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Issues 2008



70 years after the 1938 Night of Pogrom, we must continue to teach the lessons of the Holocaust (07-11-2008)

"Paying respect to the victims, we must remember that the lessons of this greatest crime against humanity remain sadly relevant today", said Morten Kjaerum, Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), marking the 70th anniversary of the 1938 Night of Pogrom "Kristallnacht". ***"Learning from the past, we must empower people to understand the significance of human rights protection today"***, said Morten Kjaerum. FRA, in cooperation with Yad Vashem, is hosting a workshop for a network of educators on lessons from the Holocaust and its relevance for human rights education in Vienna on 10 November.

This joint seminar is dedicated to the remembrance of the victims of the 1938 "Kristallnacht". Teachers from 21 EU countries and students who have been involved in outstanding projects on preventing racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia will attend. The aim is to equip teachers with tools and techniques, and to encourage projects on Holocaust remembrance and human rights education.

Advancing awareness on the Holocaust goes hand in hand with raising awareness on fundamental rights. The history of anti-Semitism and Holocaust shows the tragic consequences of a gradual and increasing denial of human rights. At the beginning, Jews were denied social and economic rights, such as the freedom to choose an occupation, or the right to property. Later, civil and political rights, such as freedom of thought and expression were abused, and in the end Jews paid with their lives when their most fundamental rights were brutally and systematically squashed – the right to human dignity, the prohibition of torture or the prohibition of slavery and forced labour, and ultimately the violation of the right to life.

"Education plays a key role in helping future generations realise the dangers of human rights violations. It is vital that young people learn from the Holocaust and are empowered to shape an inclusive society, based on respect for diversity and the protection and promotion of fundamental rights. Holocaust was a human-made tragedy - it is up to humans to fight any developments in a similar direction. Political leaders, governments and society at large must remain determined in their stance against all forms of racist hatred", Morten Kjaerum concluded.

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On the site

- [See also our previous collaboration with Yad Vashem in 2007](#)

Background information on “Kristallnacht”:

The 1938 Night of Pogrom “Kristallnacht” was a pogrom in Nazi Germany on 9–10 November 1938. Within a few hours, “Kristallnacht” saw the destruction of more than 200 Synagogues, and tens of thousands of Jewish businesses and homes. Hundreds of persons were murdered or driven to death. That night marked the beginning of the systematic extermination of Jews and served as a prelude to the Holocaust.

Background information on FRA:

- FRA is a body of the European Union. It was established in March 2007 and is based in Vienna. The Agency has three key functions: to collect information and data on fundamental rights; to provide advice to the EU and its Member States; and to promote dialogue with civil society in order to raise public awareness of fundamental rights. FRA continues to monitor racist and anti-Semitic incidents in the European Union.
- FRA's Annual Report 2008 (June 2008) provides ample evidence that discriminatory behaviour and racist violence persist across the EU. On the evolution of anti-Semitism in the EU, check the FRA update report “Anti-Semitism Summary overview of the situation in the European Union 2001-2007” (January 2008) ([PDF](#))
- In the past, FRA and Yad Vashem have brought together Austrian pupils to speak, via video conference, with holocaust survivors in Israel and conducted follow up classes with the pupils to link the significance of Holocaust to human rights violations.

Background information on Yad Vashem:

Yad Vashem, in Jerusalem, is the Jewish people's memorial to the murdered Six Million. Containing the world's largest repository of information on the Holocaust, Yad Vashem is a leader in Shoah education, commemoration, research and documentation. Yad Vashem has been entrusted with documenting the history of the Jewish people during the Holocaust period, preserving the memory and story of each of the six million victims, and imparting the legacy of the Holocaust for generations to come through its archives, library, school, museums and recognition of the Righteous Among the Nations.

For more information see: www.yadvashem.org