“Passing on the Remembrance of the Holocaust and prevention of crimes against humanity: a cross-cutting approach”

A) Introduction

Since the signing of the Treaty of London, the Council of Europe, which emerged from the ruins of the Second World War, has defined its fundamental objectives with a view to countering the totalitarian ideologies that dominated the first half of the 20th century and their corollaries: intolerance, separation, exclusion, hatred and discrimination, referring to the "preservation of human society and civilisation". The values which the Council of Europe stands for: democracy, human rights and the rule of law, are part of a preventive post-Holocaust effort which guarantees the construction of a European society striving to learn to respect the equal dignity of all, thanks to, among other things, intercultural dialogue.

Since 1954, the European Cultural Convention has highlighted the importance of teaching the history of all the member States in its European dimension, in order to foster mutual understanding.

It was in the framework of the "Learning and teaching about the history of Europe in the 20th century" project that the Holocaust theme found its place, following the first International Forum on the Holocaust, held in Stockholm in 1998.

In 2001, the Council of Europe introduced a Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity (Recommendation CM 2001(15)).

The Holocaust was unprecedented in human history. Hence knowledge of this major element of 20th century history is needed with a view to preventing the commission of crimes against humanity.

Until 2010, the project focused on the school environment, more specifically secondary education, taking a multidisciplinary approach.

B) From the "Teaching Remembrance – Education for the prevention of crimes against humanity" project to a cross-cutting programme: a new approach

a) At institutional level

- The new programme will develop its cross-cutting approach throughout the Organisation and in priority in the sectors for which Directorate General IV is responsible: Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth.
b) At thematic and educational level

Making the programme a cross-cutting one will facilitate discussions of the following questions:

- How to improve teaching about and on the basis of the Holocaust outside the classroom?
- Why give such prominence to passing on the remembrance of the Holocaust outside the school environment?
- What basic information should be given to the many and varied target groups to ensure that the passing on of the remembrance of the Holocaust is passed on?
- How to use the diachronic approach to create awareness of the importance of the culture and the human, spiritual and material heritage destroyed by the Holocaust? For instance, the Council of Europe's "Jewish Heritage" and "Roma Culture and Heritage" European Cultural Routes provide a starting point for developing positive knowledge of a European cultural heritage in great jeopardy.
- How to use the cross-cutting approach to help to prevent crimes against humanity, open up new angles for understanding the Holocaust and combat its trivialisation?
- Means of enriching and diversifying a wide range of teaching methods (using fiction films, survivors’ accounts, visits to authentic remembrance sites), making use of arts (music, literature, drama) which offer attractive ways of passing on knowledge and life skills.

In terms of target groups

Until 2010, the target groups were largely European teachers and trainers, and through them their pupils.

From 2011, the passing on of the remembrance of the Holocaust will be extended to other target groups in the fields of culture, heritage and youth. A few examples of new priority targets groups are:

- **Education**: primary and higher education;
- **Youth**: youth movements and associations;
- **Culture**: cultural players and administrators, networks of intellectuals and academics, etc;
- **Heritage**: tourist guides and cultural intermediaries at museums and memorials, particularly in the framework of the Council of Europe's European Cultural Routes on the themes of the Jewish heritage and Roma culture and heritage.
C) The new “Passing on the Remembrance of the Holocaust and prevention of crimes against humanity: a cross-cutting approach” programme

a) Within the Directorate General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport

➢ School education

On the basis of experience acquired at secondary education level, the aim will be to develop modules and teaching material for primary schools that will also be helpful for other users.

Training for secondary teachers will continue in 2011, taking account of what states can provide and the financial resources available.

In 2011, the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and Council of Europe will be organising an event to be attended by teachers and students at which comments will be collected about the specific results of Council of Europe and FRA projects so as to boost dialogue about the Holocaust, the prevention of crimes against humanity and human rights education.

➢ Out-of-school education (including visits to remembrance sites)

Out-of-school activities in the field of Holocaust teaching tend to be devoted mainly to visits to memorials and authentic remembrance sites, school trips, or participation in arts events.

The Council of Europe publication "European Pack for visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, guidelines for teachers and educators" (prepared in close co-operation with the Auschwitz Museum, the International Centre for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, and the Polish Education Ministry) is an excellent and thought-provoking instrument of use not only to teachers, but also to guides and cultural interpreters at memorials and to youth movement leaders.

Public presentations and training courses based on this publication will be scheduled in 2011.

Synergies will be sought for the promotion of teaching material, particularly with the Fundamental Rights Agency.

➢ Higher education

International discussion will be conducted about the current situation of Holocaust teaching in higher education.

It is an important question, for, while Holocaust education has been developed in compulsory and optional secondary curricula, teachers have often found themselves obliged to teach a subject for which they had received no university training. The situation is worse for all the teachers who were not, during their own secondary education, taught about the Holocaust.

Networked and co-operative efforts with a number of "pilot" European universities about "the Holocaust and the prevention of crimes against humanity" could be started to give thought to an overall strategy for the development of this kind of education.
Youth

The passing on of the remembrance of the Holocaust and the prevention of crimes against humanity go hand-in-hand with the plan to promote the fundamental values of the Council of Europe and to consider coexistence in plural societies through the promotion of intercultural dialogue.

- An event should be organised by the Council of Europe at which it is possible for the first time to pay a European tribute to the "Righteous among the Nations" and to involve European young people in this; thus the passing on of the Organisation's fundamental values as well as the concepts of refusal of indifference and the principles of solidarity would be highlighted.

- Informal education through youth movements, youth associations and specialised NGOs will be encouraged through the training of executives of these new target groups about the passing on of the remembrance of the Holocaust and the prevention of crimes against humanity, geared to the specific needs of these new carriers.

- Particular attention will be given to combating Holocaust denial and revisionism. Ad Hoc training for teachers could be introduced in dealing with the attitudes of vulnerable teenagers in search of their identity and likely to be influenced by exclusion demagoguery or fascinated by the horrors of the Holocaust.

- Thought will have to be given to the use of the new means of communication which have a strong impact on the younger generations, especially for networking and for passing on the message through "multipliers". This will make the Council of Europe’s activities on this subject directed at young people more visible.

Culture

- In the framework of the cross-cutting programme, the remembrance of the Holocaust will be passed on through the artistic carriers already mentioned (music, drama, painting...), but a particular focus will be on reviving the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Jews and the Roma which was destroyed by the Holocaust. For example, the life of the Jewish and Roma communities prior to Nazism is a fundamental subject which should be included so that not only is the memory of persecution and annihilation passed on, but also the contribution that these communities made to the countries in which they were living is highlighted.

- This could involve organising, in co-operation with the European cultural routes, training workshops for cultural holiday organisers, tourist guides, cultural interpreters and teachers wishing to extend their knowledge of how travel can be used to pass on the remembrance of the Holocaust.
It will be possible to consider planning a European cultural route linking Holocaust and Roma genocide (Samudaripen) remembrance sites, in the context of co-operation with research scientists and institutions involved in the network established in the framework of the International Task Force for the Remembrance of the Holocaust (ITF).

European Heritage Days (with European Union support) could be interested in this programme.

As far as possible, the cross-cutting programme will explore possible ways of highlighting the cultural heritage of the Romani and Yiddish languages (the latter virtually disappeared during the Holocaust) through activities related to the passing on of the remembrance of the Holocaust, for instance in co-operation with the European Centre for Modern Languages in Graz.

In the context of the planned setting up of a European Roma academic network (a joint project between the European Union and the Council of Europe), real synergies could be created to raise awareness in the Roma community of its own history and culture (including the Roma genocide), and to highlight the contribution the Roma have made to European culture through their intellectuals and academics, in synergy with the Roma cultural route and higher education.

b) International co-operation

- Externally, apart from the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the International Task Force for Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research (ITF), new partnerships with institutional and non-governmental players in the fields of culture, heritage and youth will need to be established in the years ahead;

- Joint actions will be implemented as regards specific projects with the other international organisations also conducting programmes in this connection, viz.:

  - European Union: contributing the know-how and expertise of the Council of Europe and participating in certain activities relating to the preservation and promotion of remembrance (to include activities under the programme “Europe for Citizens”) and, more specifically, town twinnings;

  - Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA): co-operating in an evaluation scheduled in 2012 of the activities of the FRA and the Council of Europe relating to the Holocaust and human rights conducted over the past 4 years. The evaluation is being performed in order to reinforce the network of disseminators and set up further groups involved with the Holocaust and human rights, with special emphasis on teachers and young people;
- Unesco and the United Nations: creating a mutual Internet link to publicise the programme on “Holocaust remembrance and prevention of crimes against humanity” and the publications;
- OSCE/ODHIR: updating the website www.romagenocide.org which has been designed jointly by the Council of Europe and that organisation.

- Museums and memorials or organisations involved in the transmission of Holocaust remembrance will be, among other functions, partners in the new cross-cutting programme: Yad Vashem, Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, Topography of Terror, Museum of the Ghetto Fighters, Yad Layeled, Anne Frank House, Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma, Museum of Romany Culture, Jasenovac Memorial…
Appendix

2011-2013 between the Council of Europe and the Memorial de la Shoah

As part of the furtherance of the cooperation between the Memorial de la Shoah and the Council of Europe concerning transmission of Holocaust remembrance and prevention of crimes against humanity, guidelines for extending these activities across several remits of the Council of Europe are presented here.

The Shoah Memorial is involved as a consultant for the implementation of certain activities, placing its resources and expertise at the disposal of the Council of Europe.

The plan of action, corresponding to various areas of activity of Council of Europe Directorate General IV, has three main thrusts:

A. TRAINING COURSES AND AWARENESS-RAISING PROGRAMMES

These will be conducted according to 3 distinct principles and adapted to various audiences, needs and activities:

a) An annual seminar at the Shoah Memorial in Paris for teacher trainers and teachers from European Cultural Convention signatory states, with goals of acquiring scientific knowledge, applying educational methods and pooling European experiences.

These courses will be conducted in French or in English, possibly in other languages, under the arrangements described below.

The courses will comprise plenary sessions with subject matter such as Europe’s Jews before the Second World War; the Shoah, between history and memory; from anti-Judaism to anti-Semitism; Nazi ideology; the stages in the destruction of Europe’s Jews; the victims of Nazism: a tentative typology of Nazi policies of repression; persecutions of Roma during the Second World War; genocides and crimes against humanity; legal analyses, history of the 20th century genocides; comparative approaches to genocides; negationism.

In the working groups, where the educational aspect will have pride of place, the following will be addressed inter alia: teaching at memorial sites, “Auschwitz concentration camp: history and representations”; photos, archival and testimonial documents as educational tools; the Shoah through film (supplemented as appropriate by a session during one of the workshop evenings); the Shoah in literature; philosophy by the test of the Shoah: proposals and activation concerning the theme of extreme violence and its interpretations; the Nazi crime in Eastern Europe: history and traces.

Following the working Meeting in Paris on 29 October 2010.

www.coe.int/holocaust
The example of Babi Yar; photos, works of art, archival and testimonial documents as educational tools; as the case may be, Teaching the Shoah to young children; the survivor’s testimony in class; implications of teaching the Shoah; teaching the Shoah in multicultural classes; teaching the Shoah for pupils attracted by messages of neo-Nazi violence; the tangible and intangible Jewish heritage in Paris, before, during and after the Shoah.

The courses will also comprise, for example, a tour of the Shoah Memorial and a presentation of its resources; a visit to the temporary exhibition at the Shoah Memorial, a visit to the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme, a visit to the Drancy centre for history and documentation, a visit to the documentation centre of FNASAT Gens du Voyage (French federation of associations actively supporting Gypsies and Travellers), and the personal testimony of a survivor.

On each occasion, one session of the workshops will be devoted to persecutions of Roma.

The publications on these subjects, particularly those of the Shoah Memorial and the Council of Europe, will be presented to the participants.

b) 2 annual seminars (subject to availability of budgets) in different member states, chiefly those in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans, the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey, for representative of formal and informal education, targeting associations and professions to which the theme is of importance in historical and ethical terms, especially:

- representatives and members of youth organisations,
- instructors of schools of journalism and media professionals,
- tourist guides and cultural mediators, etc.

This will be done in co-operation, where relevant, with the heads of the Council of Europe offices in the countries concerned.

The seminars may be held in two phases, one part in the country concerned and another on the premises of the Shoah Memorial.

B. SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL EVENTS

- Participation in the staging of an annual colloquy on a current issue in the transmission of remembrance of the Shoah, with high-level participants from the European Cultural Convention signatory countries;

- Presentation of major exhibitions at the Council of Europe to mark the occasion of 27 January. Each year the Shoah Memorial offers two or three major new exhibitions. Some of these could be presented in the Council of Europe buildings.

- Series of annual conferences/lectures (projection with debate, etc.) or video conferences organised in partnership with the Council of Europe information offices.
C. TEACHING MATERIAL AND PUBLICATIONS

- Participation in the production of teaching material on the Shoah, directed at teachers. This kit, of European scope, will contain both paper and multimedia information carriers, and should include parts adapted to the recipient countries.

- Participation in creating an information pack on the Shoah, intended for the voluntary sector, providing interchangeable modules according to the different audiences (youth organisations, anti-racist NGOs, etc.)

- Establishment of mutual links on the Internet portals www.mémorialdelashoah.org and www.grenierdesarah.org of the Shoah Memorial and those of the Council of Europe www.coe.int/holocaust and www.romagenocide.org affording access to the various educational products.

- Circulation and adaptation in several languages of the Shoah Memorial Auschwitz guide for teachers and of the “European Pack for visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum: guidelines for teachers and educators” issued by the Council of Europe.

- Organisation of researchers’ and educators’ meetings on innovative topics with regard to teaching the Shoah, preventing crimes against humanity and fighting racism and anti-Semitism.