

The Third Conference on National Dialogues, 5-6 April 2017

The House of the Estates, Helsinki

History and narratives in conflict

This thematic session looks into the use of historical narratives in intra-state conflicts. It asks **what the implications of nationalist identity formation for peacebuilding are, and whether national dialogues should address the past – at all, and in what ways?**

In addition to the battlefield, armed conflicts are also contested on the level of ideas, both in internal narratives and in the media. Particularly in intra-state conflicts the various sides look for legitimacy for their identities, objectives and methods in the form of historical narratives that explain the reason and rationale for the conflict. After the conflict the past is present in the practises of today and tied in identity narratives.

Addressing conflicting narratives may seem of lesser urgency – and involve even more difficulty – for peacebuilding than the needs of the present and hopes for the future. This session wants to, however, explore:

- **What are the implications of bypassing conflicting narratives?**
- **Should the past be addressed more firmly in national dialogues, and if so, in what ways?**
- **Is it possible to negotiate interpretations of history as part of the peace processes?**
- **How durable is peace if the mutually adversary identities and hatred tied in historical narratives are not taken into consideration as part of national dialogue and peace processes?**

Panel:

Dr. Timo R. Stewart, Researcher, Finland (Moderator)

Dr. Erkki Tuomioja, Former Minister, Member of Parliament, Finland

Ms. Paula Gaviria, Presidential Counsellor on Human Rights of Colombia (video message)

Dr. Marko Lehti, Academic Director of Master's Programme in Peace, Mediation and Conflict Research, University of Tampere, Finland

