



24 November 2020

ODIHR / UNESCO: Addressing Anti-Semitism in Schools: Training Curricula – Publication Launch and Discussion

Video message, IHRA Chair Ambassador Michaela Küchler

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

In January of this year, Edith Bruck – an Italian author, film director and Holocaust survivor of Hungarian descent – addressed 35 Ministers and other high-governmental representatives of IHRA Member Countries. When she finished, the room was filled with a heavy, almost tangible silence.

In her address, Ms. Bruck explained why she still visits schools to speak about her suffering, the loss of loved ones, the horrors she endured in different concentration and death camps, and on death marches.

She told the Ministers how she is unable to sleep the night before she talks to students. And she told them that she is increasingly afraid because of the incidents of hate, antisemitism and racism she sees erupting all over Europe and beyond.

She is afraid that it can happen again.

Edith Bruck believes that it is imperative to educate the young, to give them the tools to think critically. To explain the value of democratic institutions, of minority protection and of human rights.

As Chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, I share this belief. That is why I wholeheartedly commend ODIHR and UNESCO for the publication of “Training Curricula – Addressing Anti-Semitism in Schools”.

The IHRA, ODIHR and UNESCO are partners on many levels. That is why I particularly welcome this publication as a practical follow-up to the guidelines for policy-makers ODIHR and UNESCO published in 2018. They are one of three guidelines within the “Words into Action” program initiated and funded by Germany and supported by IHRA experts.



Let me take this opportunity to express my gratitude to IHRA experts like Ruth-Anne Lenga, who is also speaking on this panel, Nevena Bajalica, Werner Dreier, Mark Weitzman and Robert Williams who helped in many ways with the Words into Action program.

The Training Curricula, which is being launched today, complement the IHRA's Recommendations for Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust, adopted in December 2019.

To combat antisemitism, as well as anti-Roma and other discrimination, guidelines for decision-makers are needed, but equally needed is concrete support for practitioners and teachers.

This is exactly what this new publication aims for.

But we also need to be able to identify these phenomena when we come across them.

Therefore, I encourage the use of the IHRA's working definition of antisemitism, but also of the newly adopted working definition of antigypsyism/anti-Roma discrimination, as instruments to educate and to spark debate.

We must stand together to fight antisemitism, anti-Roma discrimination and all other forms of racism. We must speak out and we must empower others to do so.

And it is education that must form the cornerstone of our efforts.

Thank you very much for undertaking this task.