

# Commission en direct

## ► Europe & Beyond

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► Marieke Slovin Lewis was the first person to share her migration story

### Sharing our common migration history

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**Throughout 2018, the European Year of Cultural Heritage, Europeana is inviting people to share their personal migration stories. The first collection days are taking place in Brussels right now. Do you have a picture, a letter or another object with a story behind it?**

Europe's shared history of migration has shaped our cultural heritage. To capture this past and make it available online, the multimedia library Europeana will run a series of collection days in collaboration with museums, libraries and other relevant partners across Europe.

*"For us, this will be one of our major contributions to the European Year of Cultural Heritage. We want to show that the flow of people and ideas through the centuries has really enriched the European culture that we enjoy today,"* says Eleanor Kenny, Europeana's Head of Communication.

The House of European History is currently hosting the first collection event, which started yesterday and will continue tomorrow. Europeana has invited communities from Brussels to share their family's migration stories and bring objects to illustrate them. Pictures, diaries, videos or letters, the objects will be added to the portal's online collection, which already includes some 50 million objects.

Two teams, one from Europeana and another from the House of European History, started collecting stories yesterday morning. There are four interview tables where participants can share their stories with the collectors in French, Dutch, German, English, Spanish or Italian.

In a second step, the objects illustrating the story are digitalised, either as photographs or as scanned copies in the case of paper documents. Finally, the objects are returned to the owners.

The very first person to share her story was entrepreneur Marieke Slovin Lewis. She brought with her a ukulele to illustrate her 'Story to Song' project, which invites residents of asylum centres in Brussels to share their personal experiences, which they then translate into songs together.

### Reaching out to migrant communities, schools and retirement homes

Ahead of the event, the organisers reached out to associations representing different groups in Brussels, such as the Polish, Italian, Irish, Russian and African communities. "*We also invited schools and elderly homes, as we wanted to include people of all ages,*" explains Ad Pollé, collection manager for Europeana.



► Digitalising Marieke's ukulele to preserve the memory of her migration story

Europeana started organising this type of events for its collection on the First World War, remembers Pollé. Collection days were organised across Europe, from Cyprus to Ireland, and as a result many interesting objects were digitalised and added to the online library.

*"For example, we got a Bible with a piece of a grenade embedded in it - the Bible had saved the life of a soldier. For the family, it was almost a holy object,"* he says. This Bible is now on display at the House of European History, as well as in Europeana's virtual collection.

If you have a personal migration story to tell, there is no need to register, you can just pass by the House of European History until 17.00 tomorrow. You can take the opportunity to visit the temporary exhibition *Interactions*, currently on display at the museum, which explores exchanges across the world.

But if you can't make it, don't worry, it is also possible to add your stories and pictures to

Europeana's website. Some stories and their illustrating objects are already on display online.

Among these objects, the first magazine bought by a boy in West Germany, after his family left the German Democratic Republic, the library cards that a Romanian student collected during his stays in Norway, the Netherlands, Estonia and Italy, and a money box that a migrant brought to The Netherlands from the former Dutch East Indies.

Until the end of the year, Europeana will continue to organise collection days in different countries. In cooperation with 10 partners, events are foreseen in Budapest, Dublin, Utrecht, Cardiff, Zagreb, Luxembourg, Riga and Belgrade.



([https://pro.europeana.eu/event/make-your-story-of-migration-part-of-a-new-digital-collection?utm\\_source=PRWebShan&utm\\_campaign=EuropeanaMigration](https://pro.europeana.eu/event/make-your-story-of-migration-part-of-a-new-digital-collection?utm_source=PRWebShan&utm_campaign=EuropeanaMigration))

**Europeana Migration collection days**

**European Year of Cultural Heritage** (<https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/>)

Topics: Culture, Migration, History,