



ROMANIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

POSITION PAPER

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We are living in a world in which the numerous interdependencies among processes at international level trigger the need for responsibility toward the society we are living in. In this context, education is a very important tool in the young people's development and progress, with a view to their active participation in the building of a democratic society.

International context

Teaching about the Holocaust in the 21st century is not a simple task. It is quite difficult to make the young generation to understand such a complex and tragic event.

In 2000, as the result of a Swedish Government initiative, an international conference on the Holocaust took place in Stockholm. As a result, the Task Force for the International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research was settled. On the same occasion, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe suggested the idea of introducing a day of remembrance in all the schools in Europe.

In 2000, at the Conference of the Ministers of Education, in Krakow, a decision was reached in order to establish a Day of remembrance of the Holocaust and for prevention of crimes against humanity in all the member states of the Council of Europe.

Following an invitation of the French authorities, in October 2002, in Strasbourg, the Ministers of Education fully accepted the Declaration that a Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and day for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity shall be introduced in all the schools in Europe.

Romania established that 18th of October to become the Day of Holocaust Remembrance and Prevention of Crimes against Humanity in school.

School curriculum

We consider that Romania offers a good example of education reform, especially as far as the teaching of social sciences is concerned. Besides eliminating the ideology and the distortion of the content, which characterized the teaching of the social sciences prior to 1989, the educational reform has passed through various stages and therefore we are in the position to assess its first results

In the new curriculum there have been introduced new subjects such as „education for citizenship” and „civic education”. These subjects are structured around several issues that our specialists considered to be important, such as freedom and rights of citizens, the functioning of democratic institutions, the civic society, civic attitude and action. The issues related to the Shoah/Holocaust are integrated within the framework of the civic education curriculum and they are not limited to the mere presentation of facts, but give rise to discussions, to interpretation and critical thinking.

In Romania the history teaching has been under a process of complex reform with the aim to be a decisive factor in promoting the fundamental values, such as tolerance, mutual understanding, human rights and democracy.

Since 1999, the study of Holocaust was introduced in the new History curricula and included in the History textbooks. The teaching on the Holocaust is centred in the 7th, 11th and 12th grades, respectively:

- a. in the VII th grade: theme no.8- The second world war- the dimension of war
- b. in the XI th grade: theme 9- The second world war- Holocaust
- c. in the XII th grade, theme 8- State, society and culture, it is studied the situation of Jewish community between 1940-1944
- d. within the optional courses on Holocaust education the following subjects are studied: The Nazi and the issue of Jews, the legionary regime in Romania, the Antonescu regime, the solidarity with the Jewish community

Teacher training programmes

The Romanian Ministry of Education and Research has supported projects developed in cooperation with institutions from Israel for continuing training of history and civic education teachers. Moreover, the academic community in prestigious universities in Romania has taken the initiative of setting up Jewish Study Centre, some of which have already obtained remarkable results in their activity.

The centres for Jewish Studies, such as those from Bucharest, Cluj and Craiova support the in-service training of history teachers directly involved in teaching about the Holocaust and a network of teacher trainers focused on teaching about Holocaust was established.

a. the teacher training programme developed by the "Dr. Moshe Carmilly" Institute for Hebrew and Jewish History, Cluj Napoca

The "Dr. Moshe Carmilly" Institute for Hebrew and Jewish History, part of the "Babes-Bolyai" University of Cluj-Napoca has initiated in 2000 a teaching training programme on how to teach the Holocaust in the schools for the history teachers.

Purpose

The mission of the program is to train qualified individuals for teaching such an important topic in the secondary and high-schools of Romania. It broadens the teachers' expertise in the history of the Jews, their tragic fate during World War II and in the same time it develops, crystallizes ethical values so important in educating the young generation in the spirit of tolerance, understanding, concivility, peace and human solidarity.

Structure of the course

It is a three-week course for 15 secondary and high-school history teachers from all over Romania.

Teaching program

It consisted of conferences and lectures on the general history of the Jews, Anti-Semitism, history of the Jews in Romania, World War II, Holocaust, attitudes vis-à-vis the Holocaust in communist and post-communist countries, oral history and the Holocaust, the Holocaust in films, the second generation in Israel – children of Holocaust survivors, a theme in the contemporary Israeli literature.

The lectures were given by prestigious scholars from universities from abroad and Romania: Prof. Carol Iancu, University "Paul Valery" from Montpellier, Prof. Doru Radosav, University "Babes-Bolyai" from Cluj, Dr. Raphael Vago and Dr. Liviu Rotman, University Tel Aviv, Dr. Radu Ioanid, The Holocaust Museum, Washington, Debbie Ungar, Tel Aviv, Nava Semel, Tel Aviv.

The program also comprised courses and workshops on the methodology of teaching the Holocaust that were given by specialists in the field: Margaret Walden, South Carolina Council on Holocaust, USA, Alicja Bialecka,

Auschwitz Museum, Poland, Lea Roshkovski, Yad Vashem, Tim Kaiser, The Holocaust Museum, Washington, Claude Singer, C.D.J.C. Paris, France and Susan Llanes, The Holocaust Museum, Houston, USA. They lectured on: using technology in teaching about the Holocaust, using testimonies in classroom, historical issues on Auschwitz and what Auschwitz means for different national and religious groups, the functions and educational role of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, Yad Vashem educational guidelines, interdisciplinary educational units in teaching the Holocaust, USHMM guidelines on teaching the Holocaust, the Antisemite propaganda in Nazi Germany, tools and pedagogic experiences in teaching the Holocaust in the secondary schools of France, bystanders, perpetrators and rescuers, assessing and defining responsibility.

Other activities

- the meeting with Holocaust survivors that live in Cluj who recalled for the students memories of their own experiences as natives of Cluj, before, during and after the Holocaust.
- trips to places related to the history of the Jews of Romania and memorial sites – the cemetery of Sarvas where the entire Jewish population of the town was buried after being shot down by the Fascists, the cities of Oradea and Tirgu Mures where big Jewish communities lived before World War II.
- The trip to Auschwitz organized together with the Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau concluded the courses as the participants had the opportunity to see with their own eyes to what atrocities unfounded hatred among people can lead. It was a lesson that they would never forget.

Course follow up

All the participants are expected to prepare a teaching project after graduating the course that they have to present to the participants in the program of the following year. After the presentation they are awarded a graduation certificate issued by the "Babes-Bolyai" University that empowers them to co-ordinate lessons on Holocaust at local level. Copies of the projects, as well as responses of the pupils to class work may be found in the special fund "Teaching the Holocaust" of the Judaica library of the Jewish studies institute.

Publications:

- Studia Iudaica – an annually publications in English

- Moshe Carmilly – The History of Jews in Transylvania 1623-1944 (București, 1994)
- Moshe Carmilly – *The way of life* (1996)
- Maria Radosav – Introduction in the Hebrew Grammar (Cluj, 1996)
- Maria Radosav – The Grammar of modern Hebrew language (București, 1998)

In “Bibliotheca Judaica”

- Anton E. Dörner – The Jews in Satu Mare committee in the XVIII century, 1723-1760 (vol. 1 - 1998); The Jews in Satu Mare Committee in the XVIIIth century 1761-1781 (vol. 2 - 2000)
- Ladislau Gyemant – *Evreii din Transilvania în perioada emancipării* (1790-1867) (București, 1999)
- Ladislau Gyemant (coordonator) – *Izvoare și mărturii referitoare la evreii din România* (București, 1999)

b. *teacher training seminar organised jointly by the Romanian Ministry of Education and the Council of Europe- „ Teaching about the Holocaust in the 21st century: Remembering the past and preventing crimes against humanity”, Bucharest, 7-10 May 2003*

In the framework of the Council of Europe project- Teaching Memory, Education for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity, the Romanian Ministry of Education has organised an international seminar.

The seminar aims were:

- To discuss how the Holocaust is represented in the history curricula and textbooks of the European countries
- To debate how the Holocaust and its consequences for the European history should be taught
- New didactical methods and share teachers experience on this topic
- Increase awareness among history educators about various available additional teaching materials such as: cinema, art, museums, ICT
- To encourage discussions among the history teachers

The participants were: teacher trainers, history teachers, textbook authors from Romania and other European countries

Recommendations:

- Teaching about Holocaust should start with the 1920's and end with the consequences after the World War II
- Teachers should be encouraged to approach the topic from the interdisciplinary point of view-history, literature, arts,
- The museums have to play an important role and should become the usual background of the history classes
- The activity of the in-service teachers training should be re-enforced both at the national and European level (with the support of the Yad Vashem Institute, the Museum of Holocaust in Washington, etc)
- A website discussion group can bring together teachers from different countries of Europe and may offer the opportunity of the exchange of views on different local and regional projects or initiatives and the way the Day of remembrance is commemorated on our continent.