

## Mission statement – CEGES-SOMA

The CENTRE FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION ON WAR AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY (CEGES-SOMA) is a **federal research and documentation centre**. It aims at being a **Belgian centre of expertise on the history of the great political, social and cultural conflicts and turning points of the XXth century**. It wants to function as a platform for scientific and social activities, where both researchers and a generally interested public are involved.

The thematic focus is on **both World Wars and their (long-term) causes and effects**. **Other conflicts and totalitarian ideologies that have marked XXth century society** (fascism and Nazism, communism, colonialism and decolonization) are other points of interest. Particular attention is paid to phenomena such as violence, genocides and massacres, civil wars, national and ethnic oppositions and purges, religious conflicts, forced migrations, but also to human rights, international conflict management and the unification of Europe. The CEGES-SOMA approaches these conflicts and their causes and effects from a Belgian as well as an international comparative point of view.

The CEGES-SOMA wishes to realise this objective by acquiring, preserving and making available and accessible **documentation** in the form of archival material, books, periodicals and audiovisual documents, but also by conducting and stimulating scientific **research** and widely spreading its results.

The centre collects actively **personal archives and the archives of private institutions**. On behalf of the State Archives, it holds an important part of the archives of the public institutions that existed in Belgium only during the Second World War or its aftermath. The **library** strives to cover thematically, chronologically as well as geographically the **entire field of research of the CEGES-SOMA**. The purpose of the **audiovisual archives** is to constitute a **collection of images of the XXth century**, in particular with relation to Belgium.

The CEGES-SOMA aims at a maximal and automated availability to the public of the collection and archives. For the expansion and opening up of its collection of documentation, it collaborates with the Federal scientific institutions.

The CEGES-SOMA organises **research projects on themes related to Belgian history which are within the scope of its field of research**. As a public research unit, it specifically considers the social relevance of these projects. The centre serves as a meeting place and portal for research and researchers in Belgium in the field of contemporary history. It develops privileged relationships with all universities and scientific institutions, both on the federal level and on that of the communities and regions. It participates in international networks of related institutions in and outside Europe. By means of a website, the publication of periodicals and monographs, study days, colloquia and seminars, the CEGES-SOMA attempts **to communicate the results of this research as widely as possible**.