

# Call for papers

## Special Issue on Disability Memory

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Deadline for abstracts: August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026

The aim of this Special Issue is to begin writing the memory of disability into mainstream European history. In recent years, academic scholarship has experienced a ‘memory boom,’ but the subject of disability has yet to be integrated into this development. Historians of sexuality have sought to ‘queer’ the field of memory studies by challenging and re-evaluating traditional, often heteronormative narratives of the past through the lens of marginalised communities. This special issue seeks to ‘disable’ existing European narratives by uncovering and integrating memories around disability and disabled citizens into European history.

At a European and international level, well-known markers of disability memory include the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, in Washington, D.C. (opened in 1997, with the statue of Roosevelt in a wheelchair famously added in 2001) and the Memorial for the Victims of National Socialist ‘Euthanasia’ Killings in Berlin (opened in 2014). These memorials represent how people with disabilities can be at the top of political state power or can fall victim to it. They also illustrate how the memory of disability tends to coalesce around powerful (often Anglophone) figures, or episodes of extreme violence and persecution, memorialised through physical monuments.

This Special Issue takes these memorials as departure points to ask questions about disability memory. What happens when we look for the memory of disability beyond Anglophone hegemonic contexts? And when we turn to markers of memory beyond statues and memorials? How can disability memory go beyond stereotypes of either the individual who ‘overcame’ their disability, or the tragic victim of ableist norms and policies? Are there instances in which the memory of disability is of a sense of community, joy, elation, or nurture?



Roosevelt's statue and the 'euthanasia' memorial.  
Source: Wikimedia commons

Asking these questions enables researchers to interrogate pervasive assumptions in European history, such as the centrality of national communities. While memory can legitimise the perceived uniformity and continued existence of nation-states, it can do the same for communities that do not necessarily align with national contours. Can disability memory draw attention to alternative communities and narratives existing within or beyond the nation-state, at a local, regional or even global level? In similar fashion, can disability memory reach further back than the modern or contemporary period, in which constructions including 'disability,' 'nation' and 'citizen' are usually placed?

These and other questions stand at the core of this Special Issue. We welcome both empirical and theoretical contributions (or a combination of the two). Potential topics could include, but are not limited to:

- Memory through archives and archiving practices
- Memory of activist groups and protests
- Memory through deaf and other languages
- Memory through media (music, photography, film, video games...)
- Commemoration practices
- Oral history and popular memory
- Lack of memory and archival silences
- Methodological reflections, such as on studying disability memory from an intersectional perspective

Please send a title and abstract (max 500 words) as well as a short bio (max 100 words) to [monika.baar@eui.eu](mailto:monika.baar@eui.eu), [chiara.lacroix@eui.eu](mailto:chiara.lacroix@eui.eu) and [timo.houtekamer@eui.eu](mailto:timo.houtekamer@eui.eu). Applications must be received by **31 August 2026**. Feel free to contact us for any questions on this Special Issue.