

# NEWSLETTER



The International Commission  
for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania

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## Citizenship Initiative "The living flower of the nation"

Commemorating the 28th anniversary of the restoration of Lithuania's Independence – the 11th of March, 1990 - and celebrating the 100th anniversary of the restoration of Lithuanian statehood this year - Lithuanian educational institutions have joined the citizenship initiative "The living flower of the nation".

This year, 284 educational institutions participated in the citizenship initiative.

The national citizenship initiative is initiated by the International Commission together with Kastytis Ramanauskas kindergarten from Panevėžys, the authors of this idea.



Viewis Art School

## Teachers from all over Lithuania attended a seminar on the history of occupations

On the 27-28th of March, a seminar "Understanding and presentation of the history on occupations" was held in Kedainiai Multicultural Centre for teachers, educationalists and museum workers.

Participants of the two-day seminar listened to lectures by the International Commission's historians Algirdas Jakubčionis and Arūnas Bubnys. A coordinator of educational programs Ingrida Vilkienė presented visual materials to the teachers, the director of the Kedainiai regional museum Rimantas Žirgulis presented the international projects of the museum that revealed the themes of the Nazi and Soviet occupations.



Audronė Pečiulytė, the head of the multicultural centre, shared her experience on an international project implemented, telling about different attitudes of three generations of Lithuanian people towards Soviet occupation. When the director of the International Commission Ronaldas Račinskas was moderating the talk on a discussion of occupation topics with students, the teachers vividly shared their experiences and insights.

## The traditional song festival "Songs from the exile" reminisced about the loss of the Lithuanian people during deportations to Siberia and during the partisan war

On the 22nd of March, the Culture Centre in Varėna hosted a traditional event - the national song festival "Songs from the exile". The target of the event is to creatively and courageously commemorate the year of the partisan leader Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas and the largest mass deportation operation of the Baltic population "Priboi" ("The beat of the waves"), which took place on the 25-28th of March, 1949.

A traditional event already - the song festival "Songs from the exile"- attracts more and more representatives from all over Lithuania. This year it has already been held for the fifth time. More than 300 participants from 22 schools participated in the festival. At the festival the students performed authentic songs, sung by partisans and exiles. Many of the old songs sounded fresh with artistic compositions and arrangements, developed namely for the event.



## At the seminar "Presentation of the history of occupations in schools" teachers went deeper into important historical questions



On the 5th of April, Pagėgiai Algimantas Mackus Gymnasium hosted a seminar for teachers on the presentation of the history of occupations in the education process.

The participants of the seminar were introduced to the educational program, implemented by the International Commission on the totalitarian regimes, the development of prevention of crimes against humanity and tolerance. The teachers were presented with methodological recommendations "Why, what and how to teach about the Holocaust?", recommendations and slideshows about the first and second Soviet occupations. The presentation of historian Artūras Svarauskas "Lithuanian Society in the period of the crisis and Soviet occupation 1939-1941" raised many questions among teachers: about the mood of the Lithuanian society in 1939, about the attitude towards the first Soviet occupation and the upcoming war in Lithuania.

## The Yiddish literature performances festival "Through the Pages of the Jewish Literature"

The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania initiated a project "Once you open the pages of the Jewish literature" in order to better acquaint Lithuanian students with Yiddish literature and Jewish culture.

The project has been implemented in Lithuania within the years of 2017-2018. During this time, school communities got acquainted with the creative works of Litvaks, who wrote in Yiddish.

While reading these works, teachers and students not just learned about the legacy of a very rich Yiddish literature, which was wantonly forgotten in Lithuania, but also understood more about the life, traditions, peculiarities of thinking as well as the way of life of Lithuanian Jews. The Tolerance Centres of six towns of Lithuania have staged performances on these creative works.

The closing event of the project "Once you open the pages of the Jewish literature" took place on April 11, 2018 – on the eve of the day of YomHashoah. Six performances, staged by students, represented the six million of the Holocaust victims. The organizers of the project sought to recover from the wanton oblivion, at least in our memory, the Jewish communities, having lived in the settlements and towns of Lithuania, who projected the Lithuanian state and believed it being their home and their future. The performances, arranged by the students, are like six small fragments of a broken mirror, which reflect glimpses of the world in the nonentity, that urge us to think and remind us of the loss of the state of Lithuania during the Holocaust.

The project "Once you open the pages of the Jewish literature" was implemented by the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania. It was partially supported by the Good Will Foundation.



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