



Holocaust Memorial Days in the OSCE Region

- An overview of good governmental practices –

January 2008

Introduction

With the Berlin Declaration of 2004, OSCE participating States committed 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.” This commitment was renewed in various Ministerial and Permanent Council Decisions.

It constitutes an important element in the OSCE’s focus on the fight against discrimination and for respect and tolerance. The OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) offers assistance to participating States and facilitates the exchange of good practices to implement these commitments. In close co-operation with Yad Vashem, the ODIHR developed an online document entitled “Preparing Holocaust Memorial Days: Suggestions for Educators”, which is available for download in 13 languages at <http://www.osce.org/odihr/20104.html>. This document provides teachers with practical examples and suggestions for the commemoration of the Holocaust in schools and has proven to be a useful and frequently employed tool.

Beyond the OSCE, other international organizations have identified the promotion of Holocaust remembrance as an area of multilateral co-operation. In 1998, the Swedish Prime Minister initiated the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, whose members are committed to establishing a Holocaust memorial day.¹ In January 2000, 44 states signed 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”.²

In October 2002, the European Ministers of Education met in Strasbourg at the Council of Europe and made a declaration, agreeing “to establish in close co-operation with the Council of Europe a ‘Day of Remembrance’ in member states’ schools, as from 2003, according to national practice and priority; to host on a voluntary basis European events in connection with the ‘Remembrance Day’”.³ With Resolution 60/7, the UN General Assembly on 1 November 2005 resolved that “the United Nations will designate 27 January as an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust”. As requested by the General Assembly, an outreach programme “Holocaust and the United Nations” was created and continues to actively promote Holocaust remembrance.⁴ On 16 April 2007, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights⁵ organized a video conference with Yad Vashem.⁶

Many states choose to commemorate the Holocaust on the day that marks the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp by the Red Army on 27 January

¹ For more information see: <http://www.holocausttaskforce.org/>

² For more information see: <http://www.holocausttaskforce.org/about/index.php?content=stockholm/>

³ For more information see: <http://www.coe.int>

⁴ For more information see: <http://www.un.org/holocaustremembrance/emapage.shtml>

⁵ For more information see: <http://www.fra.europa.eu/fra/index.php>

⁶ For more information see: <http://www.yadvashem.org.il/>

1945. Another prominent remembrance day is *Yom HaShoah*. *Yom HaShoah Ve-Hagevurah* (Hebrew) literally means the “Holocaust Martyrs’ and Heroes’ Remembrance Day”, beginning at sunset on the 27th of the month of Nisan of the Hebrew calendar. It marks the beginning of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in 1943 and was established by the Israeli government in 1951. Some states commemorate the victims of the Holocaust on a day of national significance.

All of these international remembrance efforts have increased the awareness on the issue of the Holocaust in the OSCE region in past years, not least because the media reports on the remembrance activities all across the region.

This overview “Holocaust Memorial Days in the OSCE Region” attests to this development. It focuses on the role governments, parliamentarians and other public officials can play in the area of promoting remembrance of the Holocaust. While many governments support educational activities, the main focus of this overview is on the active role played by public officials on Holocaust memorial days.

Based on a questionnaire that was prepared in co-operation with a Special Working Group of the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research (ITF), this document provides country-by-country examples of government activities that take place on the designated day of remembrance. The summaries are solely based on the questionnaires received. No additional research was undertaken. The ODIHR does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of the information received.

The ODIHR would like to thank the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research and all other contributors for the excellent co-operation.

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. Communication dated 12 December 2007.

Austria

Holocaust Memorial Day

In Austria, victims of National Socialism are officially remembered on 5 May, which marks the day of the liberation of Mauthausen concentration camp. 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 remembrance day, other days, such as 27 January and 9 November (the day of the pogrom of 1938) are commemorated in public places in Vienna and other Austrian cities, with activities being largely organized by civil society groups.

Official Commemorative Activities

The principal commemorative event takes place in the Austrian Parliament, with several speeches being delivered. It is attended by high-ranking state officials, such as the president, the prime minister, members of the cabinet, parliamentarians, and party leaders.

Additional Good Practices

Civic education projects take place in public places, especially in schools.

Numerous civil society organizations are involved in the events, especially the initiative “National Socialism and the Holocaust. Past and Present” as well as the National Fund of Austria and “Letter to the Stars”.

http://www.konvent.gv.at/PG/VER_FEST/FEST/show.psp?P_INF2=1

<http://www.erinnern.at/aktivitaten/gedenktag-5-mai>

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

Azerbaijan

There is no Holocaust Memorial Day in Azerbaijan.

Information provided by the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Warsaw, Poland. Communication dated 5 December 2007.

Belgium

Holocaust Memorial Day

In 2004, a government decree designated 27 January as Holocaust Memorial Day. Prior to this decree, 8 May, the day that marked the end of the Second World War, had been the official Holocaust Remembrance Day in Belgium. 8 May continues to be marked as “Peace Day”. 27 January is called “Remembrance Day of the Genocide committed by Nazi Germany” and generally referred to as “Holocaust Remembrance Day”.

Official Commemorative Activities

On 27 January 2005, the Head of State H.M. King Albert II and the Head of Government Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt took part in the official ceremony in the Museum Auschwitz Birkenau.

On 27 January 2006, activities evolved around the Belgian Chairmanship of the OSCE, with the Chairman in Office inviting representatives of all 56 OSCE participating States to attend a ceremony in Brussels, in the course of which the ODIHR/Yad Vashem Guidelines “Preparing Holocaust Memorial Days” were launched.

In 2007, the main official event was again held on 8 May, coinciding with the presentation and publication of the official report on the attitude of the Belgian authorities during the Second World War. On that day, the prime minister and the minister of defence unveiled a commemorative plaque in the centre of Brussels, thus honouring the 1440 Belgians that have been recognized by Yad Vashem as “Righteous among the Nations”. As a result, the 27 January event was small scale. Organized by Jewish organizations, it took place at the national monument in Anderlecht, in the presence of high level government officials.

In addition, various activities focusing on the Holocaust and on the issue of peace and tolerance education also take place on “Peace Day”.

Additional Good Practices

Various events are also organized by civil society throughout the country, with members of parliament and/or local politicians attending. Jewish organizations sometimes co-organize and always participate in these events.

Special ceremonies have been organized at monuments or sites that bear a specific link to the Holocaust (museums, memorials, etc.).

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

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina does not officially mark 27 January as Holocaust Memorial Day, due to the absence of state-level legislation on official holidays.

On 27 January 2007, the International Holocaust Memorial Day was, however, marked. Under the patronage of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, events took place on the premises of the Jewish community. They were organized in co-operation with the Institute for Research of Crimes of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the International Law University in Sarajevo and the Jewish community of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Information provided by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, communication Re: 08-50-5126-DD/07, dated 13 November 2007.

Croatia

Holocaust Memorial Day

On 30 October 2003, the Ministry of Education 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.

Official Commemorative Activities

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

Representatives of the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, of the Ministry of Culture, ministers, state secretaries and assistant ministers as well as the head of multilateral co-operation and the representatives of the Jasenovac Memorial State take part in the national seminar on the Day of Remembrance.

The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, the Ministry of Culture, Education and Teacher Training Agency, 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 of Righteous and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum are involved in this event.

Additional Good 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, including through projects.

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 will be put on the Ministry's website.

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

Czech Republic

Holocaust Memorial Day

In 2004, 27 January was designated by Czech law (act 101/2004) as Holocaust Memorial Day. It is called the “Memory day of Holocaust victims and for the prevention of crimes against humanity”.

Official Commemorative Activities

An event takes place in the knightly hall of the Czech senate, which is attended by the Czech prime minister, government ministers, chairs of the parliament and members of the parliament. The Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic, the Foundation for Holocaust Victims, the Ministry of Culture, the Czech Senate, the Jewish Community Prague are involved in the event.

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

Denmark

Holocaust Memorial Day

On 27 January, Denmark commemorates the victims of the Holocaust and other genocides on a national day of remembrance called “Auschwitz Day”. The remembrance day was established in 2002 and held for the first time in 2003.

Official Commemorative Activities

Apart from a series of educational activities for high school students organized by the Department for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the Danish Institute for International Studies, public events are arranged by six different municipalities all over Denmark. The public events are held in town halls, local museums or libraries. They take various forms, but generally include speeches given by genocide survivors, politicians and/or other relevant actors, concerts, poetry recitals, theatre performances, debates, exhibitions etc. The local public is invited to participate in these events.

When “Auschwitz Day” was marked for the first time in 2003, the prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs participated in the official ceremony. Subsequently, the minister tasked with implementing “Auschwitz Day” – the minister of education – has regularly attended the events in Copenhagen. In the other municipalities, the respective mayor usually participates in the local Auschwitz Day events.

The Ministry of Education has established two bodies to organize events related to “Auschwitz Day” – a steering committee and a council assembling groups affected by the Holocaust and other Nazi atrocities, and relevant non-governmental organizations. The steering committee is comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Integration as well as the Danish Institute for Human Rights and the Danish Institute for International Studies. The Council comprises representatives from groups affected by the Holocaust and other Nazi atrocities.

Additional Good Practices

Every year, the government and its implementing partners introduce a new theme for “Auschwitz Day”. In 2005, for example, the theme was “perpetrators”; in 2006, the “aftermath of the genocide” and in 2007, “the prelude of genocide”.

A special website (<http://www.27-1.dk/>) creates awareness for the events and provides information about the various activities. Further information is posted on the website of the Department for Holocaust and Genocide Studies (<http://www.diis.dk/sw13037.asp>). The educational activities evolving around “Auschwitz Day” are promoted in a newsletter on the department’s educational website (<http://www.folkedrab.dk/>).

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

Estonia

Holocaust Memorial Day

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

Official Commemorative Activities

A commemoration ceremony takes place at the Holocaust Memorial in Klooga, i.e., at the site of the former concentration camp.

A speaker of the Parliament and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and representatives of different state and non-governmental organizations, as well as from among the diplomatic corps, give speeches, lay wreaths and light candles. The prime minister prepares an official statement for this day.

The Estonian Jewish community, the Chief Rabbi and the Archbishop of the Estonian Lutheran Church also participate.

Additional Good Practices

Thematic exhibitions are opened in the National Library in Tallinn, and in other places in Estonia.

The Ministry of Education and Research sent a circular letter to secondary schools, suggesting that they choose appropriate ways of marking this special day. The materials were collected and officially presented on the day of commemoration.

In a co-operation between the Society of Estonian History Teachers, the Living History Forum (Sweden) and the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, methodological materials for teaching the Holocaust in secondary schools were elaborated. The materials – published in Estonian and Russian on a DVD and CD-Rom – were officially presented on the day of commemoration for the victims of the Holocaust.

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

Finland

27 January has been designated as “Victims of Persecution Memorial Day” in Finland. As the Finnish government does not officially designate special thematic days for certain groups of victims, there is not a day whose purpose it is to specifically commemorate the victims of the Holocaust. The government relies on initiative being taken from within civil society to organize special events in memory of the victims.

Information provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. Communication HEL5308-58, dated 20 December 2007.

France

Holocaust Memorial Day

France remembers the victims of the Holocaust on the closest Sunday to 16 July. 16 July refers to the rounding-up of Jews in the *Vélodrome d'Hiver* in Paris on 16 and 17 July 1942. The remembrance day was first designated as such on 3 February 1993, when the then President François Mitterand 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 by adding the idea that a 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 inaugurated 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 prime minister presides over the ceremony that takes place in Paris, speaking on behalf of the French government. The prefects represent the government during the public ceremonies that take place on the level of the *département*.

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

The ceremony is organized by the Department for Ex-Servicemen, which is attached to the Ministry of Defence. The ceremonies that take place out of Paris are often prepared in close co-operation with the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions of France (CRIF), with representatives of various Jewish organizations and former deportee associations as well as with public institutions.

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

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

Georgia

Based on the available information, no official commemoration of the Holocaust takes place in Georgia.

Information provided by the Public Defender of Georgia. Communication # 2476/01, dated 6 December 2007.

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 the victims of the Nazi crimes.

Official Commemorative Activities

The official commemorative ceremony takes place in the German Parliament in Berlin, in the presence of the president, the government, representatives of the federal states and the president of the federal constitutional court.

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

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

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

Greece

Holocaust Memorial Day

A law adopted by the Greek Parliament in 2004 designates 27 January as Holocaust Memorial Day. In application of this law, a presidential decree in 2005 regulated the commemorative events in the different prefectures of the country. The day is 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 significance of this day, which has been marked since 2005, is to remember the interruption of the multifaceted Jewish contribution to Greece before the Second World War, especially in Thessaloniki; and to remember the persecutions against the Jewish community during the war and the Holocaust. A further goal is to raise awareness, especially among the young generations, against 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: at big 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 Central Board of Jewish Communities, the remaining Jewish communities, and the Jewish Museums.

The president, several ministers, such as the ministers of interior, of justice, of education, and others, deputy ministers, members of all political parties represented in Parliament, prefects and representatives of local authorities take part in the events. Members of parliament, political and religious authorities (e.g. the Orthodox Church of Greece), the Association of the Greek Jewish Survivors of the Concentration Camps, pupils and Jewish Youth Clubs are involved in the events as participants.

The different commemorative events include the delivery of speeches and the showing of films related to the Holocaust. Survivors share the memories of their experience in the concentration camps. Part of the events is also dedicated to people who saved Jews during the Second World War. In addition, 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 National Education, the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece, and the Embassy of Israel.

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

Holy See

As the central government of the Catholic Church, the Holy See provides a general framework for dealing with Holocaust issues.

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 this Commission is the question of how to combat anti-Semitism.

The voice of the Roman Pontiff is heard all over the world and his statements have world-wide repercussions. John Paul II expressed again and again his concern about anti-Semitism, calling the phenomenon a “sin against God and humanity”. In a letter presenting the document called “We Remember: A Reflection on the *Shoah*”, issued by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews in 1998, 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 Second World War. The crime which has become known as the *Shoah* remains an indelible stain” on history. He visited Auschwitz in Poland in 1979. As a pilgrim, he commemorated the victims of the Holocaust, expressing his deep sorrow and shame. There he knelt his knees 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 commemorated the victims of the *Shoah* in Auschwitz is a visible sign for the importance of Holocaust remembrance.

Regarding the teaching of the Catholic Church about the Holocaust, the above-quoted document “We Remember” 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.”

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 historic visit to the Synagogue of Rome on 13 April 1986, expressing again “a word of abhorrence for the genocide decreed against the Jewish people during the Second World War, 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 anti-Semitism, xenophobia and racial hatred, which were seeds of those unspeakable crimes. Humanity cannot permit all that to happen again.”

Information provided by the Permanent Mission of the Holy See to the International Organisations in Vienna. Communication No. 549/2007, dated 7 December 2007.

Hungary

Holocaust Memorial Day

Hungary commemorates the victims of the Holocaust on 16 April, the date of the setting up of the first ghetto on Hungarian territory (in Munkács) in 1944. The Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Day was first marked in 2000.

Official Commemorative Activities

A commemorative meeting is held in the parliament. The entire cabinet, the president of state, the president of the supreme court, and members of parliament from all parties represented in the legislature attend the event.

Furthermore, the Holocaust Memorial Center organizes an official commemoration, which is attended by the president of the parliament, the president of the supreme court, foreign diplomats and municipal representatives.

Additional Good Practices

Remembrance events and activities also take place in schools. The Ministry of Education and Culture sent an official letter to public schools to encourage them to commemorate the event in a decent way.

The Ministry of Education and Culture provided a website with teaching materials and materials for students to be used: <http://www.holokauszmagyarorszagon.hu/>

The Ministry also provided a teaching package for teaching about the Holocaust.

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

Ireland

Holocaust Memorial Day

Drawing on the assistance of the Holocaust Educational Trust, the government has marked Holocaust Memorial Day on 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 for Yom HaShoah every year.

Official Commemorative Activities

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

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.

A keynote address is given by the Taoiseach (head of the government) or other senior minister. Members of parliament and the upper house, heads of government departments, and officials of 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 by the President of Ireland. Representative persons 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 non-governmental organizations, academics, poets, musicians and many other people.

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

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

Additional Good 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 aged eleven or twelve years 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 to promote awareness and stimulate 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 interculturalism. Over 300 schools on the island of Ireland participate in the Crocus Project as well as schools in Poland, Austria, the UK, the US, 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 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 (during 15-20 weeks) and each pupil who attends the lecture takes home a booklet.

Information provided by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform of Ireland. 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

Commemorations take the form of official ceremonies at the institutional level as well as seminars, meetings, educational competitions, movie screenings, theatre plays and mass-media reports.

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 some of the Italian student who have visited concentration camps as well as the winners of the annual competition on the topic of the Shoah.

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, the chairs of the parliament.

The minister of public education participated in the commemoration in Auschwitz on 28 January 2007.

Other participants and organizations involved are students from all educational levels, Jewish organizations, universities and various non-governmental organizations.

Additional Good Practices

The students who have won the annual competition on the topic of the Shoah are invited to present their works at the 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 non-governmental organizations, promote visits to concentration camp sites in Italy, Poland and Germany. In 2007, so-called “memory trains” departed from different cities to Auschwitz.

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

Latvia

Holocaust Memorial Day

Since October 1990, Latvia has held a 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 the 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, initiated by Nazi Germany, is remembered as the highest culmination point of evil. It is emphasized that the mass killings during the Holocaust have 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 the Second World War.

The president gives the opening speech during the event, followed by the minister of foreign affairs or another high-ranking government representative. The event is attended by ambassadors and government officials.

The following groups and organizations are involved in the event: the museum “Jews in Latvia”; the Latvian Jewish Community; the Association of Latvian and Estonian Jews (based in Israel); the Jewish Survivors of Latvia (based in the US); the Center for Judaic Studies of the University of Latvia; Rabbis of the Riga Synagogue; the Riga Jewish School; the Latvian Jewish Religious Community Shamir; the Latvian Council of Jewish Communities” the Society for Research on Jewish Communities (Israel); the Latvian Council of Christians and Jews; the Latvian Academy of Sciences; and the Commission of Historians established under the auspices of Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga.

Additional Good 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 the Jewish Victims was linked with the international conference “Holocaust: Remembrance and Lessons”, which attracted participants from all over the world. The President of Latvia, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, was the patron of the conference, which was organized by the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in association with the Latvian Transatlantic Organisation (LATO), and the American Jewish Committee. It was sponsored by the ITF.

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

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; a speech given by the prime minister; a speech given by the minister of foreign affairs; benefit concerts (e.g. of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Nations); movie screenings (e.g. "Yad Vashem Jerusalem"); and discussion forums in secondary schools.

There is high level participation in the event.

In 2007, the following groups and organizations were involved: the Club Liechtensteiner Friends of Yad Vashem; Colorida (a youth non-governmental organization); and representatives of Jewish museums.

Information provided by the Office for Foreign Affairs, Principality of Liechtenstein. Communication dated 15 November 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 in other Lithuanian cities. The commemoration in Vilnius takes place at the Memorial for the Holocaust Victims in Paneriai.

Speeches are delivered, candles are lit and a broad range of activities are organized by non-governmental organizations, schools and local communities.

High-ranking statesmen take part in the main commemorative events, including one or more of the following: the president, the prime minister, ministers, the speaker of the parliament, the party leaders, and representatives of the diplomatic corp. Local politicians attend events on the local level.

Additional Good Practices

Since 2001, the non-governmental organization “Atminties namai” 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 of secondary schools participated in the events with their special papers developed for the contest “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 “The Flower of Remembrance” in all major cities of Lithuania. Secondary school pupils were invited to participate. The aim of the initiative was to commemorate victims of the Holocaust and to honour the Righteous. All the students participating in the project came to the streets in order to hold the yellow sunflowers in their hands. Some of the flowers were real; others were made by students from paper. Students wrote facts about pre-war Jewish life in Lithuania, the Holocaust and on those who risked their lives saving Jews on the leaves of the paper flowers. As part of the project, the leaves and paper petals were distributed by the students. The real flowers were brought to Holocaust memorial sites. This initiative took place in all major Lithuanian cities.

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

Luxembourg

Holocaust Memorial Day

Adopting the UN resolution that declared 27 January as the official day of remembrance of the Holocaust, Luxembourg marks this day as the “Day in memory of the Holocaust and for the prevention of crimes against humanity”. Prior to this, 10 October had served as memorial day, especially in schools, since 2003.

Official Commemorative Activities

A government official from the Ministry of Education, supported by the minister of education, organizes an event that takes place in schools. From 2007 onwards, it takes place at a specified location accessible to students.

The main focus of the ceremony is on young people, with a view to remembering all those who have suffered and were killed under Nazi rule.

Apart from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Family and Integration, the *Service National de la Jeunesse* (national youth organization) and other non-governmental organizations, such as, Amnesty International, Info-Handicap, CIGALE (a gay and lesbian organization), CVCE (Center for European Knowledge), and the Jewish community are involved.

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

Additional Good Practices

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

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

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

Monaco

Holocaust Memorial Day

In 2006, the government of the Principality of Monaco designated 27 January as “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 establishments, 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.

In 2007, Serge Klarsfeld shared his experience with educators in the preparations for the remembrance day. In 2008, two projects envisage trips to be undertaken to the former concentration camps of Struthof and Auschwitz as well as to Kraków.

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

Information provided by the Embassy of the Principality of Monaco, Berlin, Germany. Communication 821-2007/ODIHR, dated 4 December 2007.

Netherlands

Holocaust Memorial Day

The government organizes various activities on different days.

Immediately after the Second World War, commemorations were held on 4 May, in memory of all civilians and soldiers who died in the Kingdom of the Netherlands or anywhere else in the world since the outbreak of the Second World War in war situations and during peace keeping operations. 4 May is a day of solemn commemoration. 5 May is Liberation Day – a day of public rejoicing, when the country's liberation from the German occupation is celebrated.

On the Sunday after 27 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. by saying the Kaddish). In the Netherlands, Auschwitz symbolizes the persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust. The commemoration of the victims of the concentration camps is held since 1952.

Official Commemorative Activities

4 May and 27 January are marked through commemorative celebrations.

On 4 May, the main ceremony takes place at the national monument on the 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 put down at the monument and some speeches are delivered. Holocaust survivors, resistance fighters, and political prisoners are special guests.

The Queen and the Crown Prince and his wife are present at this event, which is also attended by the prime minister and other members of the government as well as by the chairpersons of both houses of parliament and several members of parliament.

The commemoration around 27 January takes place at the Auschwitz Monument in the Wertheim Park in Amsterdam and it is also accessible for everyone. Wreaths are put down, the Kaddish is said and speeches are given. At least one minister is present at the event as well as the chairpersons of both houses of parliament. The Netherlands Auschwitz Committee receives project financing from the Dutch government.

Additional Good Practices

On the Thursday before 27 January, a "Never again Auschwitz" lecture is given by someone who made a special effort to realize the aims of the Netherlands Auschwitz Committee. In 2006, the lecture was given by Simone Weil.

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.

Throughout the year, all kinds of educational projects related to the Second World War 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 for the concept of commemoration.

<http://www.4en5mei.nl/4en5mei>

<http://www.auschwitz.nl/>

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

Norway

Holocaust Memorial Day

In 2000, Norway designated 27 January as Holocaust Memorial Day. The first commemoration took place in 2001.

Official Commemorative Activities

The annual commemorative event is held in Oslo at the site of the Holocaust Memorial Monument in the port area, from where the Norwegian Jews were deported in 1942/3. There are also special events in the cities of Trondheim, Bergen and Kristiansand, and in schools all over the country. The content varies from place to place.

At the event in Oslo, the keynote speech is delivered by a member of the Norwegian government. Statements are also made by the Norwegian Jewish community and by other groups affected by the Holocaust. After the outdoor event, there is an indoor gathering, which is open to all, usually with a lecture/presentation of a specific topic related to the Holocaust.

Members of the government participate as main speakers in the commemoration event. In 2006, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jonas Gahr Støre, was the main speaker. In 2007, the Minister of Finance, Ms. Kristin Halvorsen, gave a speech at the event in Oslo.

Jews, Roma, homosexuals, disabled people, former prisoners of war, and former political prisoners are involved in the ceremony.

Additional Good Practices

Holocaust Memorial Day was introduced in Norwegian schools in 2003. The Norwegian National Plan of Action to Combat Racism and Discrimination states that all schools shall commemorate the Holocaust on Holocaust Memorial Day. In addition, one school is awarded a special prize on that day. The prize is called the Benjamin Prize, in honour of a 15-year-old Norwegian boy who was killed in a racially motivated murder by young neo-Nazis.

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

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. Besides 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 and at the *Radegast* station in Łódź, and on other sites related to the Holocaust. They take the form of speeches, lighting of candles and, occasionally, prayers.

High-rank statesmen take part in the main commemorative events, including one or more of the following: president, prime minister, ministers, parliamentarians, party leaders. Local events feature local government officials and sometimes also church leaders.

Apart from government and local government officials, numerous non-governmental organizations and sometimes also local parishes are involved.

On the occasion of 27 January, an official remembrance service is held yearly at the camp site in the former concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Important government representatives and politicians participate.

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

Portugal

There is no Holocaust Memorial Day or any Holocaust remembrance activities in Portugal.

Information provided by the Permanent Representation of Portugal to the OSCE. Communication Nr. 243, dated 4 December 2007.

Romania

Holocaust Memorial Day

The day of commemoration for the victims of the Holocaust in Romania was designated by the Governmental Decision no. 672 of 5 May 2004. The “Commemoration Day of the Holocaust in Romania” takes place on 9 October, i.e., on the day the Romanian troops began the deportation of the 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 National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania.

Ministers, state secretaries and local officials take part in the special events. In 2006, the president attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the building of the Memorial of the Holocaust in Romania.

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

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 from Romania carries out a religious wreaths ceremony at the Holocaust Monument of the Jews in Romania.

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

Russian Federation

Holocaust Memorial Day

Since 2006, the “International day in memory of the victims of the Holocaust” has been commemorated on 27 January within the framework of implementing provisions of the UN General Assembly Resolution 60/7 of 21 November 2005. The remembrance day was held for the first time in 2006. In the Russian Federation, no other special day of remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust has been established.

Official Commemorative Activities

On the occasion of the Holocaust Memorial Day, a brief telegram addressed to the President of Israel was forwarded on behalf of the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, in 2006.

On the day, a memorial evening took place, with the participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov. On 5 May 2006, there was a memorial evening dedicated to the remembrance of Jews, victims of Nazism, and heroes of the anti-fascist resistance movement, with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attending the event.

On 27 January 2007, another memorial evening with participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs took place on the occasion of the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp by the Red Army. This memorial event in remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust took place in the Central House of Writers in Moscow. It was arranged at the initiative of the Holocaust Fund, with participation of the Government of Moscow, the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia (FHCR), the Embassy of Israel, and other organizations. During the event, the ceremony of awarding the winners of the IV International Competition of the works of teachers, schoolchildren and students “Holocaust Lessons are the Way to Tolerance” took place. The meeting was addressed by the Chief Rabbi of Russia, Berl Lazar, the Deputy of the Russian Federation State Duma, Vladimir Ryzhkov, the Ambassador of Israel, Anna Azari, and others. Representatives of the diplomatic corps, public figures, artists, former ghetto prisoners and soldiers-liberators were invited.

Furthermore, the Youth Movement “Ours” arranged a commemorative procession dedicated to those deceased during the Holocaust.

Similar events were organized in different places in the Russian Federation. Commemoration prayers were held in all five synagogues of Moscow. Conferences, seminars, exhibitions, concerts, requiems, television and radio programmes were dedicated to the memory of the Jews killed during the Holocaust.

Organizers and participants of the event include national public associations, religious organizations, cultural and educational institutions as well as representatives of

governmental bodies. On the occasion of this date, the president and the minister of foreign affairs delivered speeches. The Government of Moscow and the administration of other municipal bodies of the Russian Federation, VG TRK "Rossiya", ORT, the independent media, the largest Russian non-governmental organization, the Embassy of Israel in the Russian Federation, the Russian Jewish Congress, the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia and the Moscow Representative Office of BF Joint take an active role in organizing these events.

Additional Good Practices

As instructed by the president, a section devoted to the Holocaust is being prepared within the framework of the permanent exhibition of the Central Museum of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. In St. Petersburg, the Jewish Museum is being established as a subdivision of the Russian Ethnographic Museum, where the issue of the Holocaust is expected to be reflected.

Supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an initiative of the Chief Rabbi of Russia, Berl Lazar, to establish a Museum of Tolerance in Moscow is being considered.

Russian representatives have succeeded in reaching an agreement with the UN Secretariat on holding, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an exhibition of pictures of the honoured artist G.M. Dobrov devoted to the Holocaust in the organization's headquarters.

On 10 October 2007, President Vladimir Putin welcomed members of the Executive Committee of the European Jewish Congress to the Kremlin. On 8 November 2007, there was a meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey Lavrov, with the leaders of the Anti-Defamation League. In the course of these two meetings, there was an exchange of opinions on combating xenophobia and anti-Semitism. Programmes to this effect are being considered.

Information provided by the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the OSCE. Communication No. 575/F, dated 4 December 2007.

Serbia

Holocaust Memorial Day

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

The main purpose of the commemorative activities is the creation of public awareness of the Holocaust and its victims, especially among younger generations. In addition to those days, the following days are also officially marked: 6 April (1941), which marks the beginning of the Second World War on the territory of Serbia; 9 May (1945), which marks Victory Day; the first Saturday in October is the day of the commemoration on the site of the biggest execution site in Serbia (Jajinci near Belgrade, where more than 80,000 people were murdered in the Second World War); 14 October (1941), commemorating the mass murder of several thousands of civilians in the town of Kraljevo; and 21 October (1941), commemorating the mass murder of several thousands of civilians in the town of Kragujevac.

Official Commemorative Activities

Ceremonies take place at significant historical sites in Serbia on both days each year. These Remembrance Day ceremonies are organized by the state in co-operation with the Jewish community in Serbia as well as representatives of local authorities, cultural, educational and academic institutions and non-governmental organizations.

The ceremonies take the form of wreath-laying ceremonies, addresses given by Holocaust and genocide survivors and high-ranking state officials, such as the prime minister, full military honours, educational and academic programmes.

The 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.

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

Slovakia

Holocaust Memorial Day

Slovakia commemorates the victims of the Holocaust and of racial violence on 9 September since 2001. It is called “Memorial Day for Victims of the Holocaust and of Racial Violence”.

The Slovak Parliament designated 9 September as the remembrance day, because on this day in 1941, the Slovak Republic of the day passed 290 repressive laws, the so-called Jewish Codex, with which the process of Jewish deportations was initialized and which resulted in the killings of over 70,000 Slovak Jews.

Official Commemorative Activities

The “Memorial Day for the Victims of the Holocaust and of Racial Violence” is always held under the auspices of the President of the Slovak Republic. It takes the form of laying of wreaths at the memorial of the victims of the Holocaust in Bratislava.

The president and members of the government and of parliament attend the event.

The Ministry of Culture and the Slovak National Museum – Museum of Jewish Culture are also involved in the event.

In Parliament and in schools, the day is observed by a minute of silence. Thematic exhibitions and cultural events that commemorate this tragedy are also organized on this day.

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

Spain

Holocaust Memorial Day

In 2005, Spain designated 27 January as Holocaust Memorial Day. It is officially called “Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and Prevention of Crimes against Humanity”. The event focuses on remembering the victims, especially the Spanish victims who lost their lives in the Holocaust.

Official Commemorative Activities

The main commemorative event is held in a special celebration hall in the Complutense University in Madrid, with high-level politicians attending. Organizations from the Jewish community and the community of Sinti and Roma participate in the event, as do representatives of various embassies.

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

Sweden

Holocaust Memorial Day

Since 1999, Sweden has commemorated the victims of the Holocaust on 27 January. It is called “Holocaust Memorial Day”.

Official Commemorative Activities

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

The programme is carried out in the presence of specially invited guests, representing the court, the government, political parties, human rights organizations, cultural institutions, etc. Among these, the most important guests are the survivors. Official participation ranks from the prime minister to a wide range of cabinet ministers and leaders of political parties.

Apart from the Living History Forum, municipalities, county administrative boards, schools, churches, cultural institutions and libraries organize events throughout the country.

Other events are held at 70-100 places throughout the country.

Additional Good Practices

The Swedish government appointed the Living History Forum to promote the engagement to work with the memorial day on a national level. To this end, a national network was established in 2003. By providing educational support and co-operation, the network tries to keep the content of the memorial day alive throughout the year. The result of these efforts is a widespread and dedicated work, manifesting itself 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.

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

Switzerland

Holocaust Memorial Day

In 2003, the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (CDPE) decided to designate 27 January as Holocaust Memorial Day. The first commemoration of the “Day in Memory of the Holocaust and for the prevention of crimes against humanity” was held in 2004.

Official Commemorative Activities

On the day, the president makes a statement, which is published in the three official languages of Switzerland as well as in English. This message is disseminated to national news agencies.

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

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

Events are also organized by non-governmental organizations, such as the Archive for Contemporary History and the Contact Point for Holocaust survivors.

<http://www.uvek.admin.ch/dokumentation/00476/00477/00911/index.html?lang=en>

<http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/orifil/media/mcom/single.html?id=10461>

<http://www.educa.ch/dyn/84759.asp>

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

United Kingdom

Holocaust Memorial Day

In the United Kingdom, Holocaust Memorial Day has taken place on or about 27 January each year since 2001, the date varying according to the needs of religious groups. The central focus for Holocaust Memorial Day remains the Holocaust, but it is also considered an opportunity to reflect on more recent atrocities that raise similar issues.

Official Commemorative Activities

The venue of the official event changes every year, moving to a different city. It has been held in Manchester, Belfast, London, Cardiff and Edinburgh. In 2007, it was in Newcastle and in 2008 in Liverpool.

Responsibility for organizing Holocaust Memorial Day lies with an independent charity, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, which was established in 2005.

The then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, attended and spoke at the main event in 2005 and 2006, while a minister, Ruth Kelly, spoke in 2007, with other ministers attending.

Numerous activities and events take place on the local level and in schools. In 2006, there were some 600 community-based events across the UK involving about 25,000 people.

Additional Good Practices

Special objectives have been defined in the United Kingdom. The content of the commemorative event is designed to meet these objectives: to commemorate and remember the victims of the Holocaust; the persecution and mass murder of six million Jews; to commemorate and remember the victims of persecution and murder that resulted from the targeting of other groups of people by Nazi race policies (including Sinti and Roma, black people; mentally and physically disabled people, lesbian and gay people and many of the Slavic peoples); to promote harmony between communities, including racial and religious harmony; to promote universal human rights; to promote equality and diversity and the elimination of discrimination by raising awareness of the causes and effects of racism and prejudice in society. This includes awareness of the impact of the Holocaust and other acts of systematic discrimination that leads to genocide.

Responsibility for organizing Holocaust Memorial Day lies with an independent charity, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. Established in 2005, the Trust's works in the field of national commemoration, education and community activity. The Trust produces resources, motivates groups and provides advice and support.

Every year there is a new theme to provide a different focus and maintain interest. In 2007, the theme was "The Dignity of Difference".

Each February, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust publishes a theme paper, runs a conference in March and publishes resources between July and December. These include an advice pack for community groups, specific resources for use in schools, a short film and resource sheets, among other things.

<http://www.hmd.org.uk/>

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

United States of America

Holocaust Memorial Day

The United States of America officially commemorate the victims of the Holocaust on *Yom Hashoah*, i.e., the beginning of the uprising of the Warsaw Ghetto according to the Jewish calendar. 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 Capitol of the United States, with high ranking government officials attending the event. In the past years, the president, the vice-president, members of the president's cabinet, supreme court judges, senators, and members of the House of Representatives have taken part in the ceremony.

Holocaust survivors are honoured during the event.

On the national level, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has the leading role in the event. On the state and local levels, Holocaust-related organizations and survivor groups play a major role. These include organizations working with the Association of Holocaust Organizations (AHO).

The federal commemorative event is promoted through direct postal notification and by e-mailing federal departments. Media outlets in the Washington, DC area are contacted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Various activities take place on the state and local level, with government officials participating.

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