EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

⚠ *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)*

PROJECT	
Participant:	5 - The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania – The International Commission
PIC number:	938247342
Project name and acronym:	Combating Holocaust Denial and Distortion through Active Citizenship, Remembrance and Education — CARE

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	9
Event name:	Learning from the Past - Acting for the Future: Teaching the Holocaust through the Lens of Women's Resistance and Human Rights
Type:	conference
In situ/online:	in-situ
Location:	Lithuania, Vilnius
Date(s):	24-26 April 2026
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.komisija.lt/en/from-april-24-to-26-2026-an-international-seminar-was-held-in-vilnius-attended-by-teachers-from-15-countries/
Participants	
Female:	30
Male:	6
Non-binary:	0
From country 1 [Croatia]:	2
From country 2 [Georgia]:	2
From country 3 [Greece]:	2
From country 4 [Hungary]:	2
From country 5 [Kosovo]:	2
From country 6 [Italy]:	3
From country 7 [Lithuania]:	5

From country 8 [North Macedonia]:	3		
From country 9 [Poland]:	2		
From country 10 [Portugal]:	1		
From country 11 [Romania]:	6		
From country 12 [Serbia]:	2		
From country 13 [Slovakia]:	1		
From country 14 [Spain]:	1		
From country 15 [U.S.A.]:	2		
Total number of participants:	36	From total number of countries:	15

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

This event conference was organised in the framework of the project *Combating Holocaust Denial and Distortion through Active Citizenship, Remembrance and Education (CARE)*, coordinated by the Intercultural Institute Timisoara (Romania), in partnership with The Jewish Museum of Greece, Fondazione CDEC (Italy), Documenta (Croatia), The Secretariat of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, the Big Picture Association (Poland) and Terraforming (Serbia), co-funded by the European Commission through CERV programme.

The event was implemented with assistance from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, supported by the German Federal Ministry of Finance and co-funded by TOLI – The Olga Lengyel Institute for Holocaust Studies and Human Rights.

The 3-day conference *Learning from the Past - Acting for the Future: Teaching the Holocaust through the Lens of Women's Resistance and Human Rights* was held in Vilnius from 24th to 26th April 2026.

The event aimed to strengthen European educators' capacity to teach about the Holocaust in ways that foreground women's experiences, resistance, rescue, and moral courage, while equipping them with pedagogical tools to counter antisemitism and to connect historical learning to human rights, human dignity, and civic responsibility today.

The objectives of the program were to:

- Examine the Holocaust in Lithuania and the wider region, with attention to local history, collaboration, resistance, rescue, and postwar memory;
- Explore women's experiences during the Holocaust as resisters and rescuers;
- Engage with the history and memorialization of mass murder sites through the lens of human rights and human dignity;
- Reflect on the role of educators in countering antisemitism, Holocaust distortion, and denial in contemporary societies;
- Strengthen pedagogical approaches to teaching about resistance, moral choices, and civic responsibility;
- Foster transnational exchange among educators and consolidate a shared professional framework grounded in an interdisciplinary methodology combining Holocaust education, human rights education and intercultural education.

The conference methodology combined expert lectures, guided visits to Holocaust sites and memorials, interactive workshops, participant-led project presentations, and structured reflection. It was grounded in an interdisciplinary approach integrating Holocaust education, human rights education, and intercultural education. The design also prioritized dialogue and exchange among educators from different countries, strengthening a transnational community of practice and serving as a starting point for future cooperation projects and classroom collaborations among participants.

This conference gathered 36 educators from 15 countries: Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kosovo, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain and the U.S.A.

Over the course of the program, participants explored innovative approaches to teaching about the Holocaust and human rights, with a particular focus on the role of women in the resistance. The conference addressed the importance of combating antisemitism and Holocaust distortion, and of connecting these topics to local contexts and contemporary challenges. It also examined how the topic of women in the resistance and rescue during the Holocaust can enrich remembrance education, contribute to a deeper understanding of historical narratives, and support the development of more inclusive and nuanced approaches to teaching. The conference combined lectures by local and international experts with interactive group discussions, workshops, site visits, and testimonies, creating a dynamic and engaging learning environment.

The conference began on April 24 with an opening session at the Lithuanian Jewish Community, where participants were welcomed and introduced to the thematic focus of the program. The opening session, led by Oana Bajka, set the conceptual framework for the conference by exploring the crucial role of resisters and rescuers, both in the historical context of the Holocaust and in contemporary society. This introductory session invited participants to reflect throughout the event on how learning about resistance and rescue during the Holocaust can help advance education on moral choices and civic responsibility, and contribute to countering antisemitism, Holocaust distortion and social injustice.

The program continued with a lecture by Lori Weintrob on Heroines of the Holocaust, which foregrounded the experiences of women as active agents of resistance, rescue, and moral courage. This session challenged traditional narratives of the Holocaust by highlighting women's roles not only as victims, but also as actors who made complex and often courageous choices in extreme circumstances. The focus on women's experiences served as a central lens throughout the conference, enriching participants' understanding of the Holocaust and opening new pedagogical perspectives.

In the following session, participants engaged with the testimony of second-generation Holocaust survivor Faina Kukliansky, President of the Jewish Community of Lithuania. Her intervention offered a powerful and personal perspective on the legacy of the Holocaust and its intergenerational impact, reinforcing the importance of remembrance and responsibility. The day concluded with a walking tour of Jewish Vilna, led by Ingrida Vilkiene, which offered teachers the opportunity to explore the history of the Jewish community in the city through the lens of women's resistance and rescue, providing them with an immersive and place-based learning experience on the traces of Fania Brancovskaja and Rachel Margolis. An online reflection form invited teachers to consider the highlights of the day and expectations for the remaining part of the program.

The second day of the conference deepened participants' engagement with the themes of memory, human rights, and historical responsibility through a combination of reflection and experiential learning. The day began with a debriefing session that allowed participants to reflect on the previous day's activities and to further process the themes introduced. This was followed by a session titled Women of Valor, led by Peninah Zilberman, which further explored women's experiences during the Holocaust, offering personal and historical insights into resilience, survival, and moral courage, such as Faye Schulman, Hana Szenes and members of Peninah's extended family.

A key component of the day was the focus on learning through place-based education. In a session led by Oana Nestian-Sandu, participants were introduced to an innovative approach for visiting Holocaust sites and museums through the lens of human rights and human dignity. This preparatory session equipped participants with conceptual and pedagogical tools to critically engage with memorial sites and to guide their own students in meaningful and responsible ways. In the afternoon, participants travelled to the Ponary Memorial, one of the most significant Holocaust mass murder sites in Lithuania. The guided visit, led by Ingrida Vilkiene, provided a powerful and immersive learning experience, allowing participants to engage directly with the historical reality of the site while reflecting on its contemporary relevance. Through the human rights lens, the visit encouraged participants to consider questions of memory, responsibility, and the ethical challenges of representing and teaching about sites of mass violence. The visit was followed by a structured debriefing session at the site, during which participants shared reflections about their experience. This moment of collective reflection was essential in helping participants process the emotional and cognitive dimensions of the visit, facilitating their ability to connect the experience to their role as educators.

The final day of the conference focused on pedagogical application, collaboration, and the consolidation of learning outcomes. The morning began with presentations by participants who shared their good practice examples of educational projects with their colleagues, and their reflections on the impact that these brought, as well as the challenges they had encountered in the implementation. Working in small groups, participants presented their ideas and engaged in peer feedback, fostering a collaborative learning environment and encouraging the exchange of practices across different national contexts.

This was followed by a session with Deborah Lauter on the role of teachers in countering antisemitism in contemporary societies. The session emphasized the unique position of educators in addressing prejudice, promoting critical thinking, and fostering democratic values in the classroom. It also reinforced the connection between Holocaust education and present-day challenges, including Holocaust distortion, highlighting the responsibility of educators to actively engage students in discussions about antisemitism, historical accuracy and civic responsibility.

The following session, led by Oana Nestian-Sandu, was dedicated to the topic of teaching about inspiring women. Using real stories of resisters and rescuers, building on the central theme of the conference and offering practical approaches for integrating these narratives into classroom practice, this session provided participants with concrete tools and ideas for designing educational activities that highlight moral choices, resistance, and individual agency.

The conference concluded with a final session led by Oana Bajka, focusing on how to create a lasting culture of Holocaust and human rights education within schools. Participants reflected on their learning, identified next steps for implementation, and discussed strategies for ensuring continuity and impact beyond the conference.

Participants provided highly positive feedback on the conference overall. Some of their highlights included: the importance of combating antisemitism and Holocaust distortion through Holocaust and human rights education, the focus on women stories of resistance and rescue, the guided tours organized through the lens of human rights, and not least the opportunity to connect and share experiences with peers from all around Europe.

Following the conference, participants will continue to be part of the European Network of Holocaust and Human Rights Educators and receive support from the partner organizations to implement their learning in the classroom, develop projects with their students, and engage in collaborative initiatives within the network and beyond.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).