



**IN THE FACE OF WAR**  
**EUROPEAN DIALOGUE**  
VILNIUS | 30 NOV-1 DEC 2023

# Culture and Imaginary Facing the War

**Vilnius University Theatre Hall**  
Universiteto st. 3, 01513 Vilnius



Vilnius  
University



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The Great Courtyard  
of Vilnius University  
Vilnius, Lithuania  
Photo by Roman Babakin



This autumn, the Institut Français inaugurated a new public debate series entitled **“In the Face of War - European Dialogue”**.

The program launched mid-November in Prague, during the Prague European Summit. It will begin its journey through Europe with **two days of debate in Vilnius**, in the heart of Vilnius University – partner of the event alongside the French Embassy and the Institut Français de Lituanie. The chosen theme for this edition is: **“Culture and Imaginary Facing the War”**.

#EuropeanDialogue



# IN THE FACE OF WAR EUROPEAN DIALOGUE

VILNIUS | 30 NOV-1 DEC 2023

## THURSDAY 30 NOV 2023

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*THE CONFERENCES WILL BE HELD IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH (WITH TRANSLATION IN ENGLISH)*

REGISTRATION

OFFICIAL OPENING



**9:30AM-11AM**

**INAUGURAL SESSION:**

**“IDEAS FROM CENTRAL EUROPE”**



**11:30AM-12:30PM**

**“THE EXPERIENCE OF WAR: A DIALOGUE  
BETWEEN CULTURAL PLAYERS”**



**2:30PM-4PM**

**“THE EASTERN BORDER  
IN THE EUROPEAN IMAGINARY”**



**4:20PM-5:45PM**

**“WHERE IS EUROPE? NARRATIVES AND THE  
STAKES OF MEMORY”**

# FRIDAY 1 DEC 2023

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*THE CONFERENCES WILL BE HELD IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH (WITH TRANSLATION IN ENGLISH)*



**9:15AM-11AM**

**“WHAT CAN CULTURE DO IN THE FACE OF WAR?”**



**11:30AM-1PM**

**“WHAT CAN MUSEUMS DO IN THE FACE OF WAR?”**



**2:30PM-4:30PM**

**“WRITING THE WAR”: CAFÉ DEBATE**

# INTRODUCTION

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**E**urope was shaped by a multiplicity of cultural trends, schools of thought, and local and collective memories. It was built amidst major upheavals that would go on to become its historical benchmarks (the fall of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, World War II, the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin wall...).

Today, this past clearly continues to resonate amidst the full-scale military invasion instigated by Russia in Ukraine. Yet, what common conscience and awareness do we harbour regarding this history and the ways in which it is perceived by populations depending on where they are situated in Europe? What understanding do we have of the variety of narratives in Europe, forged by a plurality of identities? Is a new geography of memory appearing today, and extending all the way to Kyiv and the Donbas where the continent's equilibrium is currently at stake?

For two days, close to thirty participants representing a variety of European countries will be discussing the impact of the war through the scope of ideas and culture. The first day will focus on **mental representations of European history and geography**, particularly those of Central and Eastern Europe. The second day will take the conversation further by placing emphasis on **the circulation of narratives** in Europe and the **mobilisation of cultural players** in the context of upheavals triggered by the war of aggression instigated by Russia in Ukraine.



The “In the Face of War – European Dialogue” project aims to **foster dialogue and debate surrounding the upheavals in Europe instigated by the war in Ukraine.** Its foundations are in the mobility and the recurrence in Europe of events gathering public figures from the sectors of research, think tanks, the media, and the cultural and public spheres. By bringing together expert voices from the continent at large, by encouraging the intersection of disciplines, as well as facilitating direct interaction with the wider public, the project aims to expose **the global challenges** that the European project is confronted to, and the local contexts in which European populations face them. Following a project launch in Prague, and a second edition in autumn 2023, five events will be held during the course of 2024, in Warsaw, Sofia and Plovdiv, Helsinki, Amsterdam and Rennes, with others to follow in 2025.

Project partners: Ouest-France, Arte and University of Paris 8.

# PROGRAM DETAILS

8:45AM  
REGISTRATION



9:30AM-11AM  
**INAUGURAL SESSION:  
“IDEAS FROM CENTRAL EUROPE”**

Central Europe—or Mitteleuropa—was the cradle of major intellectual currents. Influenced by the conflicts of the 20th century in Europe, new ideas and intellectual works emerging from the proliferation of cities gradually led a common knowledge to emerge. What is left of this today?

In the face of the psychological abysses and the passions induced by the resur-



gence of war in Europe, what common references and frameworks can we draw from this heritage to think both about the urgent need of solidarity with the Ukrainian people, and the gulf becoming inexorably entrenched with Russia? In the face of atrocities and war, could Central Europe’s collective imaginary and intellectual currents offer tools and a singular agency to respond to the challenges of our time?



# THURSDAY 30 NOV 2023

## 9:15AM-9:30AM OFFICIAL OPENING

- **Prof. Rimvydas Petrauskas**  
Rector of Vilnius University
- **Alix Everard**  
Ambassador of France to Lithuania



Constantin Sigov

- **Elisabeth Roudinesco**  
Historian and psychoanalyst (France)
- **Kristupas Sabolius**  
Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy of Vilnius University (Lithuania)
- **Constantin Sigov**  
Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy of Vilnius University (Ukraine)



Vilius Bartninkas

- **Moderator: Vilius Bartninkas**  
Associate Professor at the Faculty of Philology of Vilnius University and the Head of the Department of Classical Philology (Lithuania)

*[Detailed biographies of the participants here](#)*

## 11AM-11:30AM COFFEE BREAK



# PROGRAM DETAILS



**11:30AM-12:30PM**

## **“THE EXPERIENCE OF WAR: A DIALOGUE BETWEEN CULTURAL PLAYERS”**

In different eras, and different environments, Dejan Ubovic and Mykhailo Glubokyi both experienced war—in Serbia and the Balkans for the former, and Ukraine for the latter. They will engage a conversation, as cultural entrepreneurs, to evoke what underlies their mobilisation in support of citizens and artists, and trace solidary paths that a shared sense of European belonging makes it possible to explore.



- **Mykhailo Glubokyi**  
Development director, Izolyatsia (Ukraine) — *online*
- **Dejan Ubovic**  
Director of GRAD – European Center for Culture and Debate (Serbia)
- **Moderator: Rasa Tapiniene**  
LRT TV journalist and presenter (Lithuania)

*[Detailed biographies of the participants here](#)*



**2:30PM-4PM**

## **“THE EASTERN BORDER IN THE EUROPEAN IMAGINARY”**

Throughout the 20th century, Central and Eastern Europe experienced a number of territorial divisions and boundary changes in the midst of invasions and the upheavals or the accelerations of history (fall of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires, collapse of the Soviet Bloc, the recomposition of nations...).

The gradual integration of new countries into the European Union altered the geopolitical equilibrium, de-correlating the European Area's administrative organisation from matters of identity and culture. Added to this is the proximity of Russia, the perception of which varies according to whether European populations directly or indirectly experienced the former Soviet domination, and the reality of a new war initiated in Europe by Russia. What shared sense do we then have of

East-Central European area? What is its geography? And to what extent does the war in Ukraine reinforce its cohesion and influence within Europe?

- **Inga Vidugirytė-Pakerienė**

Director of the Institute for Literary, Cultural and Translation Studies at Vilnius University (Lithuania)

- **Michel Duclos**

Diplomat and Special Advisor and Resident Senior Fellow, Geopolitics and Diplomacy at Institut Montaigne (France)

- **Eeva Eek-Pajuste**

Advisor to the Policy Planning Department at the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Former Director of the Lennart Meri Conference (Estonia)

- **Fabrice Puchault**

Head of Society and Culture Department, Arte France (France)

- **Moderator: Vykintas Pugačiauskas**

LRT TV Foreign News Editor (Lithuania)



*[Detailed biographies of the participants here](#)*

# PROGRAM DETAILS



**4PM-4:20PM**  
**COFFEE BREAK**



**4:20PM-5:45PM**  
**"WHERE IS EUROPE?  
NARRATIVES AND THE STAKES  
OF MEMORY"**

In direct connection with the ambitions of the "In the Face of War – European Dialogue" project, this round table will aim to raise the question of the circulation and awareness of narratives in Europe. At the dawn of a new wave of expansion of the European Union, the subject appears paramount. Thus, if a European "We" exists, what are its defining traits and what references must we call upon to establish a commons? What Europe are we speaking of? A Europe of values? Of networks?



Of protection? The economic power? The narratives overlap or collide on occasion, raising the question of the collective awareness of this variety of narratives and representations constitutive of the European project. It will be a matter here of weighing this question in the context of the war in Ukraine and the significant mobilisation of Eastern European states and populations.



- **Christine Cadot**

Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Paris 8 and Director of the CRESPPA research laboratory (Paris 8, Paris Nanterre, CNRS) (France)

- **Stéphanie Gonçalves**

Assistant Curator at House of European History (France/Belgium)

- **Violeta Kachakova**

Culture manager, producer, researcher and cultural policy consultant (North Macedonia)



- **Cornel-Florin Moraru**

Philosopher and cultural journalist (Romania)

- **Moderator: Marija Drėmaitė**

Professor at the Faculty of History, Vilnius University (Lithuania)

*[Detailed biographies of the participants here](#)*

# PROGRAM DETAILS



Opening words by **Eva Nguyen Binh**,  
President of the Institut français

## 9:15AM-11AM “WHAT CAN CULTURE DO IN THE FACE OF WAR?”

Ever since the first day of the war, the Europe of Culture intensely mobilised itself to host and support Ukrainian cultural players. Out of a sense of historical and cultural affinity for some, or a coming to awareness of a once more remote relationship for others: whatever the motive and the connection, the eruption of war brought on a wave of unanimous reactions to draw closer to the country. But today, beyond the concern of programming Ukrainian artists, beyond the mere necessity of creating or reinforcing professional ties with the Ukrainian



scene, what are the issues being faced by European cultural operators? When the very idea of cultural identity and independence is attacked, what new solidarities, what new exchanges must they then invent? What forms of support, what actions, what mediums can be called upon to confront the temptation of withdrawing into oneself, and instead to enhance the knowledge of the local contexts navigated by citizens and cultural players?





- **Pascal Brunet**

Director of the Relais Culture Europe (Creative Europe Desk) (France)

- **Maciej Hofman**

EU Affairs Advisor for Amsterdam-based European Cultural Foundation (Poland/Netherlands)

- **Corinne Poulain**

Director of Champs Libres in Rennes (France)

- **Valerio Rocco Lozano**

Director of Circulo de Bellas Artes in Madrid (Spain)



- **Jakub Depczyński**

Curator of public programs at Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (Poland)

- **Moderator: Dr. Julija Reklaitė**

Director of Lithuanian Institute of Culture (Lithuania)

*[Detailed biographies of the participants here](#)*

**11AM-11:30AM  
COFFEE BREAK**



# PROGRAM DETAILS



Kateryna Chuyeva

## 11:30AM-1PM “WHAT CAN MUSEUMS DO IN THE FACE OF WAR?”

Cooperation between museums in Ukraine and a number of European countries was decisive in saving and preserving the artworks of Ukrainian museum institutions as well as in opening a new space for teams to work and collaborate. The initiatives were multiplied and the collaborative network was enhanced. In the context of a war that is unfolding on the longer term, what are the needs of Ukrainian museums today? What resources can European establishments mobilise to answer these needs? More broadly, what responsibility do they face when, on European soil, museums and the heritage they enclose become subject to such threats?



Mareike Dittmer

- **Kateryna Chuyeva**  
Expert on museum and cultural heritage management and former Deputy Minister of Culture and Information (Ukraine)
- **Mareike Dittmer**  
Director of Public Engagement at TBA21 (Spain)

*[Detailed biographies of the participants here](#)*





- **Maximilien Durand**

Director of the Department of Byzantine and Eastern Christian Arts at Musée du Louvre (France)

- **Dr. Arūnas Gelūnas**

Director General of the Lithuanian National Museum of Art (Lithuania)



- **Bachaar Tarabay**

Scientific Project Manager Iconem (France)

- **Moderator: Dr. Ina Ėmužienė**

Researcher and exhibition curator at National Museum of Lithuania (Lithuania)

**2:30PM-4:30PM**

**“WRITING THE WAR”:  
CAFÉ DEBATE AT INSTITUT  
FRANÇAIS DE LITUANIE**

*French Institute, Didžioji st. 1*



Karolis Vyšniauskas



Ana Daukševič

To write the war, document it and unpack its roots and complexities amidst a broader historical arc. To give it a human face made up of so many shattered trajectories, to show resistance and decipher what underlies hatred or indifference. To hand the mic to new voices, and tackle waves of disinformation... To then face the long-term reality...

The role of the media is as crucial as it is delicate in the analysis of the war in Ukraine and its consequences in Europe. How does an event of such magnitude disrupt editorial practices? What can the media do to accompany citizens in their understanding of current upheavals, in the context of rising tensions and a shifting geopolitical equilibrium?

This café debate will round off the “European Dialogues” in Vilnius by stressing the importance of access to information and knowledge.

- **Karolis Vyšniauskas**  
Journalist and co-founder of NARA podcast (Lithuania)
- **Fabrice Puchault**  
Head of Society and Culture Department, Arte France (France)
- **Augustinas Sulija**  
Journalist, LRT (Lithuania)

- **Benas Gerdžiūnas**

Journalist, Senior Editor,  
LRT (Lithuania)

- **Ana Daukševič**

Lithuanian foreign news journalist  
(Lithuania)

- **Irina Novik**

Journalist, HrodnaLife (Belarus)

- **Moderator: Laurent Marchand**

Editor-in-Chief in charge of European  
and International Affairs  
at *Ouest-France* (France)



*Detailed biographies of the participants here*

All the info about the "European Dialogue" is on the Institut français website:  
[dialogueseuropeens.institutfrancais.com/en](https://dialogueseuropeens.institutfrancais.com/en)



## COMING SOON

In 2024, the “European Dialogue”  
will be held in several cities:  
Warsaw, Amsterdam, Sofia,  
Plovdiv, Helsinki and Rennes.

# INSTITUT FRANÇAIS

As a key stakeholder in cultural policy outside France, the Institut français is entrusted with a public service mission and financed by state subsidy. The Institut français, under the dual supervision of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture, conducts three fundamental missions.

- To promote French culture and language around the world
- To strive for cultural diversity around the world
- To amplify the action of the French cultural network abroad



#EuropeanDialogue  
[www.institutfrancais.com](http://www.institutfrancais.com)