



# **Holocaust Memorial Days in the OSCE Region**

An overview of governmental practices

January 2010

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## Preface

The Holocaust was a watershed tragedy in modern history. The Nazi genocide against Jews was based on an anti-Semitic, racist ideology that had become state policy. The genocide against Roma and Sinti and the mass murder of other persons due to their ethnicity, religious beliefs, political views, sexual orientation, disabilities or other grounds were also based on a system of state-sponsored intolerance and hatred. These crimes demonstrated graphically that the worst manifestations of anti-Semitism, racism and intolerance are not relics of the distant past, but may appear in modern circumstances with devastating and far-reaching consequences.

OSCE participating States have committed themselves to promoting remembrance of the Holocaust. Commemorating the tragedy not only honours the victims, but reinforces our determination to continue our work against intolerance and discrimination, which remains one of the burning political and moral issues of our time.

One manner in which most participating States have chosen to commemorate the Holocaust is by establishing national days of remembrance. This publication provides an overview of how and when OSCE countries commemorate the Holocaust. Observances vary widely among participating States with respect to which dates are selected, what types of events are held and which victims are honoured.

Government ceremonies on Holocaust memorial days are important for several reasons. Holding such events helps to fulfil a commitment entered into by participating States. Government sponsorship demonstrates that Holocaust remembrance is a national undertaking and is not limited to specific groups that were victims. Remembrance of the Holocaust also raises awareness that our common struggle to end intolerance and discrimination is not over. Last, but not least, memorial events can be valuable educational tools for youth. This publication cites numerous good examples of how well-planned commemorative events can resonate with our young people and provide hope for a better future.

I would like to thank the International Task Force on Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research for its close co-operation with ODIHR in the preparation of this compilation.

Ambassador Janez Lenarčič  
ODIHR Director

Warsaw, 27 January 2010

# Introduction

## OSCE Commitments

OSCE participating States have committed themselves to “promote remembrance of and, as appropriate, education about the tragedy of the Holocaust, and the importance of respect for all ethnic and religious groups”.<sup>1</sup>

This commitment constitutes an important element in the OSCE’s focus on the fight against discrimination and for respect and tolerance. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) was tasked by participating States to follow incidents motivated by racism, xenophobia, or related intolerance in the OSCE area and report on its findings. ODIHR was also tasked to systematically collect and disseminate information on best practices, offer advice to governments and support civil society efforts in this field.<sup>2</sup>

## International Co-operation on Remembrance of the Holocaust

Other international organizations have also identified the promotion of Holocaust remembrance as an area of multilateral co-operation.

In 1998, Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson, together with United Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair and United States President Bill Clinton initiated the **Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF)**. Currently, 27 countries are members of the ITF, 25 of which are OSCE participating States. The ITF’s member countries are committed to establishing a Holocaust memorial day.<sup>3</sup> In January 2000, 42 states attended the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, the outcome of which was the Stockholm Declaration, expressing a shared commitment “to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and to honour those who stood against it” and “to encourage appropriate forms of Holocaust remembrance, including an annual Day of Holocaust Remembrance, in our countries”.<sup>4</sup>

The **Council of Europe** has also decided to implement in schools a “Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and Prevention of Crimes against Humanity”, chosen with regard to the history of each member state.<sup>5</sup> This decision was taken by the

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<sup>1</sup> Permanent Council Decision 607/2004, endorsed by Ministerial Council Decision No. 12/04, “Tolerance and Non-Discrimination”, Sofia, 7 December 2004, <[http://www.osce.si/docs/mc-dec\\_12-04.pdf](http://www.osce.si/docs/mc-dec_12-04.pdf)>..

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Permanent Council Decision 621/2004, endorsed by Ministerial Council Decision No. 12/04, “Tolerance and Non-Discrimination”, Sofia, 7 December 2004, <[http://www.osce.si/docs/mc-dec\\_12-04.pdf](http://www.osce.si/docs/mc-dec_12-04.pdf)>. For ODIHR’s tools and projects on combating anti-Semitism and promotion of Holocaust remembrance, see <<http://www.osce.org/odihhr/20053.html>>.

<sup>3</sup> For more information, see <<http://www.holocausttaskforce.org/>>.

<sup>4</sup> For more information, see <<http://www.holocausttaskforce.org/about-the-itf/stockholm-declaration.html>>.

<sup>5</sup> For more information, see <<http://www.coe.int> and [http://www.coe.int/t/e/cultural\\_cooperation/education/standing\\_conferences/f.20thsessioncracow2000.asp#P19\\_566](http://www.coe.int/t/e/cultural_cooperation/education/standing_conferences/f.20thsessioncracow2000.asp#P19_566)>.

Ministers of Education of the member states of the Council of the Europe at their Standing Conference, in Krakow in 2000.

In 2005, the **United Nations** designated 27 January as an annual “International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust.” The General Assembly, in its resolution establishing the Day of Commemoration, also urged Member States to develop educational programmes to teach future generations the lessons of the Holocaust in order to help to prevent future acts of genocide. It decided to establish the “Holocaust and the United Nations” outreach programme and also to mobilize civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education in order to help to prevent future acts of genocide. The outreach programme works together with an international network of civil society groups, Holocaust memorial institutions, experts and survivors to ensure that their stories are heard and heeded as warnings of the consequences of anti-Semitism and other forms of discrimination. The programme’s activities and information also serve to combat Holocaust denial.<sup>6</sup>

In November 2007, **UNESCO’s** General Conference adopted unanimously a resolution calling on the organization to explore, in consultation with Member States, what role it could play in promoting awareness of Holocaust remembrance through education and in combating all forms of Holocaust denial. In 2008, a UNESCO platform for Holocaust education was established. In the same year, a CD ROM entitled *Education for Holocaust Remembrance* was developed. This tool contains information on UN and UNESCO programmes on Holocaust remembrance and includes links to major organizations and institutions working in this area.<sup>7</sup>

In co-operation with Yad Vashem (the Jerusalem-based Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Authority), the **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)** has developed a toolkit on the Holocaust and human rights education. In December 2009, the FRA published a tool for raising awareness among young people, entitled *School Agenda*, which includes material for Holocaust education and human rights awareness. The tool was developed by Yad Vashem and the Mémorial de la Shoah, a Paris-based museum and documentation centre. In 2010, the FRA plans to publish a comparative report entitled “The role of Commemoration Sites, Original Sites and Historical Museums in Holocaust Education and Human Rights Education in the EU”.

On 10 November 2008, ODIHR and the ITF organized a discussion on the role of Holocaust commemoration in combating anti-Semitism, entitled “Lessons Learned? Holocaust Remembrance and Combating anti-Semitism in 2008”. The meeting was held on the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kristallnacht<sup>8</sup>, the November 1938 anti-Jewish pogrom in Nazi Germany. In the presence of representatives of numerous OSCE participating States, ODIHR, the ITF, the Council of Europe, FRA, the United

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<sup>6</sup>For the text of the resolution and further information, see <<http://www.un.org/holocaustremembrance/emapage.shtml>>.

<sup>7</sup> For more information, see <[http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=57734&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=57734&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)>.

<sup>8</sup> Although the pogrom in November 1938 is generally referred to in English using the German term “Kristallnacht”, this term is today used less often in German, due to the concern the term may carry a positive connotation. The terms “Novemberpogrome”, “Reichspogromnacht” or “Pogromnacht” avoid such connotations and are today more common in usage. The term “Kristallnacht” has been used in this document along with the English translation “Night of the Broken Glass”.

Nations and UNESCO presented their views on this issue and provided information about their mandates and their work.<sup>9</sup>

### **About This Publication**

This publication focuses on the role governments, parliaments and other public institutions can play in promoting remembrance of the Holocaust. While many governments support educational activities, it is also beneficial for public officials and representatives of government institutions to participate personally in memorial days, as their presence conveys approval and support for Holocaust commemoration.

OSCE participating States commemorate a variety of different remembrance days for victims of the Holocaust, with different names in different countries. Commemorative events may emphasize different groups of victims. Some countries also include the commemoration of other, more recent, instances of genocide. For the purposes of this publication, the term “Holocaust memorial days” may be used to refer to all such national days of remembrance.

The information in this publication is based on a questionnaire that was prepared by ODIHR, in co-operation with the Subcommittee on Holocaust Memorial Days of the Museum and Memorials Working Group of the ITF (see Annex 2). The information is provided on a country-by-country basis, with particular attention given to government activities that take place on the designated day of remembrance. The individual country summaries that form the bulk of this publication are based solely on the responses received from governments.<sup>10</sup>

ODIHR received responses to the questionnaire from 30 participating States in 2009 and early 2010. Eleven participating States that had provided information in response to the questionnaire in 2007 did not update the information previously submitted; in these instances, the information included in this publication is based on their earlier submissions. No information has been received from the remaining 15 participating States as to whether they have designated a special day of commemoration for the victims of the Holocaust or if there are plans to establish a Holocaust memorial day.

### When Do States Commemorate?

According to the information received, 21 participating States commemorate the Holocaust on 27 January, the day that marks the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp by the Soviet Army in 1945. These are Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Norway, Portugal, Serbia,<sup>11</sup> Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

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<sup>9</sup> See <[http://www.osce.org/odihr/item\\_1\\_34827.html](http://www.osce.org/odihr/item_1_34827.html)> for the presentations by each of these international agencies.

<sup>10</sup>No additional research was undertaken. ODIHR does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of the information received.

<sup>11</sup> Serbia reported that it commemorates “International Holocaust Victims Remembrance Day” on 27 January, and also commemorates “National Holocaust and Genocide Victims Remembrance Day” on 22 April, as well as having four more additional national remembrance days.

Two countries, Canada and the United States, commemorate the Holocaust on Yom Hashoah. The full name in Hebrew, “Yom Hashoah Ve-Hagevurah”, means the “Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day”. Commemoration begins at sunset on the 27<sup>th</sup> of the month of Nisan of the Hebrew calendar. This date marks the beginning of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in 1943 and was established as a remembrance day by the Government of Israel in 1951.

Ten participating States commemorate victims of the Holocaust on days of national significance different from those covered above. These comprise Austria, Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and the Slovak Republic.

Eight participating States – Andorra, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, the Holy See, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Russian Federation – reported that they have not established official Holocaust memorial days. Of these, however, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the Russian Federation reported that, while there is no official day of commemoration, remembrance events organized by civil society are attended by governmental officials. Although the Holy See does not have an official Holocaust memorial day, it reported that, in some countries, national Bishops’ Conferences have introduced a “Day of Judaism” in order to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust. These commemorations often take place on the 9 November anniversary of the Nazi anti-Jewish pogrom of 1938, or on the 27 January anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

Annex 1 provides a calendar of Holocaust memorial days in different countries.

#### To Whom Are Remembrance Days Dedicated?

Fourteen participating States report that they commemorate (the victims of) the Holocaust (Canada, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Liechtenstein, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden and the United States of America).

Latvia and Lithuania report that they hold remembrance of the genocide against Jews.

Finland reports that it commemorates the victims of the Holocaust and other victims of persecution during World War II.

Ireland reports that it commemorates all of the victims of the Nazi Holocaust.

Belgium reports that it holds remembrance of the genocide committed by Nazi Germany.

Austria and Germany report that they commemorate the victims of National Socialism.

France reports that it commemorates the victims of the racist and anti-Semitic crimes of the so-called “Government of the French State” during World War II, as well as paying tribute to the “Righteous among the Nations<sup>12</sup> from France”.

Bulgaria reports that it commemorates the salvation of Bulgarian Jews and the victims of the Holocaust and crimes against humanity.

Estonia reports that it commemorates the victims of the Holocaust and all other crimes against humanity.

Six countries – Croatia, Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Monaco, Spain and Switzerland – dedicate a day of remembrance to the prevention of crimes against humanity, as well as to the victims of the Holocaust/Shoah.<sup>13</sup>

Four States report that they observe broader commemorative days, devoted to victims of other historical events in addition to the Holocaust:

Denmark’s day of remembrance commemorates the victims of other genocides, as well as victims of the Holocaust.

The Netherlands reports that it commemorates all civilians and soldiers who died in the Kingdom of the Netherlands or elsewhere since the outbreak of World War II, both in war and during peacekeeping operations.

The Slovak Republic commemorates victims of the Holocaust and of racial violence.

The United Kingdom reports that its day of remembrance commemorates the victims of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution, as well as those affected by subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Darfur.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The “Righteous among the Nations” is a title given by Yad Vashem (the Israel-based Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority) to non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

<sup>13</sup> Monaco uses the term Shoah, a Hebrew word meaning “catastrophe”. The term is in common usage in many countries.

<sup>14</sup> Definitions of the term “genocide” vary among scholars. A legal definition of the term was provided in the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG). Article 2 of this convention defines genocide as “any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life, calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.” Use of the term “genocide” in submissions by participating States in this document with regard to events in specific countries should not be understood as indicating that all OSCE participating States agree that the events in question constituted genocide.

## **Albania**

ODIHR did not receive any information from Albania.

## **Andorra**

The Government of the Principality of Andorra has not designated a special day of commemoration for the victims of the Holocaust.

Information provided by the Permanent Mission of Andorra to the OSCE in 2007.

## **Armenia**

ODIHR did not receive any information from Armenia.

## **Austria**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

On 11 November 1997, the lower house of Austria's parliament, the National Council, unanimously resolved to mark 5 May – the day on which the Mauthausen concentration camp was liberated – with a memorial day against violence and racism in remembrance of the victims of National Socialism. Since 1998, this day has been called the “National Day against Violence and Racism in Memoriam of the Victims of National Socialism”.

While 5 May is the official Holocaust memorial day, other days, such as 27 January and 9 November (the date of the 1938 pogrom) are commemorated in public places in Vienna and other Austrian cities, with activities largely being organized by civil society groups.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

The principal official commemorative event takes place in the parliament, with a number of speeches being delivered.

In early May, official commemoration ceremonies also take place at memorial sites in Mauthausen, Ebensee and Gusen.

### ***Additional Practices<sup>15</sup>***

Civic education projects are conducted, especially in schools.

Numerous civil society organizations, such as the Mauthausen Memorial, “Erinnern.at”, the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism, the Documentation Archive of Austrian Resistance and the Austrian Academy of Sciences also take part in events.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

High-ranking state officials, such as the President, the President of the National Council, the Prime Minister, members of the Cabinet, Members of the National Council and party leaders, participate in the official commemorative event held in the parliament building.

The Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture co-operates with civil society groups that organize commemorative events.

Information provided by the Austrian Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in a communication dated 15 December 2009.

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<sup>15</sup> Further information is available at [http://www.konvent.gv.at/PG/VER\\_FEST/FEST/show.psp?P\\_INF2=1](http://www.konvent.gv.at/PG/VER_FEST/FEST/show.psp?P_INF2=1); <http://www.erinnern.at/aktivitaten/gedenktag-5-mai>; <http://www.mauthausen-memorial.at>; <http://www.doew.at>; and <http://www.oeaw.ac.at>.

## **Azerbaijan**

There is no Holocaust memorial day in Azerbaijan.

Information provided by the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Warsaw, Poland, in 2007.

## **Belarus**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

There is no official Holocaust memorial day in Belarus.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

Although there is no official Holocaust memorial day, annual special events are organized jointly by government bodies and civil society organizations to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust.

On 18 September 2009, a memorial marker was dedicated on the site of the former Minsk Ghetto.

In October 2008, several events were organized in Minsk to commemorate the victims of the Minsk Ghetto. These events marked the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liquidation of the Minsk Ghetto, on 21 October 1943.

On 21 October 2008, an exhibition in the Museum of the Great Patriotic War in Minsk entitled “War. Holocaust. Memory without Limit” was opened to mark the anniversary. Special stamps dedicated to the victims of the Minsk Ghetto were issued on the same day.

On 22 October 2008, a memorial marker was unveiled in Sukhaya Street in Minsk on the spot where more than 5,000 ghetto prisoners were killed. A memorial headstone was inaugurated to commemorate Jews from Cologne, Germany, who were forcibly displaced and exterminated in the Minsk Ghetto.

On 23 October 2008, a memorial sign was unveiled in Berut Street in Minsk, on the spot where more than 14,000 Jews from the Minsk Ghetto were executed.

### ***Additional Practices***

In October 2008, an International Scientific Symposium entitled “Exploring the history of the Holocaust in Germany and Belarus” took place in Minsk. Exhibitions and presentations of books on the Holocaust in Belarus were also organized.



A commemorative ceremony in Minsk, Belarus, on the 60th anniversary of the liquidation of the Minsk ghetto, 21 October 2003.

Photo: Victor Tolochko, BelTA News Agency

Information provided by the Permanent Delegation of the Republic of Belarus to the OSCE in a communication dated 12 October 2009.

## **Belgium**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

In 2004, the Belgian Federal Government decided to designate 27 January as the country's Holocaust memorial day. Prior to this decision, 8 May (the anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe) had been Belgium's official Holocaust remembrance day. The 8 May anniversary continues to be marked as "Peace Day", while 27 January is now commemorated as the "Remembrance Day of the Genocide Committed by Nazi Germany" and is generally referred to as "Holocaust Remembrance Day".

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

On 8 May, a number of official ceremonies are held, each of which is attended by a government delegation. One example is the annual ceremony at the Antwerp Deportation Monument that is attended by official representatives of Belgium's national and local governments and by Jewish organizations.

An annual commemorative trip to Auschwitz is organized each January on the initiative of the Minister of Defence, whose portfolio includes war victims, and the National Institute for War Disabled, War Veterans and War Victims ("Instituut voor Veteranen – Nationaal Instituut voor Oorlogsinvaliden, Oud-strijders en Oorlogsslachtoffers/Institut des Vétérans – Institut National des Invalides de Guerre, Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre"), with the participation of survivors, witnesses and secondary school students. On 29 January 2009, 135 youngsters and Minister of Defence Pieter De Crem visited Auschwitz-Birkenau.

A variety of activities focusing on the Holocaust and on the issue of peace and tolerance education also take place on Peace Day.

### ***Additional Practices***

Various events are also organized by civil society throughout the country, with high-level federal and/or local government officials attending. Jewish organizations sometimes co-organize and always participate in these events. Several commemorative activities are organized on Yom Hashoah.

Special ceremonies are held at monuments or sites that have a specific connection to the Holocaust (museums, memorials, etc.).

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

On 27 January 2005, Belgium's Head of State, H.M. King Albert II, and the Head of the Belgian Government, Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt, participated in an official ceremony at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum.

On 27 January 2006, activities revolved around the Belgian Chairmanship of the OSCE, with the Chairperson-in-Office inviting representatives from all 56 OSCE participating States to attend a ceremony in Brussels. In the course of this ceremony the ODIHR/Yad Vashem guidelines, *Preparing Holocaust Memorial Days: Suggestions for Educators*, were launched.

In 2007, the main official event was held on 8 May, coinciding with the presentation and publication of the official report on the actions of the Belgian authorities during World War II. On that day, the Prime Minister and the Belgian Minister of Defence unveiled a commemorative plaque in the centre of Brussels honouring the 1,443 Belgians that have been recognized by Yad Vashem as “Righteous among the Nations”. The 27 January event was arranged by Jewish organizations and took place at the national monument in Anderlecht, with a number of high-level government officials in attendance.



Belgian Minister of Defence Pieter De Crem at a Holocaust commemoration ceremony, Auschwitz, 27 January 2008.

Photo : Institut National des Invalides de Guerre

Information provided by the Belgian Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in a communication, dated 25 September 2009.

## **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

Bosnia and Herzegovina does not officially mark a Holocaust memorial day, due to the absence of state-level legislation on official holidays.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

Although there are no strictly official events, the office of the president of Bosnia and Herzegovina has lent its patronage to events that have taken place on premises owned by the Jewish community.

### ***Additional Practices***

On 27 January 2007, commemorative events were held on Jewish community property under the patronage of the office of the President. The events were organized in co-operation with the University of Sarajevo's Institute for Research of Crimes against Humanity and International Law, the university's law faculty and the Jewish community of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

As noted, memorial events have been held under the patronage of the office of the President of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Information provided by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2007.

## **Bulgaria**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

Decision No. 105 of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, dated 19 February 2003, declared 10 March the “Day of the Salvation of the Bulgarian Jews and of the Victims of the Holocaust and of the Crimes against Humanity”, which is also known as “Holocaust and Victims of Crimes against Humanity Remembrance Day”. The day marks the prevention of the deportation of 50,000 Bulgarian citizens of Jewish origin to the Nazi concentration camps. On 10 March 1943, the Deputy Speaker of the Bulgarian National Assembly, Dimar Peshev, Metropolitan Bishop Stephan of Sofia, Metropolitan Bishop Cyril of Plovdiv and many other prominent public figures – with the support of members of the general population – prevented the planned deportation.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

Every year on 10 March, a commemorative meeting is held in front of a plaque dedicated to the memory of Dimar Peshev located near the National Assembly building. Representatives of the Bulgarian Government, the National Assembly, other institutions and civil society groups pay homage to the victims of the Holocaust, as well as to the saviours of Bulgarian Jews.

Commemorative events are organized all over the country, especially in Sofia, Kyustendil, Plovdiv, Lom, Shumen, Montana and in other towns where considerable Jewish communities are living or have lived.

### ***Additional Practices***

On 10 March, commemorative events are held all over the country. These are organized in schools with the aim of raising students’ awareness about the saving of the Bulgarian Jews from Nazi death camps. These events include discussions, essay competitions, exhibitions, meetings with survivors of the Holocaust and other initiatives.

National and local public institutions, as well as the Bulgarian Jewish organization Shalom (which has branches all over the country), are involved in the organization of commemorative events.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

The President of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Speaker of the National Assembly, national deputies, and high-level officials from the Government and regional public institutions participate in the events held to commemorate the Day of the Salvation of the Bulgarian Jews and of the Victims of the Holocaust and of the Crimes against Humanity.

The commemorative events are widely covered by national and local media.

Information provided by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Bulgaria to the OSCE in a communication dated 5 January 2010.

## **Canada**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

At the federal level, the Holocaust memorial day in Canada is determined in each year by the Jewish lunar calendar and is called “Holocaust Memorial Day – Yom Hashoah”. In 2009, the day fell on 21 April.

At the federal level, the Canadian Holocaust Memorial Day was established by an Act of Parliament (the Holocaust Memorial Day Act) in 2003 and celebrated for the first time in 2004.

The mandate of the commemoration day is to reflect upon and educate citizens about the enduring lessons that humanity must learn from the Holocaust; to recognize the necessity for perpetual vigilance to avoid such atrocities in the future; and to consider human rights issues, the multicultural reality of modern society and other instances of the systemic destruction of peoples.

Canada has also officially declared 17 January as “Raoul Wallenberg Day,” designated for reflection on the evils of racism and hate and the profound impact that an individual who speaks out can have.

These dates commemorate the deaths of millions of Jews and others who perished as a result of a policy of hatred and genocide during World War II.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

At the 2007 Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony on Parliament Hill in Ottawa (15 April 2007), Prime Minister Stephen Harper spoke, honouring the victims of the Holocaust. The Prime Minister also acknowledged that politicians have an important role to play in ensuring the continued protection of human rights and combating anti-Semitism, both of which are key to ensuring that the lessons of the Holocaust are remembered and that such tragedies are not repeated.

Governmental commemorative events are held all across Canada.

Governments, universities and NGOs also acknowledge 27 January as the UN’s International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust. This day is marked by official statements and events across the country.

### ***Additional Practices***

In April 2007, the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem was one of the organizations sponsoring the Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony on Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

In February 2009, the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre and the City Opera of Vancouver presented a performance of *The Emperor of Atlantis*, a chamber opera written in 1943-1944 at the Theresienstadt concentration camp. The production was

supported by the Government of British Columbia's 2010 Legacies Now Innovation Fund.

In May 2009, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra performed the world premier of Zane Zalis' musical memory of the Holocaust entitled *I Believe*. This work documents the Holocaust experience as seen and lived by those involved – the perpetrators, the victims, the observers – and (in a plea for informed hope and peace) ourselves.

The League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada has created a wide range of Holocaust activities to reach students, educators, legal experts and the wider Canadian public. These are all supported through private funding, although the Government has expressed interest in and moral support for them. They include a major event held on Yom Hashoah, in which academics, legal scholars and legislative experts take part in a major panel discussion that touches on Holocaust education, remembrance and/or research.

The Holocaust Centre of Toronto hosts Yom Hashoah Ve-Hagevurah ("Holocaust and Heroism Day"), a Holocaust commemoration held every spring. This event attracted nearly 3,000 people in 2007.

In Alberta, the Jewish Federation of Edmonton and the Calgary Jewish Community Council provide educational support services and mount programmes involving Yom Hashoah commemorative activities, such as a production of the play *Hana's Suitcase*.

Each year, over 5,000 students visit the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, the only officially recognized Holocaust museum in Canada. School groups often come from elsewhere in Quebec, from eastern Ontario and from the north-eastern United States. Over 12,000 people visit the museum annually. The Centre organizes an annual Holocaust Education Series, which reaches out to young adults, adults and the elderly. In October and November 2007, 45 events were held over a seven-week period. The Hana's Suitcase Educational Project, created by the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, provides a complete educational kit to educators (suitcase, books for the class, teacher's manual, drawings, maps and photos).

The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre is a teaching museum that delivers Holocaust-based anti-racism programming through its exhibits, school programmes, teacher conferences, student symposia, outreach speakers programme, teaching materials and public programmes. Its public programming calendar includes an active roster of lectures, film screenings, panels and readings. Commemorative events include International Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yom Hashoah, a commemoration of Kristallnacht, and cemetery services at the Holocaust memorial.

The Victoria Holocaust Remembrance & Education Society organizes an Annual Holocaust Education Symposium in Victoria, British Columbia, for high school students and their teachers, with over 2,000 students in attendance in the last two years alone.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

The Government of Canada promotes commemorative events and raises awareness by issuing news releases, statements and giving speeches.

Participation is at the ministerial level and the Governor General often attends events. Occasionally, the Prime Minister participates in commemorative events as well.

Aside from federal, provincial and territorial involvement, below is a list of some of the NGOs involved in commemorating the Holocaust:

Asper Foundation  
B’Nai Brith Canada  
Calgary Jewish Community Council  
Canadian Jewish Congress  
Canadian Society for Yad Vashem  
Freeman Family Foundation Holocaust Education Centre  
Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies  
Facing History, Facing Ourselves  
General Romeo Dallaire Genocide Institute  
Holocaust Awareness Committee, Jewish Federation of Winnipeg  
Holocaust Centre of Toronto  
Israel Experience Centre, Asper Jewish Community Campus  
Jewish Federation of Edmonton  
Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada  
Kleinmann Family Foundation  
Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre / Le Centre commémoratif de l’Holocauste à Montréal  
Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre  
Victoria Holocaust Remembrance and Education Society  
Winnipeg Foundation



The National Holocaust Memorial Day Ceremony on Parliament Hill, Ottawa, Canada, organized by the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, 2 May 2008.  
Photo: Canadian Society for Yad Vashem

Information provided by the Permanent Mission of Canada to the OSCE in a communication dated 13 October 2009.

## **Croatia**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

On 30 October 2003, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Croatia adopted a decision to commemorate the “Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity” on 27 January. The day has been commemorated since 2004.

The purpose of the commemoration is to prevent crimes against humanity and to educate people about the Holocaust.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

At the national level, a three-day seminar for educators is held on teaching about the Holocaust and the commemoration of the Day of Remembrance. It takes place in Zagreb and at the Jasenovac Memorial Site.

Many official bodies and civil society organizations are involved in this event, including the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports; the Ministry of Culture; the Education and Teacher Training Agency; the Jasenovac Memorial Site; the Croatian delegation to the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research; Yad Vashem; the Anne Frank House; the Council of Europe; the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous; and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

### ***Additional Practices***

Every year, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports sends instructions for the commemoration of the Day of Remembrance to all primary and secondary schools. The schools organize the commemoration in different ways.

All Croatian teachers were invited to send their class/school presentations related to the Day of Remembrance in the school year 2006/2007 to the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, and the most interesting ones were put on the Ministry’s website.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

Representatives from the Croatian Government, local governments, Croatia’s Jewish community and others groups are involved in commemorations. The Government delegation includes the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and ministers.

Representatives of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, the Ministry of Culture, ministers, state secretaries, assistant ministers and representatives of the Jasenovac Memorial site take part in the national seminar on the Day of Remembrance.



Jasenovać Memorial site, Croatia, 27 January 2008.

Information provided by the Croatian Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in a communication dated 22 September 2009.

## **Cyprus**

ODIHR did not receive any information from Cyprus.

## **Czech Republic**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

In 2004, 27 January was designated in Czech Republic law (act 101/2004) as the Holocaust memorial day. It is called the “Memorial Day for Holocaust Victims and for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity”.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

An official event takes place in the Czech Senate. In addition to Government officials, the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic, the Prague-based Foundation for Holocaust Victims, the Ministry of Culture, the Senate, and the Prague Jewish community are involved in the event.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust remembrance and level of participation in events***

The official event is attended by the Czech Prime Minister, Czech Government ministers, parliamentary chairpersons and Members of Parliament.

Information provided by the Permanent Mission of the Czech Republic to the OSCE in a communication dated 21 October 2009.

## Denmark

### *Holocaust Memorial Day*

In Denmark, victims of the Holocaust, as well as other genocides, are officially commemorated each year on 27 January. This national day of remembrance, called “Auschwitz Day”, was established in 2002 and has been observed since 2003. The significance of the day was explained by former Danish Chief Rabbi Bent Melchior: “The term Auschwitz has gained universal meaning. Really, it encompasses all forms of mass murder, ethnic cleansing and all collective crimes against people, whose only crime is to be born into or having joined the ‘wrong’ group. In our mind, Auschwitz, originally a European phenomenon, covers atrocities in all parts of the world.”

### *Official Commemorative Activities*

The activities related to Auschwitz Day fall into two categories: public events on 27 January and educational activities about the Holocaust and other genocides.

Each year on 27 January public events are arranged by six different municipalities across Denmark. The events are held in town halls, local museums, libraries and the like. They take various forms but generally include speeches given by genocide survivors, politicians and/or other relevant actors; concerts; movie screenings; poetry recitals; theatre performances; debates; exhibitions; and other such activities. The general public is invited to participate in these events.

The Ministry of Education has established two bodies to organize events related to Auschwitz Day – a steering committee and a council whose membership comprises representatives of groups affected by the Holocaust and other Nazi atrocities, and other relevant NGOs. The steering committee is comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Integration, as well as from the Danish Institute for International Studies and, like the council, from groups affected by the Holocaust and other Nazi atrocities.

### *Additional Practices*

The educational activities related to Auschwitz Day include seminars offered to high school students and teacher training seminars. There are also educational websites targeting both secondary and high schools and educational material about the Holocaust and other genocides. Every year, the Government and its implementing partners introduce a new theme for Auschwitz Day. In 2009, for example, the theme was “Rescue”; in 2008, “On this place...”; and in 2007, “The prelude to genocide”. A special website<sup>16</sup> raises awareness about the events and provides information about the various activities in the municipalities. The educational activities revolving around Auschwitz Day are promoted in a newsletter on the department’s educational website<sup>17</sup>. Further information is posted on the website<sup>18</sup> of the Danish Institute for International Studies.

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<sup>16</sup> See < <http://www.27-1.dk>>.

<sup>17</sup> See < <http://www.folkedrab.dk>>.



## **Estonia**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

In Estonia, the victims of the Holocaust and all other crimes against humanity are officially commemorated on 27 January. The date is named the “Day of Holocaust” and was introduced in 2003.

On 18 June 2009, the Estonian Parliament joined the European Parliament’s call to proclaim 23 August as a Europe-wide Day of Remembrance. The resolution states that the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes should be commemorated with dignity and impartiality<sup>19</sup> and acknowledges the uniqueness of the Holocaust.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

On 27 January 2010, the victims of the Holocaust were commemorated in the annual candle-lighting ceremony at the memorial stone placed at the location of the Klooga death camp. After the commemoration event at Klooga, a commemorative concert was held in the Tallinn synagogue.

The commemoration activities were organised in co-operation with various public institutions and ministries and the Estonian Jewish community.

### ***Additional Practices***

An exhibition entitled “Anne Frank – a History for Today” to run for a month was opened in the National Library of Estonia at the beginning of January 2009. The exhibition was compiled by the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam and had already been displayed in a number of other locations in Estonia. Arrangements for the exhibition were made by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Estonia and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research.

Since Holocaust education is integrated into the Estonian education programme and educational materials have been published with the support of the Holocaust ITF and the Ministry of Education and Research, the Holocaust was also commemorated in Estonian schools.

The Ministry of Education sends a circular letter to schools every year in January. There are teaching materials (books, films, CD-ROMs, DVDs, etc.) for schools included in the circulars.

At the end of June 2010, Estonian history teachers will visit the sites of former concentration camps established by Nazi Germany in occupied Poland during World

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<sup>19</sup> European Parliament Resolution on European Conscience and Totalitarianism. P. 15, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2009-0213+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN/>

War II. The educational programme will be organized in co-operation with the Embassy of Poland in Estonia and the Estonian History Teachers' Association.

At the end of July, 2010, a group consisting of 20 Estonian history teachers will visit Yad Vashem.

***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

Traditionally a member of the Estonian Government gives a speech during the commemoration ceremony.

Information provided by the Estonian Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research. Communication dated 8 January 2010.

## **Finland**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

In Finland, 27 January has been designated as the “Memorial Day for the Victims of Holocaust” (“Vainojen uhrien muistopäivä”). The Memorial Day honours the memory of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, as well as other victims of persecution during World War II. It was established by the Prime Minister's Office on 20 February 2001.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

The commemorative event is organized by the Finnish Society for Yad Vashem with the financial support of the Ministry of Education. There is no fixed location. It traditionally consists of a memorial ceremony and an academic seminar.

### ***Additional Practices***

The Finnish Society for Yad Vashem organizes the commemorative event, which is open to everyone. Beginning in 2009, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has assisted the Finnish Society for Yad Vashem in increasing public awareness about the Memorial Day events through the use of the Ministry's communication channels, such as the its website.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

Government ministers participate in the memorial ceremony.



The President of Finland, Tarja Halonen, gives a speech at the Memorial Day for the Victims of Holocaust commemoration, 27 January 2004.

Photo: Dan Kantor, Jewish Community of Finland

Information provided by the Permanent Mission of Finland to the OSCE in a communication dated 13 October 2009.

## France

### *Holocaust Memorial Day*

France remembers the victims of the Holocaust on the closest Sunday to 16 July. This timing commemorates the rounding up of Jews in the Vélodrome d'Hiver cycle track in Paris on 16 and 17 July 1942. On 3 February 1993, French President François Mitterrand signed a decree introducing a “commemorative national day of racist and anti-Semitic persecutions committed under the authority of the so-called ‘Government of the French State’ (1940-1944)”. On 10 July 2000, a new law restated the decree of 1993, adding that tribute should be paid to the French “Righteous among the Nations”. The day is called “National Day of Remembrance of the victims of racist and anti-Semitic crimes of the so-called ‘Government of the French State’, and in homage to the Righteous among the Nations from France.”

### *Official Commemorative Activities*

The main ceremony takes place in Paris, not far from the former site of the Vélodrome d'Hiver and in front of a memorial dedicated in July 1994. In each administrative region, or *département*, a ceremony is organized by the prefect, who represents the French Republic. Many other ceremonies take place in cities all over France in front of commemorative plaques or at World War II memorials.

The official ceremony includes speeches, and a moment of silence and/or a prayer for the dead.

The ceremony is organized by the Department for Veterans Affairs, which is attached to the Ministry of Defence.

### *Additional Practices*

The ceremonies that take place outside Paris are often prepared in close co-operation with the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions of France, representatives of various Jewish organizations and former deportee associations, and other public institutions.

Educational establishments organize local events and organize various activities related to the Shoah on that day.

### *Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events*

The Prime Minister presides over the ceremony in Paris, speaking on behalf of the French Government. The prefects represent the Government during public ceremonies that take place at the *département* level.

Information provided by the French Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in a communication dated 30 September 2009.

## **Georgia**

Georgia has not designated a special day of commemoration for the victims of the Holocaust. There are no plans to establish a Holocaust memorial day.

Information provided by the Department of International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia in a communication dated 9 October 2009.

## **Germany**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

Germany officially commemorates the Holocaust on 27 January. The day is called “Memorial Day for the Victims of the National Socialist Regime”. It was introduced by President Roman Herzog in 1996. The focus is on remembering all of the victims of Nazi crimes.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

The official commemorative ceremony takes place in the Reichstag building, seat of the Bundestag, the German parliament.

The parliament traditionally invites a wide range of institutions and groups to attend the ceremony.

### ***Additional Practices***

The central commemorative event is complemented by events that take place at historical sites and at the local level, with a view to involving young people, schools and local groups.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust remembrance and level of participation in events***

The President, representatives of the Federal Government and the states, and the President of the Federal Constitutional Court attend the official commemorative ceremony in the Bundestag.

Information provided by the German Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in a communication dated 3 December 2009.

## **Greece**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

A law adopted by the Greek parliament in 2004 designates 27 January as the Holocaust memorial day. The day is officially called “Commemoration Day of the Greek Jewish Martyrs and Heroes of the Holocaust”. In application of this law, a presidential decree published on 28 February 2005 regulates the commemorative events in the different prefectures of the country.

The purpose of this day, which has been marked since 2005, is to remember the interruption of the multifaceted Jewish contribution to Greece before World War II, especially in Thessaloniki, and to remember the persecution of the Jewish community during the war and the Holocaust. A further goal is to raise awareness, especially among youth, of every form of xenophobia, religious intolerance, racism and, in particular, anti-Semitism.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

Commemorative events are organized in the most important religious and cultural centres, including large concert halls, synagogues and universities, mainly in Athens and Thessaloniki.

The key organizers of the commemorative events are the prefectures and the municipalities (under the guidance of the Ministry of Interior), the Ministry of Education (which issues a circular every year), the Athens-based Central Board of Jewish Communities, the remaining Jewish communities and the Jewish museums.

In addition to state and government representatives, other groups participating in the events include religious authorities (e.g. the Orthodox Church of Greece), the Association of the Greek Jewish Survivors of the Concentration Camps, students and Jewish youth clubs.

The different commemorative events include the delivery of speeches and the screening of films related to the Holocaust. Survivors share the memories of their experience in the concentration camps. Parts of the events are also dedicated to people who saved Jews during World War II.

### ***Additional Practices***

In addition to the official events described above, travelling exhibitions are presented and prizes are awarded to the winners of an essay competition for students. The competition was organized by the Ministry of Education, the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece and the Embassy of Israel.

***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

The President, a number of ministers (such as those for the Interior, Justice, and Education), deputy ministers, members of parliament, members of all political parties represented in the parliament, prefects and representatives of local authorities take part in the Commemoration Day events.

Information provided by the Greek Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in 2007.

## **Holy See**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

The Holy See has not designated a special day of commemoration for the victims of the Holocaust.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

In some countries, national Bishops' Conferences have introduced a "Day of Judaism" in order to commemorate the victims of the Shoah and to draw attention to the Jewish roots of the Christian faith and the progress made in Jewish-Catholic dialogue. Specific mention should be made of the commemoration of Kristallnacht on 9 November or of the liberation of Auschwitz on 27 January in this context.

The Holy See is the central government of the Catholic Church, which consists of local churches. These are independently responsible for education and remembrance, in accordance with general guidelines. This means that concrete measures for Holocaust remembrance are taken by the individual local churches.

On 7 April 1994, the Vatican organized a well-attended concert in commemoration of the victims of the Shoah. In a speech before the concert, Pope John Paul II referred to his historical visit to the Synagogue of Rome on 13 April 1986, expressing "abhorrence for the genocide decreed against the Jewish people during World War II, which led to the holocaust of millions of innocent people". He went on: "It is not enough that we remember; for in our own day, regrettably, there are many new manifestations of the anti-Semitism, xenophobia and racial hatred which were seeds of those unspeakable crimes. Humanity cannot permit all that to happen again".

### ***Additional Practices***

In 1974, the Holy See established the "Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews" in order to promote and foster dialogue with the Jewish people on a global level. Among the most important topics of the work of the Commission is the question of how to combat anti-Semitism and to provide education with respect to Holocaust commemoration. The Commission can only, however, give general guidelines. It is not its task to organize Holocaust commemoration for the whole Catholic Church, but rather to establish the theoretical framework for dealing with Holocaust issues.

The Holy See has a high moral authority which depends on and is mediated by the Pope. His voice is heard all over the world and his statements have worldwide repercussions. Pope John Paul II repeatedly expressed his concern about anti-Semitism, calling this phenomenon a "sin against God and humanity". In a 1998 letter presenting the document "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah", issued by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, he said: "On numerous occasions during my Pontificate I have recalled with a sense of deep sorrow the sufferings of the

Jewish people during the World War II. The crime which has become known as the Shoah remains an indelible stain” on history.

In a 12 February 2009 meeting with members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Pope Benedict XVI affirmed: “The hatred and contempt for men, women and children that was manifested in the Shoah was a crime against God and against humanity. This should be clear to everyone, especially to those standing in the tradition of the Holy Scriptures, according to which every human being is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). It is beyond question that any denial or minimization of this terrible crime is intolerable and altogether unacceptable. Recently, in a public audience, I reaffirmed that the Shoah must be ‘a warning for all against forgetfulness, denial or reductionism, because violence committed against one single human being is violence against all’.”

Regarding the teaching of the Catholic Church about the Holocaust, the above quoted document “We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah” defines the Shoah as a “horrible genocide”: “no one can remain indifferent, least of all the Church, by reason of her very close bonds of spiritual kinship with the Jewish people and her remembrance of the injustices of the past”. Therefore, the Catholic Church considers Holocaust education and the commemoration of the victims to be an important matter that should be promoted at all levels of Church life.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

Pope John Paul II was the first Pope to visit Auschwitz in 1979. As a pilgrim, he commemorated the victims of the Holocaust, expressing his deep sorrow and shame. There he knelt and prayed in silence. In May 2006, Pope Benedict XVI also visited Auschwitz and commemorated the victims of the Shoah. The example of two Popes commemorating the victims of the Shoah in Auschwitz is a visible sign of the importance of Holocaust remembrance.

Information provided by the Permanent Representation of the Holy See to the OSCE in a communication dated 9 October 2009.

# Hungary

## *Holocaust Memorial Day*

Hungary commemorates the victims of the Holocaust on 16 April, the date of the establishment of the first ghetto on Hungarian territory (in Munkács) in 1944. Hungary's Holocaust Memorial Day was first marked in 2000. Since then, the marking of Holocaust Memorial Day has been compulsory in secondary schools.

## *Official Commemorative Activities*

Commemorative meetings are held in the National Assembly, the Hungarian parliament, and are attended by senior state and government officials.

Budapest's Holocaust Memorial Center<sup>20</sup> also organizes official commemorations, which are attended by the President of the National Assembly, the President of the Supreme Court, foreign diplomats, municipal representatives, Holocaust survivors, teachers and students. In accordance with the relevant UN Resolution, the Government of Hungary and the Holocaust Memorial Center organize commemorative programmes on 27 January.

## *Additional Practices*

Remembrance events and activities also take place in schools. The Ministry of Education and Culture sends an official letter to public schools to encourage them to commemorate the event in an appropriate way. Educational packages are provided to assist in organizing commemorative events.

The Ministry of Education and Culture has created a website<sup>21</sup> containing teaching materials and materials for students. The Ministry has also provided a teaching package to aid teaching about the Holocaust.

The Holocaust Memorial Center advises schools on the organization of commemorations and recommends the educational package prepared by Yad Vashem for organizing Memorial Days. During Memorial Week, which takes place around the national Holocaust Memorial Day, the Center organizes various educational programmes for schools and cultural programmes for the public. The Center organizes international conferences and teacher training seminars for educators. It also offers special educational activities for schools, thematic history lessons, guided tours of the permanent exhibition and meetings with survivors. Educators from the Holocaust Memorial Center give special thematic lessons in schools all over the country at this time. Two travelling exhibitions are presented around the country, "Anne Frank – a History for Today" and the "Auschwitz Album". The openings of these exhibitions are organized around Holocaust Memorial Day.

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<sup>20</sup> See < <http://www.hdke.hu> >.

<sup>21</sup> See < <http://www.holokausztmagyarorszagon.hu> >.

The media address the topic of the Holocaust each year around 27 January and 16 April. NGOs, as well as civil and religious communities, commemorate the Holocaust all over the country.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

Every year the entire Cabinet, the President, the members of the Supreme Court and Members of the National Assembly from all parties attend the commemorative event held in the National Assembly.



Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Day at the Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Center, Budapest, 16 April 2008.

Photo: Eszter Gordon, Hungarian Ministry of Education

Information provided by the Hungarian Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in a communication dated 14 December 2009.

## **Iceland**

ODIHR did not receive any information from Iceland.

## **Ireland**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

Drawing on the assistance of the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Government has marked Holocaust Memorial Day as the Sunday nearest to 27 January each year since 2003. Local events commemorating the Holocaust had, however, been held before – for example, the unveiling of the Holocaust Memorial in Listowel in 1995. In addition, the Jewish community holds a memorial service on Yom Hashoah every year.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

The national Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration takes place at the Mansion House in Dublin (the official residence of the city's Lord Mayor). It is designed to cherish the memory of all of the victims of the Nazi Holocaust. An integral part of the commemoration is a candle-lighting ceremony, at which six candles are lit for the six million Jews who perished, as well as candles for all of the other victims. Readings are given by survivors and prominent people in Irish society. There are appropriate musical and choral interludes. A minute's silence is observed.

The thrust of the commemoration programme is to serve as a constant reminder of the dangers of racism and to provide lessons from the past that are relevant today. The inclusion of all victim groups is fundamental to the commemoration, and the importance of education about anti-Semitism and all forms of intolerance is highlighted.

In addition to the participation of senior government officials, representatives from across the spectrum of Irish civic society are invited to attend, including educators. Approximately 800 people attended the event in 2007, including religious leaders, diplomats, members of NGOs, academics, poets, musicians and many others.

Key institutions participating are the Holocaust Educational Trust of Ireland; the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform; the Dublin City Council; the Dublin Maccabi charitable trust; the Jewish Representative Council of Ireland, the Council for Christians and Jews, and the Sisters of Sion.

Students from at least four schools participate in the event and approximately 150 other schoolchildren attend with their teachers.

### ***Additional Practices***

A well-illustrated booklet with key messages is created each year and some 6,000 copies are circulated.

The Crocus Project is intended for pupils of 11 years of age and upwards. The Holocaust Educational Trust of Ireland provides schools with yellow crocus bulbs to plant in autumn in memory of the one and a half million Jewish children and thousands of other children who died in the Holocaust. It has proved to be a tangible

way of promoting awareness and stimulating discussion about discrimination. In Ireland, the crocus blooms at the end of January around the time of International Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January. The yellow flower recalls the Star of David, which Jews were forced to wear. The Trust makes available guidelines and information to assist teachers in this activity, complementing existing material on racism and inter-culturalism. Over 300 schools in Ireland participate in the Crocus Project, as well as schools in Poland, Austria, the United Kingdom, the United States, Malta and other European countries.

There are four Jewish Holocaust survivors in Ireland, two of whom speak regularly in schools. When a survivor speaks in a school, the Irish Government's Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform co-operates with the Holocaust Educational Trust of Ireland to distribute the Memorial Day booklets to participating schools. Usually, survivors speak to about 200 students per week (over a period of 15 to 20 weeks) and each pupil who attends the lecture takes home a booklet.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

At the national Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration, a keynote address is given by the Prime Minister or another senior minister. Members of Parliament and the Senate, heads of government departments and officials from government departments attend the event. The Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform gives the keynote address. The Lord Mayor of Dublin participates actively. The event has been attended in past years by the President of Ireland.

Information provided by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform of Ireland in a communication dated 9 January 2008.

## **Italy**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

On 20 July 2000, Law No. 211 established the 27 January as a Holocaust memorial day in Italy. It is called the “Day of Memory”.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

While various events take place in different ministries and all over the country, an important celebration takes place in the *Quirinale* (the seat of the President of the Italian Republic). During this ceremony, the President welcomes Italian students who have visited concentration camps, as well as the winners of the annual competition on the topic of the Shoah.

Other commemorations include official ceremonies at the institutional level, seminars, meetings, educational competitions, movie screenings, plays and media reports. Participants and organizations involved are made up of students from all educational levels, Jewish organizations, and various NGOs.

### ***Additional Practices***

The students who win the annual competition on the topic of the Shoah are invited to present their works at the Italian Ministry of Public Education, where they are awarded a special prize by the Minister. An exhibition of the best works is organized inside the ministry. Other events are held in schools.

Local authorities, as well as NGOs, promote visits to concentration camp sites in Italy, Poland and Germany. In 2007, “memory trains” departed from different cities to Auschwitz.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

The Italian Government participates in the various events held in various ministries, with the most important authorities of the state being involved: the President, the Prime Minister, and parliamentary chairpersons.

The Minister of Public Education participated in the commemoration at Auschwitz on 28 January 2007.

Information provided by the Italian Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in 2007.

## **Kazakhstan**

ODIHR did not receive any information from Kazakhstan.

## **Kyrgyzstan**

ODIHR did not receive any information from Kyrgyzstan.

## **Latvia**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

Since October 1990, Latvia has held an official commemoration event for the Jewish victims of genocide on 4 July. The event commemorates the burning of the synagogue on Gogola Street in Riga, which took place in 1941, when victims were locked inside the synagogue. The event addresses the 20th century as a century of unprecedented terror and violence. The genocide against the Jewish people, orchestrated by Nazi Germany, is remembered as the culmination point of evil. It is emphasized that the mass killings during the Holocaust caused irreversible changes in Latvia, leaving deep scars in the collective memory.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

The event takes place in Riga, at the memorial site of the synagogue that was burnt to the ground during World War II.

In addition to state and government representatives, the following groups and organizations are involved in the event: the “Jews in Latvia” Museum and Documentation Centre; the Latvian Jewish community; the Association of Latvian and Estonian Jews (based in Israel); the Jewish Survivors of Latvia (based in the United States); the University of Latvia’s Center for Judaic Studies; rabbis of the Riga Synagogue; the Riga Jewish School; the Shamir Jewish religious community centre; the Latvian Council of Jewish Communities; the Society for Research on Jewish Communities (based in Israel); the Latvian Council of Christians and Jews; the Latvian Academy of Sciences; and the Commission of the Historians of Latvia.

### ***Additional Practices***

The commemoration event is usually linked to some educational/political event, such as a conference, debate or roundtable. In 2006, the commemoration event for Jewish victims was linked with the international conference “Holocaust: Remembrance and Lessons”, which attracted participants from all over the world. The President of Latvia was the patron of the conference, which was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in association with the Latvian Transatlantic Organisation and the American Jewish Committee. It was sponsored by the ITF.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

The President gives the opening speech during the principal commemorative event, followed by a speech by the Minister of Foreign Affairs or another high-ranking government representative. The event is attended by ambassadors and government officials.



The President of the Republic of Latvia, Valdis Zatlers, laying a wreath at the monument in Riga to the rescuers of Jews, 3 July 2009.

Photo: Toms Kalniņš, Chancery of the President of Latvia

Information provided by the Latvian Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in a communication dated 9 October 2009.

## **Liechtenstein**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

Since 2006, the Principality of Liechtenstein has commemorated the victims of the Holocaust on 27 January or on the nearest weekday after this date. The commemorative event is part of Liechtenstein's efforts to fight racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

Commemorations take place in the state museum of Liechtenstein, in the Vaduz community hall and in schools.

The event takes the form of an official commemorative hour. In addition to speeches, there are also benefit concerts (e.g., a concert given by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Nations), movie screenings and discussion forums in secondary schools.

There is a high level participation in the event.

In 2007, the following groups and organizations were involved: the Liechtenstein Friends of Yad Vashem; Colorida (a youth NGO); and representatives of Jewish museums.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

The principal commemorative event is attended by the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, both of whom deliver speeches.

Information provided by the Office for Foreign Affairs, Principality of Liechtenstein, in 2007.

## **Lithuania**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

Lithuania has commemorated the victims of the Holocaust on the “National Memorial Day for the Genocide of the Lithuanian Jews” since 1994. The commemoration events take place on 23 September. The day was instituted to commemorate the victims of the destruction of the Vilnius ghetto in 1943.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

Commemoration ceremonies are held in Vilnius and other cities. The commemoration in Vilnius takes place at the Memorial for the Holocaust Victims in Paneriai (a suburb of Vilnius that saw the killing of as many as 100,000 people – mostly Jews and Poles – between 1941 and 1945).

Speeches are delivered, candles are lit and a broad range of activities is organized by NGOs, schools and local communities.

### ***Additional Practices***

Since 2001, Atminties Namai, an NGO, has organized special events to commemorate the “National Memorial Day for the Genocide of the Lithuanian Jews” in various cities and towns of Lithuania. Students at secondary schools contributed essays on the theme “The Jewish neighbours of my grandparents and great-grandparents”.

On 23 September 2006, the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, with the support of the network of Tolerance Education Centers, initiated and organized a project entitled “The Flower of Remembrance” in all of Lithuania’s major cities. Secondary school pupils were invited to participate. The aim of the initiative was to commemorate victims of the Holocaust and to honour the “Righteous among the Nations”. All the students participating in the project came out onto the streets in order to hold yellow sunflowers in their hands. Some of the flowers were real; others were made by students from paper. On the leaves of the paper flowers, students wrote facts about pre-war Jewish life in Lithuania, the Holocaust and on those who risked their lives saving Jews. As part of the project, the leaves and paper petals were distributed by the students. The real flowers were laid at Holocaust memorial sites.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

High-ranking officials take part in the main commemorative events, including one or more of the following: the President Prime Minister, ministers, the Speaker of the Lithuanian parliament, political party leaders, and representatives of the Vilnius diplomatic corps. Local politicians attend events at the local level.

Information provided by the Lithuanian Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in 2007.

## **Luxembourg**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

Luxembourg has marked 27 January as the “Day in Memory of the Holocaust and for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity” since 2009. From 1946 up to this date, a Holocaust memorial day had been observed on 10 October.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

Luxembourg’s Ministry of Education organizes an annual event each January for all secondary schools. Since 2007, the event has taken place at a specified location accessible to students. Schools are free to organize additional activities.

The main focus of the ceremony is to encourage young people to remember all those who suffered and were killed under Nazi rule.

In 2007, the Ministry for Family and Integration, the Service National de la Jeunesse (a national youth organization) and other NGOs, such as Amnesty International, Info-Handicap, CIGALE (a gay and lesbian organization), the Center for European Knowledge and the Jewish community joined the Ministry of Education in this event.

A commemorative brochure was published, featuring the activities that took place at the first event officially organized by the Ministry of Education in January 2007.

### ***Additional Practices***

In 2007, the theme of the remembrance day, “Dignity of Difference”, encouraged participants to look at what can be learned from the Holocaust about the consequences of exclusion based on differences between people. The theme highlighted the experiences of different groups under the Nazi regime. It also explored the opportunities for respect and understanding in societies.

In 2008, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Family and Integration staged two important exhibitions, “Mémoires” and “Triangle rouge”.

“Mémoires”, which was assembled and set up by students from two secondary schools after a visit to the camp of Auschwitz, focused on life in concentration and extermination camps. It also recalled recent genocides.

“Triangle rouge” is a well-known exhibition created by the “Territoires de la Mémoire de Liège”, an NGO. It deals with the growth of fascism, life in concentration camps and the resistance during World War II, and calls for vigilance.

The activities in 2009 were organized by Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. The goal was to instil in people’s memories the atrocities committed during World War II and to warn young people against intolerance, racial hatred and ignorance.

A special booklet documenting the activities related to the “Journée de la Mémoire 2009” was published by the Ministry of Education in the spring of 2009.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Family and Integration were involved in the commemoration event in 2007.

The Holocaust memorial day is promoted through an information campaign at all school levels.



Holocaust survivor Gerd Klestadt meets with 1,500 students from the campus of the University Center of Luxembourg, where 4,000 students attend courses, 27 January 2009, Luxembourg City.

Information provided by the Delegation of Luxembourg to the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in a communication dated 29 September 2009.

## **The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

The Government has not established an official memorial day, but commemorative ceremonies are customarily held on 10 and 11 March.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

The Mayor of Skopje traditionally holds an official meeting with the Macedonian Jewish Community on 11 March, as a symbolic recognition of the traditional peaceful coexistence among the various communities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

### ***Additional Practices***

In addition to the ceremonies in Skopje, the Jewish community traditionally organizes annual commemorative meetings on 10 March, honouring the memory of the 7,200 Jewish Holocaust victims from the towns of Bitola and Stip. The latest annual commemorative meeting was held in 2009.

On 10 and 11 March, the Jewish cemeteries in Bitola, Stip and Skopje are visited. The commemoration ends with a concert.

In June 2009, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was granted the status of observer in the International Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (as a part of the first stage in the process of acquiring full-fledged membership). Once it has attained membership of this important organization, established on 7 May 1998, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will be in a position to make an active contribution to the organization's primary goal – the promotion of international cooperation in the field of Holocaust education, remembrance and research. Over the past several years, government representatives have taken part in the biannual meetings of the ITF as guests of the chairperson. Within this framework, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is committed to implementing a baseline study of all national activities, including the commemoration of the International Day of Holocaust victims.

In April 2002, the Government of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia adopted a decision establishing the "Fund for the Holocaust of Jews in Macedonia". Subsequently, the Government adopted a decision that authorizes the Fund to manage the expropriated properties of deceased Jewish individuals who do not have legal successors. The Fund's management board is composed of six members, of whom three are persons from the Jewish community and three are government representatives.

***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation  
in Events***

The commemorative meetings organized in Skopje, Bitola and Stip are attended by government officials, politicians and a great number of the country's prominent public figures, as well as representatives of the diplomatic corps.

Information provided by the Embassy of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in Poland in a communication dated 22 October 2009.

## **Malta**

ODIHR did not receive any information from Malta.

## **Moldova**

ODIHR did not receive any information from Moldova.

## **Monaco**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

In 2006, the Government of the Principality of Monaco designated 27 January as the “Day in Memory of the Shoah and for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity”. Commemorations took place for the first time in 2007.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

Commemorative events take place in educational institutions, with a view to sensitizing students to the memory of the Shoah and to encouraging reflections about the world as it is today. Educators who took part in training provided by the Council of Europe in 2006 have so far undertaken various initiatives with their students, including the reading of texts, the development of an exhibition, research projects and film screenings. In general, these activities are aimed at providing students with orientation on the issue of crimes against humanity.

### ***Additional Practices***

In 2007, Jewish activist and attorney Serge Klarsfeld shared his experience with educators in the preparations for the Monaco’s Holocaust remembrance day. In 2008, two projects involved trips to the former concentration camps of Struthof and Auschwitz, as well as to Krakow.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

Monaco’s Government Counsellor of the Interior and its General Commissioner for National Education officially welcomed experts from the Council of Europe. The National Directorate of Education, Youth and Sports has supported the various activities that have taken place on 27 January.

Information provided by the Embassy of the Principality of Monaco, Berlin, Germany, in 2007.

## **Montenegro**

ODIHR did not receive any information from Montenegro.

## **Netherlands**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

Since the end of World War II, the date of 4 May has been observed as a day of solemn remembrance. The day commemorates all civilians and soldiers who died in the Kingdom of the Netherlands or anywhere else in the world since the outbreak of World War II in war situations and during peacekeeping operations. This includes the victims of the Holocaust.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

The dates 4 May and 27 January are marked through commemorative celebrations. Since 1946, silent commemorative marches have been held all over the country on the evening of 4 May. They end with two minutes of silence. Liberation Day, 5 May, is a day of public rejoicing, celebrating the country's liberation from the German occupation.

On 4 May, the main ceremony takes place at the national monument on Dam Square in Amsterdam. It is attended by thousands of people. In addition, almost every town has its own celebration. At 8 o'clock, there are two minutes of silence in the whole country, followed by the singing of the national anthem. Memorial wreaths are laid at monuments and speeches are delivered. Holocaust survivors, resistance fighters and former political prisoners are special guests.

### ***Additional practices***

On the last Sunday of January, there is a commemoration for the victims of Auschwitz. This commemoration is organized by the Netherlands Auschwitz Committee and is held on a Sunday in order to allow as many interested people as possible to be present. At this event, the victims of Auschwitz are remembered and the event has a Jewish character (e.g. Kaddish – the Jewish prayer for the dead – is said). This commemoration of the victims of the concentration camps has been held since 1952.

On the Thursday before 27 January, a "Never Again Auschwitz" lecture is given by someone who is recognized as having made a special effort to realize the aims of the Netherlands Auschwitz Committee. In 2006, the lecture was given by Simone Veil, the first President of the European Parliament and a survivor of the Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps.

On 27 January, various activities are organized for schoolchildren as part of Holocaust Remembrance Day. Educational activities focus on encounters with survivors, lessons on the Holocaust and discussions. A website on Holocaust Memorial Week provides an overview of these activities.

Throughout the year, numerous educational projects related to World War II and the Holocaust are financed by the Dutch Government. There is an annual budget of

€1,200,000 available for this purpose. The aim of these projects is to create an understanding of the events being commemorated and the concepts involved. The “National Committee 4 and 5 May” also receives an annual €2,800,000 for National Commemoration and Liberation Day activities.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

The Queen and the Crown Prince and his wife are present at the principal commemorative event, which is also attended by the Prime Minister and other members of the Netherlands Government, as well as by the chairpersons and other members of both houses of parliament.

The commemoration<sup>22</sup> preceding 27 January takes place at the Auschwitz Monument in Wertheim Park in Amsterdam and is open to everyone. Wreaths are laid, Kaddish is recited and speeches are given. At least one Dutch Government minister is present at the event, as well as the chairpersons of both houses of parliament.



Auschwitz commemoration, Auschwitz Monument, Wertheimpark, Amsterdam, 27 January 2009.  
Photo: Dirk Spits

Information provided by the Department of Victims and Remembrance World War II, Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport in a communication dated 6 October 2009.

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<sup>22</sup> Additional information is available at: <<http://www.4en5mei.nl/4en5mei>>; <<http://www.auschwitz.nl>>; and <<http://www.holocaust-memorial-day.nl>>.

## **Norway**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

In 2001, Norway designated 27 January as Holocaust Memorial Day. Norway has commemorated the International Holocaust Memorial Day every year since 2002, resulting in a wide variety of activities at schools, museums and at memorial sites.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

In Oslo, the annual commemorative events take place at the quayside from where the Norwegian Jews were forced into ships for deportation to Auschwitz and extermination.

There are also special events in Trondheim, Kristiansand and other towns, and at the Falstad Memorial and Human Rights Centre (site of a former prison for military and political prisoners during the Nazi occupation).

At the event in Oslo, the keynote speech is delivered by a senior member of the Norwegian Government. Statements are also made by representatives of the Norwegian Jewish community and by representatives of other groups that were victims of the Nazi policy of extermination. After the event, there is an indoor gathering, which is open to all, usually with a lecture/presentation of a specific topic related to the Holocaust. Jews, Roma, homosexuals, disabled persons, former prisoners of war, and former political prisoners are involved in the ceremony.

In Oslo, the event is arranged by the Centre for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities. In Trondheim and at Falstad, the events are arranged by the Falstad Memorial and Human Rights Centre, in cooperation with the Jewish Community in Trondheim.

### ***Additional Practices***

All Norwegian schools are invited to commemorate International Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January. On Holocaust Memorial Day, the Minister of Education awards a special prize to a school that has distinguished itself in working against racism and discrimination. The prize is called the Benjamin Prize, after a 15-year-old Norwegian boy who was killed by young neo-Nazis in a racially motivated murder in 2001.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

Senior members of the Norwegian Government participate in Holocaust Memorial Day events.



Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration at the Falstad Memorial and Human Rights Centre, formerly SS Camp Falstad (1941-45), Norway, 27 January 2009.  
Photo: Johan A. Nesgaard

Information provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a communication dated 7 October 2009.

## **Poland**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

Since 2004, Poland has commemorated the victims of the Holocaust on 19 April. It is called the “Day of Remembrance of Holocaust Victims”. In addition to 19 April, 27 January is also commemorated in Poland.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

Commemorations are held in major Polish cities, including at the Umschlagplatz in Warsaw (where the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto assembled to board the trains which transported them to the Treblinka death camp), at the Radegast station in Łódź (where Jewish and other inhabitants of the city were gathered for transport to the Kulmhof and Auschwitz camps), and at other sites related to the Holocaust. The commemorations take the form of speeches, the lighting of candles and, occasionally, prayers.

Every 27 January, an official remembrance service is held at the former concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Government representatives and politicians participate.

### ***Additional Practices***

Apart from government and local government officials, numerous NGOs and, sometimes, local church parishes are involved in commemorative events.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

High-ranking Polish officials take part in the main commemorative events, including one or more of the following: The President, the Prime Minister, Government ministers, parliamentarians, and political party leaders. Local events feature municipal government officials and sometimes also church leaders.

Information provided by the Polish Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in 2007.

## **Portugal**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

In Portugal, the Holocaust memorial day takes place on 27 January. The first commemoration of the “Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust and Crimes against Humanity” was held in 2006.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

In 2006, the official commemorative ceremony took place in the Assembly of the Republic, the Portuguese parliament, in the presence of representatives from a wide range of institutions. The ceremony included the delivery of speeches and a moment of silence for the victims.

In 2008, the President of Portugal delivered a speech at the Remembrance Ceremony of the International Day of the Holocaust Victims, which was held in the Lisbon Synagogue. The Minister of Justice and the Mayor of Lisbon, as well as members of all political parties represented in the parliament, took part in the event.

### ***Additional Practices***

In 2009, the Holocaust Remembrance and Education Association, an NGO that is responsible for organizing Holocaust-focused activities in schools across the country and teacher participation in Yad Vashem seminars, with support from the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sent a group of teachers to Poland to visit Treblinka, Auschwitz, Majdanek and other sites out of death camps.

The Aristides de Sousa Mendes Foundation is the other main Portuguese NGO dealing with Holocaust education and remembrance. It was established in 2000 to honour Aristides de Sousa Mendes, the Portuguese diplomat who, disregarding orders, saved thousands of fellow human beings from extermination at the hands of the Nazis. In 1967, he was recognized by Yad Vashem as “Righteous among the Nations”.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

Teaching about the Holocaust is a mandatory part of the official school curriculum. The Ministry of Education also organizes a series of educational activities throughout the country for school students. Methodological material for teaching about the Holocaust in schools is distributed. Jewish organizations sometimes co-organize and participate in these events.

One of the first school projects focusing on the Holocaust was “Education and Tolerance – Tell me about the Holocaust!”, a 1996 joint project between the Lisbon Israeli Community and the Ministry of Education that was supported by the European

Jewish Congress. It encompassed almost 150 schools and 6,000 students countrywide and included regional meetings with two Auschwitz survivors.

In 2000, a translated and adapted version of the seminal book *Go Tell Ye to The Children – a Book on the Holocaust* was distributed to all schoolchildren.



The President of Portugal, Dr. Anibal Cavaco Silva, delivering a speech at the Remembrance Ceremony of the International Day of the Holocaust Victims, Lisbon Synagogue, 2008.

Photo: Luis Filipe Catarino/Presidência da Republica

Information provided by the Permanent Representation of Portugal to the OSCE in a communication dated 14 December 2009.

## **Romania**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

Governmental Decision no. 672 of 5 May 2004 designated 9 October as the “Commemoration Day of the Holocaust in Romania”. This was because 9 October was the date on which Romanian troops began the deportation of Jews from Bessarabia, Bucovina and Southern Bucovina to Transnistria.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

Commemorative events take place in schools, universities, synagogues, Jewish cemeteries and in the Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania.

The Romanian Ministry of Education and Research organizes meetings between schoolchildren and survivors of the Holocaust. These meetings are linked to special educational activities (documentary film screenings, exhibitions, history lessons about the Holocaust, etc.) all over the country.

### ***Additional Practices***

The Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania organizes international conferences, seminars, exhibitions and book releases.

The Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania carries out a religious wreath-laying ceremony at Bucharest’s Holocaust Monument

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

Romanian Government ministers, state secretaries and local officials take part in the special events held on Commemoration Day. In 2006, the Romanian President attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the building of the Holocaust Monument.



Presidential inauguration of the Holocaust Monument in Bucharest, Romania, 8 October 2009.  
Photo: Anca Ciuciu

Information provided by the Romanian Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in a communication, dated 21 August 2009.

## **Russian Federation**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

The Russian Federation has no official Holocaust memorial day. However, since 2006, Moscow and over 30 other Russian towns and cities have observed the United Nations' International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust on 27 January. In Moscow, these events are held in the Central House of Literati and they are widely publicized in the mass media.

From time to time, memorial evenings dedicated to the tragic events of the “Night of the Broken Glass” in Germany, 9 November 1938, are also held.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

On 27 January, speeches are delivered by representatives of the Government of the Russian Federation and the Moscow Mayor's Office, leaders of European organizations in Russia and ambassadors from a number of countries. Awards are given to those who have been honoured as “Righteous among the Nations”, as well as to pupils, students and teachers who have taken part in competitions dedicated to the remembrance of the Holocaust.

### ***Additional Practices***

Memorial evenings to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust are organized in several Russian cities. They take place in communal and cultural centres and in educational institutions.

Between 1992 and 2006, the Russian Holocaust Center in Moscow organized a “Day of Remembrance of the Jews – victims of Nazism and heroes of the opposition”, which was held in either April or May at prestigious Moscow venues. On two of these occasions, the President of Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin, delivered speeches and, in 2005, the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, Alexy II, spoke to the participants. The meetings were attended by Russian political activists and the Ministers of Education, Culture and Foreign Affairs.

In addition, every year since 1995, the Russian Holocaust Center, in co-operation with the Moscow City Government has celebrated the “Day of Liberation of the Nazi Concentration Camp in Auschwitz”. In 2005, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation spoke at this event.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

Commemoration events on 27 January are attended by representatives of the Government of the Russian Federation and of the Moscow Mayor's office, teachers and students from various educational institutions, World War II veterans, former

prisoners of the Nazi ghettos and concentration camps, public and religious activists and prominent cultural figures.

In 2008, the President of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev, spoke in Kaliningrad at the “Memorial evening dedicated to the tragic events of the ‘Night of the Broken Glass’”.

Information provided by the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the OSCE in a communication dated 25 November 2009.

## **San Marino**

ODIHR did not receive any information from San Marino.

## **Serbia**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

The Republic of Serbia has marked 27 January as “International Holocaust Victims Remembrance Day” since 2006. Since 1993, 22 April has been observed as “National Holocaust and Genocide Victims Remembrance Day”. National Holocaust and Genocide Victims Remembrance Day was designated by the national parliament under Article 2 of the Foundation of the Genocide Victims Museum Act adopted in 1992.

The Republic of Serbia marks four more commemoration days:

- Since 1945, 22 January has been observed as the annual commemoration of the Novi Sad Pogrom of 1941;
- In 1945, 3 October was established as the date for an annual remembrance ceremony in Jajinci, the biggest extermination site in Serbia, located near Belgrade, where more than 80,000 people were murdered in World War II;
- Since 1945, 14 October has been observed annually to mark the date of the Kraljevo pogrom of 1941; and
- Since 1945, 21 October has been observed annually to mark the date of the Kragujevac pogrom in 1941.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

Commemorations are held each year on 27 January at a number of sites.

The ceremonies include wreath laying, official addresses (by the President of the Republic of Serbia, the President of the Government and Cabinet ministers), speeches by survivors and cultural programmes.

These ceremonies are organized by the state in co-operation with the Jewish community in Serbia, as well as by local authorities, cultural, educational and academic institutions and NGOs.

### ***Additional Practices***

Commemorative events are organized by the government, with significant participation by local authorities, educational institutions (primary and high schools), museums, galleries, the Jewish Community and NGOs.

These events are promoted through various media activities and programmes. Awareness of the necessity to remember the Holocaust is raised mostly through educational programmes that are organized in conjunction with commemorative events.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

The President, the President of the Government, Cabinet ministers (the Serbian Ministers of Education, Labour and Social Policy, Culture and Defence), local authorities, educational institutions (primary and high schools) and representatives of museums, galleries, the Jewish Community and NGOs participate in commemorative events.

The Serbian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, as the state ministry in charge of organizing memorial ceremonies and preserving significant historical sites and memorials, tries to raise awareness by issuing regular press releases.

Interest among the Serbian population about the Holocaust is increasing year by year. Numerous television and radio programmes, as well as educational, scientific and artistic projects have been organized throughout Serbia.



An official state ceremony held on 3 October 2008 in Jajinci, near Belgrade, Serbia: Numerous Serbian actors, musicians and choirs participated in the artistic part of the ceremony.  
Photo: Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Republic of Serbia

Information provided by the Serbian Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in a communication, dated 7 December 2009.

## **Slovak Republic**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

Since 2001, Slovakia has commemorated the victims of the Holocaust and of racial violence on 9 September. The date is called the “Memorial Day for Victims of the Holocaust and of Racial Violence”.

The Slovak parliament chose 9 September because, on this day in 1941, the Slovak Government at the time introduced 290 repressive laws (the “Jewish Codex”), by which the process of Jewish deportations was initiated and which resulted in the killing of over 70,000 Slovak Jews.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

The “Memorial Day for the Victims of the Holocaust and of Racial Violence” is always observed under the patronage of the President of the Slovak Republic. The central event involves the laying of wreaths at the memorial to the victims of the Holocaust in Bratislava.

The Slovak Ministry of Culture, the Slovak National Museum and Bratislava’s Museum of Jewish Culture are also involved in the event.

A minute’s silence is observed in the parliament of the Slovak Republic and in the country’s schools.

### ***Additional Practices***

Thematic exhibitions and cultural events that commemorate this tragedy are also organized on Slovakia’s Holocaust memorial day.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

The President of the Slovak Republic, government representatives and members of the parliament attend the principal memorial event.



The Memorial to the victims of the Holocaust in Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 9 September 2008.  
Photo: Viera Kamenicka

Information provided by the Slovak Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in a communication, dated 8 December 2009.

## **Slovenia**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

In February 2008, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted a decision to commemorate the “National Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust” on 27 January. The day was commemorated informally in 2008, but official commemorations began in 2009.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

The Holocaust memorial day is commemorated in the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia with a speech given by the President and a minute’s silence held to commemorate the victims. There is an official ceremony organized by the Union of the Associations for the Values of the National Liberation Movement of Slovenia, which is also attended by the President. There are official statements from the President, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government bodies on the Day of Remembrance.

The Slovenian Ministry of Education and Sport sends instructions to commemorate the Day of Remembrance to all primary and secondary schools, with additional suggestions being posted on the website of the National Education Institute. The schools organize commemorations in different ways.

### ***Additional Practices***

The Synagogue in Maribor traditionally prepares an exhibition related to the Jews in Slovenia or the Holocaust that opens officially on 27 January.

The Day of Remembrance is also covered extensively in the mass media in Slovenia, with interviews with historians, researchers, Holocaust survivors and others being published.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

As noted, the President and other senior public officials participate in the Day of Remembrance.



National Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust commemoration, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 25 January 2009: (left to right: Mr. Miran Potrč, Vice President of the National Assembly of Slovenia; Mr. Blaž Kavčič, President of the National Council of Slovenia; Dr. Danilo Türk, President of the Republic of Slovenia; Mr. Janez Stanovnik, President of the Union of Associations for the Values of the National Liberation Movement of Slovenia.)  
Photo: Foto Bobo

Information provided by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Slovenia to the OSCE. In a communication dated 8 September 2009.

## **Spain**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

In December 2004, the Cabinet established 27 January as the national Holocaust remembrance day. The date is officially observed as the “Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and Prevention of Crimes against Humanity”.

Although the most important focus of the commemoration is always devoted on the Jewish victims, other groups are also the focus of remembrance, such as the Roma and other Spanish people deported to Nazi concentration camps. Spanish holders of the title “Righteous Amongst the Nations” (or their descendents) play a major role in the observances.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

The main commemorative event is held in a special celebration hall in Complutense University in Madrid, where high-level politicians from several Spanish Government ministries (Foreign Affairs, Education and Justice and Culture) attend. Representatives of the main Spanish Government institutions (including the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate) participate in the ceremony. Organizations from the Jewish community and the Catholic Church, together with representatives of various embassies, also take part.

The programme of activities is always related to a central topic, which changes every year. In 2006, the presence of King Juan Carlos I, the President of the Spanish Government and high state officials reflected Spain’s commitment to Holocaust Remembrance Day. In 2007, the idea was to link Spain and its citizens with their Jewish Sephardic heritage through the presence of several Sephardic Holocaust survivors. These individuals were received by King Juan Carlos. In recognition of the need to transmit knowledge of the Holocaust to the younger generation, the 2008 programme addressed the idea that European youth are the recipients of a European heritage that includes the Holocaust. In 2009, the central topic was the paying of tribute to the “Righteous among the Nations”.

### ***Additional Practices***

There is a year-long programme of educational activities. Since 2006, Holocaust survivors have given lectures to more than 5,000 students in several schools throughout Spain.

The Foreign Affairs Ministry and Casa Sefarad-Israel (a Spanish Foreign Ministry body dealing with Spanish-Jewish relations) organize a seminar to further develop the topic dealt with in the main commemorative event. Among these, for example, have been “Sephardim in the Shoah”, in 2007, and “Lights of Humanity in the Holocaust – righteous, rescuers and rescued”, in 2009.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

Since 2006, the President and Government ministers have made speeches every year on 27 January. Holocaust survivors invited to the commemorations from different countries play a major role in all remembrance events, which always draw full audiences and excellent responses.



Holocaust commemoration at the Complutense University in Madrid, Spain: (left to right) Ana Salomon, The Spanish Foreign Ministry's Ambassador on Special Assignment for Relations with Jewish Communities and Organizations, Carlos Berzosa, Chancellor of the Complutense University of Madrid, Mariano Fernández Bermejo, Minister of Justice, Miguel Angel Moratinos Minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, Mercedes Cabrera, Minister of Education and Science, and Jacobo Israel (President of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Spain).

Information provided by the Spanish Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in a communication dated 11 December 2009.

## **Sweden**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

Since 1999, Sweden has commemorated the victims of the Holocaust on 27 January, which is observed as “Holocaust Memorial Day”.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

The Living History Forum, a Swedish public authority, arranges an outdoor event on Raoul Wallenberg Square in central Stockholm each year, offering an exhibition on a topical theme, information about Holocaust memorial day, the lighting of candles and an official programme with a keynote speaker.

The programme is attended by specially invited guests representing the Royal Court, the Government, political parties, human rights organizations, cultural institutions, etc. Among these, the most important guests are the Holocaust survivors.

Municipalities and county administrative boards also organize commemorative events.

### ***Additional Practices***

In addition to official commemoration activities, schools, churches, cultural institutions and libraries organize events at as many as 100 sites throughout the country.

The Swedish Government has tasked the Living History Forum to promote Holocaust remembrance at a national level, to which end a national network was established in 2003. By providing educational support and co-operation, the network tries to keep the content of Holocaust Memorial Day alive throughout the year. The result of these efforts is manifested in a variety of ceremonies and programmes connected to 27 January. Different themes are highlighted on this day, but the prime focus is always to honour and remember the victims and the survivors.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

Official participants in Holocaust Memorial Day events include the Prime Minister and a wide range of Cabinet ministers and leaders of political parties.

Information provided by the Swedish Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in 2007.

## Switzerland

### *Holocaust Memorial Day*

In 2003, the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (CDPE) decided to designate 27 January as the “Day in Memory of the Holocaust and for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity”. The day was first observed in 2004.

### *Official Commemorative Activities*

The President of the Swiss Confederation makes a statement<sup>23</sup> on the Day in Memory of the Holocaust that is published in Switzerland’s three official languages, as well as in English. This message is disseminated to national news agencies.

In addition, activities take place in schools focusing on three themes: remembrance of the tragedy of the Holocaust; general remembrance of the genocides that have marked European history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and reflections on human rights and tolerance, as well as inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue.

### *Additional Practices*

Events are also organized by NGOs such as the Archive for Contemporary History and the Contact Point for Holocaust Survivors. In 2008, some 500 people, among them the President of the Swiss Confederation, attended a national ceremony honouring the Swiss “Righteous among the Nations”, whose number is more than 60. This ceremony, which was organized by an NGO, was the first event of its kind to take place in Switzerland.

### *Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events*

Cantonal Ministers of Education, as well as senior officials of the CDPE and education departments, participate in selected events at the cantonal level. The CDPE informs all Cantonal ministries of education about the teaching tools available for this commemorative day, including the resources prepared by the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. Tools<sup>24</sup> are also provided on the CDPE’s educational resource website.

Information provided by the Swiss Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in a communication dated 7 October 2009.

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<sup>23</sup> Messages from the President of the Swiss Confederation can be found at <<http://www.uvek.admin.ch/dokumentation/00476/00477/00911/index.html?lang=en>>; <[http://www.eda.admin.ch/etc/medialib/downloads/edazen/dfa/head/spee07.Par.0019.File.tmp/070127\\_en.pdf](http://www.eda.admin.ch/etc/medialib/downloads/edazen/dfa/head/spee07.Par.0019.File.tmp/070127_en.pdf)>; <<http://www.news-service.admin.ch/NSBSubscriber/message/en/16980>>; and <<http://www.efd.admin.ch/aktuell/reden/00465/index.html?lang=en&msg-id=25065>>.

<sup>24</sup> Further information is available at: <<http://www.educa.ch/dyn/84759.asp>> and <[http://www.cicad.ch/fileadmin/user\\_upload/documentation/pdf/justes\\_\\_2\\_.pdf](http://www.cicad.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/documentation/pdf/justes__2_.pdf)>.

## **Tajikistan**

ODIHR did not receive any information from Tajikistan.

## **Turkey**

ODIHR did not receive any information from Turkey.

## **Turkmenistan**

ODIHR did not receive any information from Turkmenistan.

## **Ukraine**

ODIHR did not receive any information from Ukraine.

## United Kingdom

### *Holocaust Memorial Day*

In the United Kingdom, 27 January is observed as “Holocaust Memorial Day”, marking the date of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. The date was established in 2000, and the first event was held in 2001. The mandate of the day is to remember the victims of the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and those affected by subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur, to honour survivors, and to prompt action today to stop persecution and exclusion in Britain through learning the lessons of the past.

### *Official Commemorative Activities*

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) organizes a single national event on or around 27 January that is usually attended by a senior government official. Each year, the event reflects a different theme. The national event is always supported by a programme of educational and community events, building up momentum toward the event, and many parts of these programmes are used during the commemoration. The event is held in a different city in the United Kingdom each year; the most recent was held in Coventry to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2009. At this event, survivors were joined in the city’s Belgrade Theatre by leaders of different faiths and communities, the Home Secretary, the Minister for Communities and Local Government and hundreds of other stakeholders for a programme of testimonies from survivors and speeches from the Chief Rabbi and Hazel Blears, who was then Minister for Communities and Local Government. The event also contained specially commissioned music and dance. The event was followed by a short reception for all attendees. The work of the HMDT is funded by the Government’s Department for Communities and Local Government.

Hundreds of other events are held to mark Holocaust Memorial Day around the United Kingdom, many of which are attended by local Members of Parliament, Councillors and other elected officials.

The formats of the events differ around the United Kingdom, with communities marking the day in their own way. Some hold a civic event, which involves candle-lighting, participation from schools across their locality and Holocaust survivor speakers; others are large scale, public events that have a more proactive nature, urging attendees to take on the messages of the past to create a better future. The HMDT does not tell event organizers or educators how to run their events. Full details of previous years’ activities are available in the annual commemorative book, which can be found on the Holocaust Memorial Day website<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> See <[www.hmd.org.uk](http://www.hmd.org.uk)>.

### ***Additional Practices***

In addition to the official or semi-official commemorations held under the auspices of the HMDT and local authorities, hundreds of groups organize their own events, including schools, community, faith and race equality groups, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender organizations and many others. Anyone may organize a Holocaust Memorial Day event. Thus, the spread of organizers is wide.

The work of the HMDT is carried out and developed by a small professional team throughout the year. Its activities, all of which are designed to raise awareness of Holocaust Memorial Day, are broken down as follows:

#### Formal Education:

Each year, after the annual theme has been set, the HMDT produces free educational materials for educators of primary and secondary school students to use as part of their Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations. Traditionally, the HMDT has provided hard-copy educational materials, but for Holocaust Memorial Day 2010, a brand new, cross-curricular website containing these free resources for educators was launched.

#### Communities:

To support the hundreds of individuals and organizations who arrange their own activities for Holocaust Memorial Day, the HMDT produces guidance for running events and on producing display materials, and advice on commemorations – all of which are free of charge to those in the United Kingdom. For Holocaust Memorial Day 2010, a campaign pack was produced that organizers can request to help them in their planning. A free short film, suitable for showing as part of Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations, was also created.

#### Public Awareness:

In order to engage the wider United Kingdom community, the HMDT hosts a website, where it provides free resources, such as survivor stories, artwork, images, poetry, liturgical readings and films.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

Senior Government ministers often attend the principal national commemoration event and often speak at other events. In 2006, the Prime Minister was in attendance to speak and to meet Holocaust survivors.

For Holocaust Memorial Day 2009, the national event was preceded by a reception, hosted by the Lord Mayor of Coventry for Holocaust survivors. This was attended by a junior minister, who read out a personal message from the Prime Minister.

The HMDT website provides visitors with a way to explore the issues of the day<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Further information is available at <<http://www.hmd.org.uk>> and <<http://education.hmd.org.uk>>.

The HMDT has contracted a media agency to generate media interest and publicity for Holocaust Memorial Day. As a new initiative in advance of Holocaust Memorial Day 2010, social media were utilized and the HMDT now has a presence on Facebook and Twitter.



March in Coventry, United Kingdom, 27 January 2009.  
Photo: Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

Information provided by the United Kingdom Delegation to the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research in a communication dated 16 October 2009.

## **United States of America**

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day***

The United States of America officially commemorates the victims of the Holocaust on Yom Hashoah. The official name of the memorial day is “Days of Remembrance.” The first Days of Remembrance ceremony took place on 24 April 1979.

### ***Official Commemorative Activities***

The national commemorative ceremony is conducted in the rotunda of the United States Capitol, with high-ranking government officials attending the event, at which Holocaust survivors are honoured.

The federal commemorative event is promoted through direct postal notification and by e-mailing federal departments.

At the national level, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has the leading role in the event. Media outlets in the Washington, D.C. area are contacted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

At state and local levels, Holocaust-related organizations and survivor groups play a major role. These include organizations working with the Association of Holocaust Organizations. Various activities take place at the state and local levels, with government officials participating.

### ***Additional Practices***<sup>27</sup>

Apart from the annual national day of commemoration, many Holocaust memorials and educational institutions conduct commemorations in their communities on 27 January, International Holocaust Remembrance Day. In Washington, D.C., the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum organizes a special commemoration with Holocaust survivors and the diplomatic corps.

### ***Promotion of Holocaust Remembrance and Level of Participation in Events***

In past years, the President and Vice President, members of the Cabinet, Supreme Court judges, senators and members of the House of Representatives have taken part in the national commemorative ceremony.

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<sup>27</sup> Further information is available at <<http://www.ushmm.org/remembrance/dor>> and <[http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/ihrd/comment\\_post.php](http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/ihrd/comment_post.php)>.



United States of America President Barack Obama speaks at the Days of Remembrance ceremony on April 23, 2009, in the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C.  
Photo: Carl Cox for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Information provided by the United States Mission to the OSCE in a communication dated 21 August 2009. Additional information was provided by the U.S. Department of State on 27 August 2009.

## **Uzbekistan**

ODIHR did not receive any information from Uzbekistan.

## Annex 1

### Calendar of Holocaust Memorial Days

#### Governmental commemoration events

<b>Date</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Country</b>
27 January	Liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp (1945)	Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Norway, Portugal, Serbia, <sup>28</sup> Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom
10 March	Prevention of the deportation of 50.000 Jewish Bulgarian citizens to the Nazi concentration camps (1943)	Bulgaria
April <sup>29</sup>	Yom Hashoah - Beginning of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (1943)	Canada, United States of America
17 April	Establishment of the first ghetto in Hungary in Munkács (1944)	Hungary
19 April	Beginning of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (1943)	Poland
4 May	Day before Liberation Day (on which the 1945 liberation from German occupation is marked)	Netherlands
5 May	Liberation of the Mauthausen concentration camp (1945)	Austria
4 July	Burning of the synagogue on Gogol Street in Riga (1941)	Latvia
16 July	Round-up of Jews in the Vélodrome d'Hiver in Paris on 16 and 17 July 1942	France
9 September	Adoption of 290 repressive laws, the so called Jewish Codex (1941)	Slovakia
23 September	Liquidation of the Vilnius Ghetto (1943)	Lithuania
9 October	Start of deportation of Jews from Bessarabia, Bucovina and Southern Bucovina	Romania

<sup>28</sup> Serbia also observes a “National Holocaust and Genocide Victims Remembrance Day” on 22 April and four more remembrance days with national significance.

<sup>29</sup> The date changes according to the Hebrew calendar: Yom Hashoah takes place on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Nissan.

## Annex 2



### QUESTIONNAIRE

#### “Holocaust Memorial Days in the OSCE Region – An overview of good governmental practices”

#### 1.

Is the information provided in the document “Holocaust Memorial Days in the OSCE Region – An overview of good governmental practices” correct, complete and up to date?

See: [http://www.osce.org/documents/odihhr/2008/01/29395\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/odihhr/2008/01/29395_en.pdf)

Yes:  *Thank you for your participation, you do not need to fill the form.*

No:  *Please fill in questions 2 and 3 in order to provide new or up to date information.*

#### 2.

Has your government designated a special day of commemoration for the victims of the Holocaust?

Yes:  *Please go to question 3*

No:  *Please go to question 4*

#### 3.

Please describe good governmental initiatives of that kind, including

- a) On which day do commemorations take place?
- b) What is the significance of that date?
- c) What is the day called?

- d) Please describe the mandate of the commemoration day.
- e) When was the commemoration day established?
- f) Where are governmental commemorative events held?
- g) What is the content of the event/s?
- h) Which groups or organizations are involved in the event/s (in terms of organization and participation)?
- i) At which level do government officials participate in the commemorative event/s?
- j) How do you promote the commemorative event/s and raise awareness?
- k) Do you have any additional information about your event/s that you would like to share? For example what are the outcomes in terms of increased interest and participation since last year?

Thank you for your participation, you do not need to answer question 4.

**4.**

Are there plans to establish a Holocaust Memorial Day? If yes, which name will it have, on which day will the commemoration take place and what is the significance of that date?

Thank you for your participation.