



**EuroClio**

Inspiring History  
and Citizenship Educators

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## **Statement on the murder of our French colleague Samuel Paty**

The assassination of French history and geography teacher Samuel Paty on 16 October in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine leaves us with feelings of sadness and revulsion. We first and foremost express our sincerest condolences to his family, his students and his colleagues. We strongly condemn this murder. Our thoughts and solidarity also go to our friends at the *APHG - Association des Professeurs d'histoire-géographie*, our French Member Association.

Samuel Paty sought to educate his students on matters of human rights and the freedom of expression. Freedom of expression, in part, is about being able to address sensitive and controversial topics, difficult as this may be. Samuel Paty used his pedagogical freedom to grant his students the tools and values needed for open debate based on mutual respect and peaceful dialogue. His approach to teaching was both brave and enlightened, and there is a bitter and tragic irony to the fact that his murder came at the hand of an extremist so young that he could have been a student benefiting from the kinds of lessons that Paty gave.

While the murder of our colleague in France stands out for its hideousness and horror, it is sadly illustrative of how dangerous our profession as history educators can be. Historians and history teachers are increasingly subjected to violence, censorship and threats. It pains us that Samuel Paty became the fifth historian to lose their life this year alone. The Network of Concerned Historians documents such instances and the reading of the Network's annual reports is becoming increasingly painful.

Confronted with these atrocities, we applaud our French colleagues' calls for defiance in the face of terror. Now more than ever we need to stand together as a community to assert with the utmost firmness our unwavering commitment to an education that opens students to critical thinking and multiperspectivity, and allows them to deal with controversial issues with understanding and mutual respect. It is clear that this is an absolute prerequisite if we are to remain democratic, open, pluralistic and peaceful societies.

Steven Stegers

Executive Director

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