



UNIVERSITY  
OF WARSAW

## **IABA Europe 2023**

### ***Life-Writing in Times of Crisis***

**5–8 July 2023**

**University of Warsaw, Poland**

We are pleased to announce that the next IABA Europe Conference will be held in Warsaw, Poland, from July 5th to July 8th 2023. The conference will be held on-site only. The theme of the conference, *Life-Writing in Times of Crisis*, relates to the challenges we have had to face in Europe and all around the world in recent years. A lot has changed since the 2019 IABA Europe conference in Madrid. The accelerating climate crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and then the war in Ukraine have significantly influenced not only our perception of the world, but also the ways in which we record autobiographical experiences (the practice of writing about one's own life). A crucial component of the difficult situation in Europe and other parts of the world is the refugee crisis. In recent years, inhabitants of countries affected by wars and terrible conflicts – Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan or African states – have been seeking peace among European communities. Today, millions of Ukrainians are in the same situation.

Contemporary crises may take place on a collective scale and concern events such as war, extermination, the pandemic or economic troubles (rising inflation, unemployment, difficult housing markets), but they can also happen on an individual (personal) scale: illness, the passing of loved ones, imprisonment, forced confinement, hunger, houselessness, unemployment, or changing one's place of residence... Circumstances of unwanted change, sudden rupture, and discontinuity, which could be described as a sense of living in a previously unknown, utterly changed world, often mark the experience of crisis. In all of these situations, different practices of life-writing emerge – and all of them will interest us. How do dynamic sociopolitical processes shape the stories we tell about our everyday lives? What is the relation between the fragmentation or consolidation of entire social systems and the experimental modes of autobiographical narratives put forward by individuals?

Since our conference will be organised in Warsaw, we would like to refer to historical and academic experiences that are specific to Polish and Central European contexts, such as the surprisingly rich tradition of memoir competitions organised in Poland since the 1920s (a total of about 1,500 different competitions were held, with millions of memoirs and diaries collected). Another example would be the tradition of collecting autobiographical documents during the war and the Holocaust, which resulted in the creation of the monumental Ringelblum Archive, among others.

Overall, we aim to examine the relationship between crisis situations and writing one's life. How and why does autobiographical writing happen during crises, when



the established order of the world suddenly collapses and everyday life becomes strange, unpredictable, and threatening? How do we talk about our lives, how and why do we record our experiences in difficult conditions?

We invite proposals focused on archival records or material records in general (diaries, letters, autobiographies, memoirs), as well as various electronic, virtual life-writing practices that may be performed or kept on-line, on various websites or social media platforms. The theme of the conference may also be analysed from the perspective of life-writing in visual forms (photography, drawings, comics, films and video recordings, among others). Finally, participants may discuss records/reports about the experience of crisis created at the request of journalists or researchers, reporters, sociologists, psychologists, and historians (audiovisual, spoken, written accounts, important oral history tradition). All of the above-mentioned ways of “recording” life in a crisis situation are of great interest to us.

During the IABA Warsaw Conference we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the *European Journal of Life Writing*.

### **Submissions:**

We welcome 20-minute individual presentations and 90-minute panel sessions (preferably interdisciplinary and international).

The conference will be held in English.

Abstracts should not be longer than 300 words; bios should not be longer than 150 words.

### **Practicalities and schedule:**

**Conference website:** <https://iabawarsaw2023.eu>

**Conference e-mail:** [iabawarsaw2023@uw.edu.pl](mailto:iabawarsaw2023@uw.edu.pl)

**Online submissions** will open on October 15, 2022

**Deadline for proposals:** December 31, 2022

**Notifications of acceptance** will be sent out by January 31, 2023

**Registration and conference fees:** February 1–March 31, 2023

**Preliminary programme:**

May 1, 2023



**Detailed programme:**

June 1, 2023

**Conference Fees:**

Participants

220 EUR (includes conference lunches and a dinner)

The participation of 5 researchers from Ukraine, free of charge

PhD student participants

170 EUR (includes conference lunches and a dinner)

The participation of 5 PhD students from Ukraine, free of charge

**IABA Warsaw 2023 Organising Committee**

Teresa Bruś

Marcin Gołąb

Joanna Jeziorska-Haładaj

Artur Hellich

Maciej Libich

Lucyna Marzec

Joanna Piechura

Paweł Rodak

Agnieszka Sobolewska

Honorata Sroka