

EDITORS' PREFACE

This volume of *Politeja*, entitled *Diversity and Unity. How Heritage Becomes the Narrative for Europe's Future*, deals with the question of how the diversity and unity of heritage might become the narrative for Europe's future. To tackle this broad area of reflection, the volume focuses on Poland and Sweden, countries situated at the geographical periphery of the EU and which became EU-members relatively late (2004 and 1995 respectively). We propose to analyse the use of the past in these two countries by looking at how it has been narrated and represented in European symbolic resources, that is the repository of images and ideas from which European collective identity is constructed.

The texts included show how the narratives and images of the past in the Polish and Swedish contexts play a role in influencing the present of these two countries. We discuss the question of a European future built on the basis of a common European past and especially one which stems from and exceeds its unification. We also enquire as to whether the founding mythology of Europe applies to its periphery and pose the question of how heritage is used to reinforce the cultural continuity of the Old Continent to build a supranational community based on commonly held values.

Following these lines of investigation, the invited Polish and Swedish researchers wrote about open-air museums (Łukasz Bukowiecki), museums (Łucja Piekarska-Duraj and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa), debates on cultural heritage (Niklas Bernsand and Eleonora Narvselius), World War I cemeteries (Krzysztof Kowalski), Holocaust museums/memorials (Elisabeth Wassermann, Katarzyna Suszkiewicz), finally, communism in Swedish collective memory (Adrian Velicu). All these topics serve as interesting examples of the pursuit of an enduring European community and challenges to this endeavour (Zdzisław Mach). These concrete studies permit the identification of the processes underpinning the attempted construction of a common, European image of the past. In this manner it is possible to consider the strength and role of unity and diversity in the interpretation of the past and its utilization in particular situations in Poland and Sweden.

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