionita**, journalist

14:15–15:00

Lunch

15:00–18:00

CULTURAL VISITS choose one:

- Suomenlinna Sea Fortress
- Ateneum Art Museum and Political Walking Tour of Helsinki
- Ateneum Art Museum
- Modern Helsinki Walking Tour and Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma

18:15–19:30

Cocktails at the University of Helsinki



Helsinki from Below: Grassroots Dynamics and Human Rights

09:00–10:00 WELCOME SPEECHES

Rev. Frank-Dieter Fischbach, General Secretary of the European Churches

Rev. Dr. Kaisamari Hintikka, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland's Diocese of Espoo

10:00–12:00 PANEL DISCUSSION 1 Principle VII and Basket III: Dynamics through Human Rights

Marju Lauristin, politician, Estonia **ONLINE**

Roland Cerny-Werner, Paris Lodron-University of Salzburg

Gert Weisskirchen, politician, Germany

Kimmo Elo, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu

Sarah B. Snyder, American University, Washington, DC

Speaker: **Sarah B. Snyder**, American University, Washington, DC

Chair: **Katharina Kunter**, Faculty of Theology, University of Helsinki

12:00–13:00 Lunch

13:00–15:00 PANEL DISCUSSION 2 Helsinki and Civil Courage: The Helsinki Groups in Central and Eastern Europe and Reactions to (1970s-80s)

Anna Šabatová, signatory and speaker of Charter 77, Czechia

Gregor Feindt, Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz

Douglas Selva, Federal Archives, Berlin

Nadezhda Beliakova, University of Bielefeld

Speaker: **Myroslav Marynovych**, Ukraine Helsinki Committee

Chair: **Stefan Kube**, *Religion & Society in East and West*, RGOW Institute, Zurich

15:00–15:30 Coffee Break

15:30–17:30 PANEL DISCUSSION 3 Outlook: Lessons Learnt? – The Spirit of Helsinki from 1990 up to Now

Gabriel Andreescu, dissident, human rights activist, Bucharest

Anja Mihr, OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan & Centre on Governance through Human Rights, Berlin

Piet de Klerk, Netherlands Helsinki Committee

Anna Kaminsky, Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Germany, Berlin

Chair: **Jenny Baumann**, Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Germany, Berlin

09:00–10:15

WORKSHOPS choose one:

- **Definition of a museum and how museums deal with historical memory**

The workshop will explore different examples of how Polish museums have presented, preserved and interpreted historical memory in the 20th and 21st centuries. The changing definition of a museum will also be discussed.

Adam Barbasiewicz, Advocate, Partner at Cottyn Barbasiewicz i Łyś-Gorzkowska law firm, member of ICOM Poland

- **The role of cultural institutions in fostering media literacy**

This workshop explores the role of cultural institutions (especially museums) in teaching and promoting critical thinking and fact-checking through the examples of exhibitions, educational games, events, multimedia and other materials.

Joanna Urbanek, Curator at the House of European History

10:15–10:30

Coffee Break

10:30–11:45

WORKSHOPS choose one:

- **Cultural sustainability**

Museums are not noncommittal places, especially when they deal with dissonant subjects such as war, peace and remembrance. Based on the practice of the In Flanders Fields Museum in Ypres, which is dedicated to the history and commemoration of the First World War, this workshop will discuss several approaches that museums can use to fulfil their societal role.

Pieter Trogh, Curator of the In Flanders Fields Museum

- **How can the impact of museums be measured?**

The Finnish Museums Association has, together with Petri Uusikylä, built a model for demonstrating the systemic impact of museums. The model is in its pilot phase. The workshop will present the basics of the model, its current stage and lessons learnt so far.

Petra Havu, CEO of the Finnish Museums Association

11:45–12:15

Coffee Break

12:15–14:00

SUMMARY AND ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION:

Where Has the 'Spirit of Helsinki' Gone?

What Is Left after 50 Years?

In the concluding panel, participants will reflect on the 'Spirit of Helsinki' in a global context. Has the Russian-Ukrainian war changed the significance of the Helsinki Final Act? Has 50+ years of human rights advocacy been in vain considering the current state of the world and declining democracy on both sides of the Atlantic?

Rasa Juknevičienė, Member of the European Parliament

Ladislav Kudrna, Institute for the Study of the Totalitarian Regimes (ÚSTR), Prague

Taras Kuzio, National University of Kyiv Mohyla Academy

Bradley Reynolds, Historians without Borders, Helsinki

Ernest Wyciszkiwicz, Juliusz Mieroszewski Centre for Dialogue, Warsaw

Chair:

Elisa Tarnaala, Historians without Borders, Helsinki

14:00–14:15

CLOSING REMARKS

14:15–15:15

Lunch

DAY 4

FRIDAY 13 JUNE

German Congregation in Finland, Helsinki

INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE
PROGRAMME

German-speaking Event

10:00–10:10

WELCOME ADDRESS

Tina Meyn, Lead Pastor German Congregation in Finland

Robert Grünbaum, Federal Foundation for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship

Chair:

Katharina McLarren, Max Planck Institute, Heidelberg

Roland Cerny-Werner, Paris Lodron-University of Salzburg

10:10–11:00

LECTURE BY

Irina Scherbakowa, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Berlin

11:00–12:00

TALK BETWEEN

Irina Scherbakowa, Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Berlin

and

Katrin Göring-Eckardt, Vice President of the German Bundestag

Chair:

Tina Meyn, German Congregation in Finland, Helsinki

12:00

Lunch & End of Conference



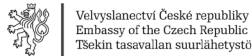
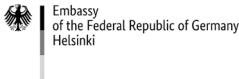
FIND OUT MORE

<https://enrs.eu/edition/european-remembrance-symposium-2025>

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Co-Organiser



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