

# The fall of the Berlin Wall – from Europe back to Berlin

Twenty years ago, in November 1989, the Berlin Wall came down and along with it arguably the most famous symbol of the Cold War and the division of Europe.

This event not only resulted in the unification of the two German states but also was followed by major changes in social, political and economic life all over Europe. After the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, Eastern European countries in particular had to face a new beginning and build up new nation states. Some of these processes are ongoing.

One other result of the events of 1989 was that all Europeans had to rethink their 40-year-old concept of Europe. A new awareness of Europe began to rise. Because of the new opportunities to travel, citizens of European states began to move closer together; they were forced to get to know each other better. At Italian camp-sites, one could hear conversations in Polish and Czech; at Prague's Wenzel Square, English was suddenly the dominant language. Many German citizens sought work in Scandinavia or Poland, and migrant labourers from other European countries began to move as well. In this way, the political and economical developments changed the lives of almost all Europeans.

During this EUSTORY academy, young Europeans will study such changes in their countries and will compare their histories with those of other participants from across Europe. The past will be the basis for further research within the microcosm of Berlin. Berlin has changed a lot since 1989, especially in the makeup of its population: People from all over the world have moved to this European metropolis. For these new inhabitants, the former division of the city may not seem important. Nevertheless, the "Wall" is still present in the cityscape of Berlin and in the minds of its inhabitants: Some people who used to live in the divided city still avoid visiting "the other side".

During this academy, participants will research the history of a particular street that was divided by the Wall. They will interview inhabitants of both sides of the street, hopefully revealing the consequences of a political event that influenced their daily routines.

A highlight of the EUSTORY academy in Berlin will be our work with various types of media. At the end of the academy, the results of your research efforts will be incorporated into a video – theatre collage. So, beyond the content-related work, the academy will offer the opportunity to learn new and innovative methods of presenting the results of historical research.

**In cooperation with:**  
**wannseeFORUM, Berlin**  
**[www.wannseeforum.de](http://www.wannseeforum.de)**

**When:** 22.08 – 29.08.2009  
**Where:** Berlin (Wannsee), Germany  
**Age:** 16 – 18 years  
**Group size:** 25 – 30 participants

