

**January 2022**

About one million Jews were assassinated at Auschwitz-Birkenau. The largest Nazi extermination camp was liberated by the Soviet Army on 27 January 1945. In a 1995 resolution, the European Parliament proposed 27 January be marked across the EU as European Holocaust Remembrance Day. Not all Member States have chosen this date, but the EP solemnly commemorates Holocaust victims every year on that date. Margot Friedländer, a Holocaust survivor from Germany, will address the Parliament during its solemn session on that date this year. The following publications from the European Parliamentary Research Service offer background information and analysis.

Jewish art collections – Nazi looting

Briefing by Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, EPRS, January 2022

When the Nazis grabbed power in Germany, they introduced racist and antisemitic laws. They also had clear ideas about what art is, and felt authorised to destroy what they qualified as degenerate and Jewish culture. On these grounds they allowed themselves to seize Jewish property, forbid Jews from running art galleries, push them out of their countries to exile, and send them to camps and their death. Looted valuable classical artworks were destined for existing or planned museums, and prominent Nazis' private collections. After the war, the few survivors or their heirs should have get their property back. The process is still continuing, as many works of art were hidden in unknown places, or have changed hands many times, making research on their provenance very difficult. However, these complex legal issues should not let us forget that the Holocaust was the source of these painful stories, and the huge contribution of Jewish art collectors to thriving European culture.

The European Union and Holocaust remembrance

Briefing by Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass and Philippe Perchoc, EPRS, January 2020

The Holocaust was the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and mass murder of Jews, whom the Nazi regime and its collaborators sought to annihilate along with other persecuted groups, such as Roma and Sinti. The expropriation, state-sponsored discrimination and persecution of the Jews by the Nazi regime began in 1933, followed by pogroms and their mass incarceration in concentration camps. In the European Union, numerous programmes seek to preserve the memory of these tragic events in the history of the continent.

Yiddish language and culture and its post-Holocaust fate in Europe

Briefing by Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, EPRS, January 2022

Yiddish is a language once spoken by Jews in an area spreading from Alsace to the Urals, influenced by and influencing local languages and cultures. It neared extinction in the 20th century when it lost the majority of its speakers, mostly – but not only – through the Holocaust. Yiddish is part of European folk culture, contributing to the works of great writers and musicians and broadening European culture more generally. Successive waves of Jewish migration provoked by poverty, persecution, pogroms, Stalinism and Nazism, war and all forms of antisemitism, have drastically reduced the Jewish population across Europe and, with it, the number of Yiddish speakers.

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Holocaust education: 'Never, never be a bystander'

Briefing by Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, EPRS, January 2021

27 January, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, commemorates the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp in 1945. One focus of the 2021 annual day of commemoration devoted to Holocaust education was the responsibility borne by those who remain indifferent in the face of intolerance and discrimination. This places the Holocaust in the context of human rights, broadening Holocaust education to issues of tolerance, respect for human dignity, and democracy.

Further reading

Holocaust denial in criminal law: Legal frameworks in selected EU Member States

Briefing by Piotr Bąkowski, EPRS, January 2022

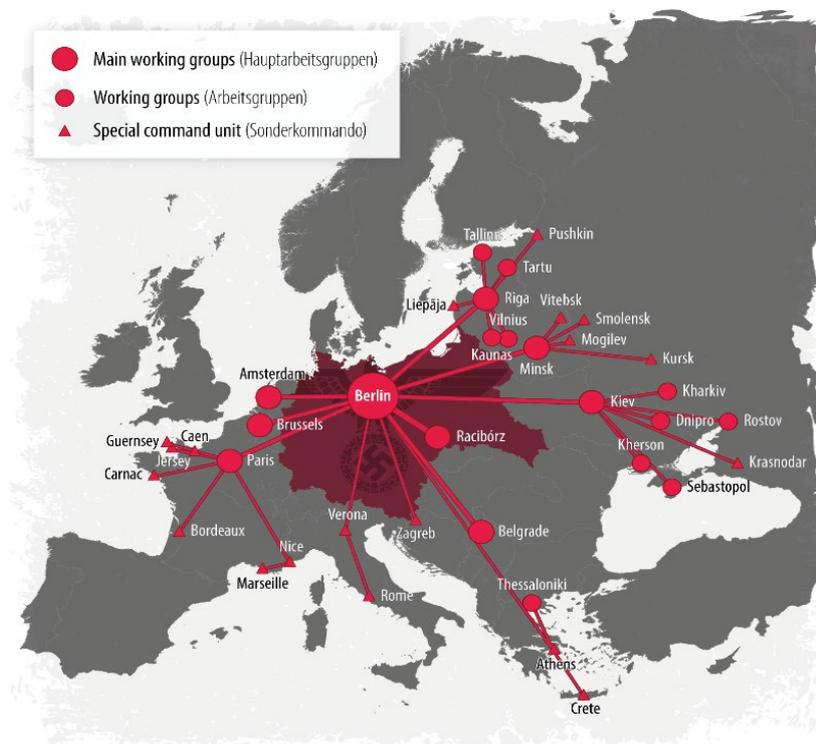
Jewish communities in the European Union

Supporting Holocaust survivors

'At a glance' note by Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, and Philippe Perchoc, EPRS, January 2019

EPRS graphics

Map showing the activities of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg in occupied Europe



Data source: [US Holocaust Memorial Museum](#), courtesy of Yad Vashem Photo Archives.

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