



**CONFERENCE ON HOLOCAUST DISTORTION AND EDUCATION:
CURRENT AND EMERGING CHALLENGES
NATIONAL MEASURES IN PLACE**

28-29 October 2024

Bucharest, Romania

The current climate calls for a fresh look at Holocaust education, including the potential impacts of artificial intelligence (AI) in this space and how to use traditional education in all its forms (classrooms, museums, memorials, public art), as well as current day platforms, to advance public knowledge of the Holocaust and confront Holocaust distortion.

The conference will showcase Romania's leadership on Holocaust education for countries in Eastern and Central Europe, recognizing education's key role in confronting Holocaust denial and distortion and other forms of antisemitism.

Featuring experts, educators and officials, the conference would engage on the realities of teaching the Holocaust today with emphasis on lessons learned and address how the October 7th Hamas attacks and the ensuing Israel-Hamas war affect Holocaust education. It seeks to raise awareness of the capacities of technologies and explore competing and conflicting historical narratives.

The conference could consider not only best practices in classrooms and public institutions, including museums, but also whether AI can also be used as an educative tool to counter Holocaust denial and distortion. It will also examine the success (and failure) of national efforts to address current challenges and combat anti-Semitism.

Logistics: Bucharest, Romania on October 28-29, 2024.

Cosponsors: Romania, the United States, with support from the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), in consultation with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

Agenda

Moderator of the event: Bogdan Mazuru, Special Envoy of the Romanian Government on promoting memorial policies, combatting Anti-Semitism and xenophobia

October 28, 2024

19.00 – 21.00

OPENING DINNER/ RECEPTION

Welcome remarks: Mihai Ghigi, Head of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister of Romania

Silviu Vexler, MP, President of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania

Kathleen Kavalec, U.S. Ambassador to Romania

October 29, 2024

08.30-09.00

REGISTRATION

09.00-09.45

OPENING SESSION

Moderator: Bogdan Mazuru, Special Envoy of the Romanian Government on promoting memorial policies, combatting Anti-Semitism and xenophobia

Speakers:

Luminița Odobescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania

Silviu Vexler, MP, President of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Romania

Ellen Germain, U.S. Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues

Tea Jaliashvili, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights First Deputy Director/Director's Alternate

Rabbi Andrew Baker, Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism

Lord Eric Pickles, IHRA Chairmanship, UK Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues

09.45 – 10.00

COFFEE BREAK

10.00-11.30

SESSION I

HOLOCAUST DENIAL AND DISTORTION – NEW CHALLENGES

Although the rise of Anti-Semitism has been constant in the recent years against the background of the situation in the Middle East since the Hamas attacks against Israel in October 2023 and the ensuing Israel-

Hamas war we have witnessed an unprecedented wave of threats and incidents against members of Jewish community worldwide, both online and offline. The discussion would assess emerging technologies such as AI and their current impact and possible positive role in countering Holocaust distortion and denial. Areas of examination: how to counter misuse of AI and what options exist to use AI for good, especially as a potential tool to reach wider audiences. Additionally, the session could address restrictions on research and efforts in some countries to rehabilitate fascist-era leaders who were complicit in the crimes of the Holocaust as well as look at how the Holocaust has been weaponized following the Hamas terrorist attacks in October 2023 and the ensuing Israel-Hamas war.

Moderator: Ellen Germain, U.S. Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues

Speakers: Alexandru Florian, the "Elie Wiesel" National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania

Jason Steinhauer, Global Fellow at The Wilson Center;
Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute

Aleksandra Gliszczyńska-Grabias, Assistant Professor at the
Institute of Law Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences

Jordana Cutler, Public Policy Director, Israel & the Jewish
Diaspora at Meta

11.30-11.45

COFFEE BREAK

11.45-13.15

SESSION II

ADVANCING HOLOCAUST EDUCATION IN CHALLENGING TIMES

Designed to connect educators with policy makers, the session could assess advances in educational curricula and the training of teachers, civil servants, as well as public commemoration ceremonies and programs, national legislation, and/or other initiatives by Holocaust museums and institutions. It should offer recommendations to overcome existing challenges to education about the Holocaust, best practice examples, relevant survey data on knowledge, and where available, critical assessments of the effectiveness of these efforts. This session would showcase Romania's work in public education and the contributions by others, including institutions like the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and others, as well as IHRA resources. The session would seek to spotlight civil society efforts to address challenges when governmental efforts are unable to meet all the needs (i.e., work of Centropa, TOLI). This session could also provide an opportunity for policy makers to hear directly from educators on their experiences considering recent events in Middle East. The role of civil society—and hearing from regional NGOs in this field—would be a critical aspect of the discussion.

This will be followed by audience questions.

Moderator: Bogdan Mazuru, Special Envoy of the Romanian Government on promoting memorial policies, combatting Anti-Semitism and xenophobia

Speakers: Ligia Deca, Minister of Education of Romania
Jennifer Ciardelli, director, Initiative on the Holocaust and Professional Leadership division, The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
Karel Fracapane, Programme Specialist, Global Citizenship and Peace Education section, UNESCO
Alex Maws, Head of Education and Heritage at The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) & a member of IHRA's Education Working Group

13.15 - 14.30

LUNCH (at location venue)

14.30 – 16.00

SESSION III

**NATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND BEST PRACTICES
– EXCHANGE OF VIEWS**

The discussion will address how states have undertaken to address the soaring increase in anti-Semitic incidents since 7 October 2023, specifically with regard to addressing Holocaust distortion and comparisons, and any changes in Holocaust education or commemoration. It will also examine how the public, private and civil society sectors can work together to improve Holocaust education and counter Holocaust distortion and denial and how states could better link international instruments to national efforts in the field.

This will be followed by audience questions.

Moderator: Bogdan Mazuru, Special Envoy of the Romanian Government on promoting memorial policies, combatting Anti-Semitism and xenophobia

Speakers: Dragoş Hotea, Secretary of State, coordinator of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for monitoring the implementation of the 2024-2027 National Strategy for preventing and combating Anti-Semitism, xenophobia, radicalisation and hate speech
Kishan Manocha, Head of Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Department, ODIHR
Anatoly Podolsky, Director of The Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies

Vitalie Rusu, Special Envoy for Combating Antisemitism,
Republic of Moldova

Goran Sadikarijo, Director of the North Macedonia Holocaust
Museum and Memorial

16.00 – 16.10

SUMMARY SESSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final session will summarize the earlier discussions and give participants an opportunity to propose new measures and next steps that may be taken by participating States, OSCE/ODIHR, IHRA, and others.

Speaker:

Bogdan Mazuru, Special Envoy of the Romanian
Government on promoting memorial policies, combatting
Anti-Semitism and xenophobia