

# What is the role of history in contemporary political discourses?

The way in which history as a far-reaching phenomenon influences our modern thinking and actions is often quite overlooked and unreflected. We do not pay much attention to the frame in which we create our opinions and arguments, neither to the fact that there might be some a priori assumptions that we take in mind and that are based on our history and the way history is presented in varying national contexts. Being more conscious in this sense opens possibility to critically analyse the role that history plays in current politics.

History is a tool. Very useful tool, but we should work with it wisely and carefully. It can be something we identify with, something we compare the present with, something we learn from but also something we can twist and adapt to our needs. The fact that history is relative and it can be presented from a lot of different positions, brings us to a great variety of interpretations of particular historical events as well as potential problems in the comparative perspective of different interpretations within the state and internationally.

In that sense, history is one of the many instruments available for the persuasive construction of a nation, state and its development. Even though the creation of new nations is not the case in current Central European region, history can be still used for nationalist purposes. Concrete examples can be found all over the region and it is definitely not the case of the nationalist parties only. The political practice is to gain as much as votes as possible and especially in relation to the recent increase of nationalism around Europe, the historical references to the either victorious or suffering past seem to be persuasive and effective.

The probability that this will fundamentally change in any way in the near future is low. Therefore we need to be more critical towards what we hear and we also need to analyse the argumentation of political subjects more carefully. Higher political literacy of public narrows the space for misleading use of history solely for nationalist purpose.

The comparative perspective is needed. Critical thinking skills are strengthened when people are able to take in mind the various aspects, positions and factors and the international environment provides a good base for such comparative and critical analysis.

And this is exactly what the first working group during the My Hero Your Enemy 2015 conference will try to reach. It will try to create a place for discussion and variety of ideas about what is and also what should be the role of history in contemporary political discourses. There is never only one answer, therefore it will be very interesting to see what discussion brings, moreover how it will shape the outcomes of the conference.