
Press Release

IHRA Handover



8 March 2016

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Berlin

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On 8 March 2016, Romania assumed the Chairmanship of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

The outgoing Chair Szabolcs Takács of Hungary handed over the Chairmanship to Ambassador Mihnea Constantinescu of Romania.

“The Holocaust (Shoah) fundamentally challenged the foundations of civilization.

The unprecedented character of the Holocaust will always hold universal meaning.”

Stockholm Declaration, 2000

The handover ceremony, which was attended by the diplomatic corps and the media, took place at the Embassy of Romania in Berlin. The event was opened by H.E. Mr. Emil Hurezeanu, Ambassador of Romania to the Federal Republic of Germany. Following the speeches by State Secretary Takács and Ambassador Constantinescu, Mr. Laurențiu-Mihai Ștefan, presidential advisor, addressed the audience on behalf of the President of Romania, H.E Mr. Klaus Werner Iohannis.

The key achievement of the Hungarian Chairmanship in 2015 was having a specific reference to the Holocaust included in the recitals of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), thereby safeguarding the future of Holocaust research. The Hungarian Chairmanship undertook outreach in Ukraine and the Vatican and the IHRA was joined by two new observer countries in 2015: Australia and Monaco. The Hungarian Chairmanship also sought to continue to increase cooperation between the expert and political level and strongly supported and encouraged more content-focused, project-based activities within the IHRA.

Projects carried out in 2015 include a unique [overview](#) of international organizations working on historical and contemporary issues connected to the genocide of the Roma and [an annotated bibliography](#) on the genocide of the Roma, an IHRA conference entitled [“The Holocaust in Public Discourse. Use and Abuse”](#) and a [professional development seminar](#) for educators carried out in the Republic of Moldova together with the national Ministry of Education.

March 2016 will also see the launch of the [second publication](#) in the IHRA series, “Rescuers, Perpetrators, or Bystanders? The Neutral Countries and the Shoah” from the Metropol Verlag.

The Romanian Chairmanship has outlined a number of priorities for its chairmanship year, including working with the media and social media, the consolidation of Holocaust education, and the promotion of academic research.

The Romanian Chairmanship also plan to host a conference on 22 May 2016 on 'Combating Antisemitism, Holocaust Denial, extremism and racism' on media and social media prior to the IHRA Plenary meetings. The conference is being organized in cooperation with the Council of Europe.

The handover ceremony was closed with Erwin Schulhoff's piece 'String Quartet' performed by the Furiant Quartet. The ceremony was followed by the opening of an exhibition on 'The Iasi Pogrom' as in 2016 Romania marks the 75th anniversary of this episode in its national history.

Romania became a member of IHRA in 2004. In 2003 the Romanian authorities set up the 'Elie Wiesel International Commission for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania' which released its report in 2004.

More information about Holocaust education, research and remembrance in Romania can be found on the IHRA [website](#).

The Romanian Chairmanship will host two IHRA Plenary meetings during the course of the year, in Bucharest in May and in Iasi in November. More details about the events organized during the Romanian IHRA Chairmanship can be found [here](#).

[#IHRANDOVER](#)

For images and more information, please contact:

Laura Robertson
lrobertson@holocaustremembrance.com

Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust

We, High Representatives of Governments at the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, declare that:

- 1. The Holocaust (Shoah) fundamentally** challenged the foundations of civilization. The unprecedented character of the Holocaust will always hold universal meaning. After half a century, it remains an event close enough in time that survivors can still bear witness to the horrors that engulfed the Jewish people. The terrible suffering of the many millions of other victims of the Nazis has left an indelible scar across Europe as well.
- 2. The magnitude of the Holocaust,** planned and carried out by the Nazis, must be forever seared in our collective memory. The selfless sacrifices of those who defied the Nazis, and sometimes gave their own lives to protect or rescue the Holocaust's victims, must also be inscribed in our hearts. The depths of that horror, and the heights of their heroism, can be touchstones in our understanding of the human capacity for evil and for good.
- 3. With humanity still scarred** by genocide, ethnic cleansing, racism, antisemitism and xenophobia, the international community shares a solemn responsibility to fight those evils. Together we must uphold the terrible truth of the Holocaust against those who deny it. We must strengthen the moral commitment of our peoples, and the political commitment of our governments, to ensure that future generations can understand the causes of the Holocaust and reflect upon its consequences.
- 4. We pledge to strengthen** our efforts to promote education, remembrance and research about the Holocaust, both in those of our countries that have already done much and those that choose to join this effort.
- 5. We share a commitment** to encourage the study of the Holocaust in all its dimensions. We will promote education about the Holocaust in our schools and universities, in our communities and encourage it in other institutions.
- 6. We share a commitment** to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and to honour those who stood against it. We will encourage appropriate forms of Holocaust remembrance, including an annual Day of Holocaust Remembrance, in our countries.
- 7. We share a commitment** to throw light on the still obscured shadows of the Holocaust. We will take all necessary steps to facilitate the opening of archives in order to ensure that all documents bearing on the Holocaust are available to researchers.
- 8. It is appropriate** that this, the first major international conference of the new millenium, declares its commitment to plant the seeds of a better future amidst the soil of a bitter past. We empathize with the victims' suffering and draw inspiration from their struggle. Our commitment must be to remember the victims who perished, respect the survivors still with us, and reaffirm humanity's common aspiration for mutual understanding and justice.

About IHRA

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an intergovernmental body whose purpose is to place political and social leaders' support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance and research both nationally and internationally.

IHRA (formerly the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, or ITF) was initiated in 1998 by former Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson. Persson decided to establish an international organization that would expand Holocaust education worldwide, and asked then President Bill Clinton and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair to join him in this effort. Persson also developed the idea of an international forum of governments interested in discussing Holocaust education, which took place in Stockholm between 27-29 January 2000. The Forum was attended by the representatives of 46 governments including; 23 Heads of State or Prime Ministers and 14 Deputy Prime Ministers or Ministers. The Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust was the outcome of the Forum's deliberations and is the foundation of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

IHRA currently has 31 member countries, ten observer countries and seven Permanent International Partners. Members must be committed to the Stockholm Declaration and to the implementation of national policies and programs in support of Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. The national government of each member country appoints and sends a delegation

to IHRA meetings that is composed of both government representatives and national experts, providing a unique link between the two levels.

In addition to the Academic, Education, Memorials and Museums, and Communication Working Groups, specialized committees have been established to address antisemitism and Holocaust denial, the genocide of the Roma, and comparative approaches to genocide studies. The IHRA is also in the process of implementing a Multi-Year Work Plan that focuses on killing sites, access to archives, educational research, and Holocaust Memorial Days.

One of IHRA's key roles is to contribute to the funding of relevant projects through its grant strategy. The purpose of the Grant Programme is to foster international dialogue and the exchange of expertise, increase government involvement in program creation, and target projects with strong multilateral elements in order to create sustainable structures for Holocaust education, remembrance, and research.

IHRA | International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance

Lindenstraße 20-25 | 10969 Berlin | Germany

Tel +49 (0)30 2639 666 - 11 | Fax +49 (0)30 2639 666 - 49

info@holocaustremembrance.com

www.holocaustremembrance.com

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