

Proposal for a training course for EC officials on “Fundamental rights in European memory: Holocaust & totalitarian crimes”

This proposal concerns a training course for EC officials regarding fundamental rights drawing on European memory from the Holocaust and experiences from post Second World War European totalitarian regimes. The course could also be offered to staff in other EU institutions and Agencies. It includes workshops using up to date training and pedagogical materials. As an additional optional module, in partnership with key practitioners in the field, the course could also offer on-site visits at memorial institutions.

Background:

The memory of Europe’s history is a fundamental element of **European integration** and the development of a common **European identity**. Greater awareness in the EU of its past is a prerequisite for developing democratic consolidation and active citizenship.

Democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are essential tenets of Europe’s common identity and future. Innovative human rights training, which **acknowledges the diversity of historical experiences across Europe can contribute to a shared culture of remembrance and act as a key point of reference for contemporary fundamental rights protection.**

Objective:

The objective of the proposed course is to expand the awareness of EC officials in regard to the lessons for contemporary Europe provided by the Holocaust and the experiences of totalitarian regimes. More specifically, the course would aim at:

- facilitating a better understanding of how the Holocaust, genocide, totalitarian crimes and human rights are relevant for the EU and the work of EC officials;
- developing better awareness of the Holocaust's lessons for issues, such as intolerance, prejudice, racism, and human rights violations;
- expanding awareness of the impact of totalitarian regimes on fundamental rights;
- providing EC officials with practical tools for applying those lessons in their work;
- empowering EC officials to communicate the lessons from European memories when addressing fundamental rights issues;
- understanding the importance of ethical leadership, reaffirming and reinforcing the importance of individual choice and responsibility in a democratic society.

Overview:

The proposed curriculum was adapted from the FRA and Yad Vashem **Toolkit on the Holocaust and Human Rights Education** developed by a group of teachers from different EU Member States who have studied and taught the Holocaust and human rights education in the context of history, civics and national language curricula in schools. It also builds on results of the FRA's cooperation with the EC on issues of Holocaust and human rights education & training, and totalitarian crimes.

The course curricula consist of the following modules:

1. Introduction for EC officials
2. Holocaust and human rights
3. Memory, history and human rights
4. Hands-on: Integrating 'rights based policy making' in daily work
5. *Optional: practical learning in memorial sites*

1. INTRODUCTION FOR EC OFFICIALS

The introductory module provides an easy access to background information, pertinent vocabulary, and a chronological context to help teach the Holocaust, totalitarian crimes, European memory and human rights. In order to make the introduction meaningful participants will be facilitated to connect with their personal experiences and encounter primary resources.

EC officials will examine their own values from four key perspectives: perpetrator, victim, rescuer and bystander that defined human behaviour during Holocaust and totalitarian regimes. For example, a case study that follows the bureaucratic process used in the persecution and exploitation of Jewish individuals. For public administration officials this raises questions about knowledge of and responsibility for the implications of public policy when it impacts on fundamental rights.

2. HOLOCAUST AND HUMAN RIGHTS

This module will examine the historical role of individuals and institutions by looking at actions of ordinary people, in particular public officials, and not only political leaders. For example, the implementation of Nazi laws and procedures that removed Jewish children from public schools, stamped "Js" in passports and organised auctions and redistributions of property left behind by those forcibly deported to ghettos and camps required support from ordinary officials – teachers, police, civil servants, military personnel and judges.

Today, such officials influence access to and the quality of public services and they have an obligation to ensure that in carrying out their work fundamental rights are respected.

The module would be divided into separate historical chapters:

Chapter 1: Before 1933, stereotyping and prejudice

The activities in this chapter help understand the history of antisemitism, which did not begin with the Nazis rise to power, providing a concise overview of the political and socio-economic conditions in Germany that contributed to Hitler's rise to power.

Chapter 2: 1933-1939, indoctrination and discrimination

The activities in this chapter introduce the policies of state-sponsored indoctrination and discrimination in order to understand how these developed as steps toward genocide and what role policy makers and public officials played in the process. They include an overview of responses of other countries to these policies and examine how life for Jews and others became increasingly difficult in Nazi Germany.

Chapter 3: 1939-1942, persecution and segregation

The activities in this chapter focus on how the Nazi racial policies and the expansion of Germany led to discrimination and persecution of other groups in addition to the Jews (Roma, homosexuals, persons with disabilities, political prisoners, trade unionists, etc.).

Chapter 4: 1942-1945, genocide

The activities in this chapter trace the steps taken by the Nazis to carry out the "final solution" focusing on the roles of perpetrator, bystander and rescuer as well as the role of public administration in facilitating the process.

Chapter 5: Response to the Holocaust, resistance and rescue

The activities in this chapter examine forms of resistance, and where and how they were practiced. The chapter examines why some individuals and nations remained as bystanders, whereas others acted as rescuers.

Chapter 6: Human rights development in the aftermath of tragic events

The activities in this chapter examine what happened to perpetrators after the war and how the survivors made a new life for themselves. The development of human rights standards and instruments in the aftermath to the Second World War provides an insight into the human rights architecture in the EU today and how it was influenced by the experience of the Holocaust.

3. MEMORY, HISTORY AND HUMAN RIGHTS MODULE

This module will examine how interrelated, but different, historical memories across different EU countries are relevant to current fundamental rights concerns. The module will discuss current practices in different MSs on remembrance analysing selected media content on the portrayal of memory, history, totalitarian crimes. It will also look at how victims of fundamental rights violations can access justice today and examine how extremism can be addressed today in a democratic state analysing contemporary issues of racism, intolerance, prejudice, propaganda and possible responses.

4. HANDS-ON: INTEGRATING 'RIGHTS BASED POLICY MAKING' IN DAILY WORK

This module will consist of a series of practical workshops. It aims at empowering EC officials to mainstream the EU's core values in regard to fundamental rights in their work. Building on the knowledge and insights gained from the previous modules EC officials will be given an opportunity to develop their own practical tools relevant to their daily work focusing on:

- Respecting and protecting fundamental rights in their professional environment
- Raising awareness of the impact of their work on vulnerable groups
- Assessing risks in terms of fundamental rights
- Ensuring access to justice for victims of fundamental rights violations
- Addressing the needs and encouraging engagement with vulnerable groups

5. OPTIONAL: PRACTICAL LEARNING IN MEMORIAL SITES

This optional on-site learning module would take place at an original remembrance site or museum. It would facilitate a better understanding of the elements learned through modules 1-4. Some possible venues are listed below.

Belgium: Holocaust and Human Rights Museum, Mechelen;

Austria: Memorial Mauthausen, Mauthausen;

Netherlands: Anne Frank House, Amsterdam;

France: Memorial de la Shoah, Paris

Poland: Auschwitz, Oswiecim

Germany: Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial, Berlin

Estonia: Estonian Institute of Historical Memory, Tallinn

Lithuania: Foundation History of Totalitarian Regimes and their Victims Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, Vilnius

Warsaw Rising Museum, Warsaw