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2 November 2020 Strasbourg

“REMEMBRANCE AND LEARNING FROM WORLD WAR II”

Strengthening the relevance and quality of remembrance activities with young people today, *at the occasion of the 75 years of the end of the Second World War and of the 70th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights*

On-line seminar to

- *learn together from the past,*
- *understand better the present,*
 - *create a common future*

14-18 December 2020

Presentation of the activity

Call for participants

*Memory is what shapes us. Memory is what teaches us.
We must understand that's where our redemption is.*

Estelle Laughlin, Holocaust Survivor

*Memory stands against the destructive power of time.
This property of memory is extremely important.
It is customary to divide time into past, present and future.
But thanks to memory, the past enters the present, and
the future is as if predicted by the present, connected to the past.*

Dmitry Likhachev, Russian philologist, cultural anthropologist,
and doctor of philological sciences

CONTEXT

In 2020, we commemorate 75 years of the end of the Second World War, the most destructive armed conflict and the greatest disaster in history. The Second World War overcame all previous wars in its scope and intensity, according to the number of participants, the quantity and quality of military equipment, casualties and material destruction.

The total military dead of all causes was approximately 20,280,000 but the war took an even greater toll on civilian populations. Overall, civilian deaths directly ascribable to the war (including victims of bombing, murder, and genocide, as well as the privation, starvation, and disease directly caused by the war) are estimated at from 30 million to 55 million, including around 11 million victims murdered on racial or ethnic grounds.

The history of the Second World War provides a wealth of stories of human bravery and selflessness, compassion and patriotism, firmness and courage, along with human inaction in face of genocide, slave labor, famine and disease.

In the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust, several organisations were established to promote international cooperation, peace and security. The largest was the [United Nations](#), created on 24 October 1945 as an international peacekeeping organisation and a forum for resolving conflicts between nations, which celebrates 75 years in 2020 since its foundation.

In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly proclaims the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), which was emerged as a response to the terrifying events of the Second World War. The preamble states that

“disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people...”

The creation of the [Council of Europe](#), the leading human rights organisation at the European continent, was a result of the founding members commitment to ensure that the tragedies of the Second World War would not be repeated and that the commitment to the common values of human rights, democracy and rule of law would ensure a Europe able to overcome the horrors of Nazism, racism and aggressive nationalism and to preserve peace on the continent.

The Council of Europe was founded in May 1949 with the aim:

“to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress”.

The foundation of the Organisation was based on the belief of the founding states that the “the pursuit of peace based upon justice and international co-operation is vital for the preservation of human society and civilization.”

On 4 November 1950, in Rome, the [Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms](#) (better known as the European Convention on Human Rights) was signed by the member states of the Council of Europe. The Convention was the first instrument to give effect and binding force to many of the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.

70 years later, in 2020, the Convention is still one of the strongest mechanisms for the protection of human rights at the European continent. The protection of human rights is a basis for not repeating the horrors of the Second World War, including crimes against humanity.

REMEMBRANCE EDUCATION

Gross human rights violations, atrocities such as the Holocaust, slave trade, genocide, wars and ethnic cleansing, are not easily forgotten or forgiven by those who were affected. However, remembrance is more than merely just remembering. Remembrance can be described as the commitment of a society to keep alive the memory of the past atrocities, to support the community to face the past and accept responsibility over it in order to learn and live in a present that allows a different course of action.

Remembrance concerns both society and individual people. There is no human right directly connected to the act of remembrance, but the type of events which society feels the need to remember are almost always those where the human rights of certain groups of individuals have been comprehensively ignored.

Since 1954, the [European Cultural Convention](#) has highlighted the importance of teaching the history of all the member states in its European dimension, in order to foster mutual understanding and to prevent the crimes against humanity happening again. It was in the framework of the Learning and Teaching about the History of Europe in the 20th Century project in schools that the Holocaust theme found its place.

The Council of Europe and the Russian Federation, as a member state, are aware of the importance of the teaching of history and the memory of the Second World War. In this respect, the [Recommendation Rec\(2001\)15 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on History Teaching in the twenty-first-century Europe](#) states:

“everything possible should be done in the educational sphere to prevent recurrence or denial of the devastating events that have marked this century, namely the Holocaust, genocides and

other crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and the massive violations of human rights and of the fundamental values to which the Council of Europe is particularly committed.”

The Recommendation underlines that that history teaching is a “decisive factor in reconciliation, recognition, understanding and mutual trust between peoples” and makes it possible for young people “to analyse and interpret information critically and responsibly, through dialogue, through the search of historical evidence and the open debate based on multiperspectivity, especially on controversial and sensitive issues”.

Education is indispensable to help foster a sense of belonging to a common humanity, to empower learners to become active citizens in crafting a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/7 (2005) and UNESCO General Conference Resolution 34C/61 (2007) on Holocaust Remembrance emphasize the historical significance of the Holocaust and outline the importance of teaching this event as a contribution to the prevention of genocide and atrocity crimes. Other resolutions of the United Nations, such as United Nations Security Council Resolution 2150 (2014) on “Recommitment to fight against genocide” or Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/28/L.25 (2015) on the prevention of genocide, highlight the importance of education as a means to raise awareness about the causes, dynamics and consequences of atrocity crimes.

Remembrance education and initiatives with, for and by young people play an important role in preserving the memory of the tragic events, in drawing lessons from the past and preventing the seeds of hatred from being sown for the future, and in developing a culture of human rights and.

Remembrance is obviously relevant for young people also, and probably especially, outside the classroom, not the least because non-formal and informal education play an important role in the forging of memories. Young people are the primary target of remembrance activities and projects because it is through them that reconciliation and dialogue should be exerted. It is therefore crucial that Remembrance activities are carried out according to human rights values, dignity and historical correctness. Conversely, manipulation and distortion of historical facts, double standards and selective memories are likely to fuel further nationalism, xenophobia, racism and hatred.

The Youth Department of the Council of Europe has been working with remembrance in the framework of human rights education with young people, integrating this theme in its manual on human rights education with young people [Compass](#), and in the “[Right to Remember](#)”, manual focusing on Roma discrimination. In the European youth campaign “[No Hate Speech Movement](#)” a particular attention was given to working with young people to counter such instances of hate speech as Holocaust denial or justification of Holocaust, and as well to commemorate international human rights days online and offline.

In December 2019, the Council of Europe Youth Department held a Consultative meeting “Remembrance activities with young people based on human rights education”, in cooperation with the Russian Federation partners and with the involvement of international experts and trainers. The participants discussed approaches and practices on Remembrance activities with young people and developed the Guidelines for further events on this topic.

The Russian Federation state authorities and non-governmental organisations have carried out the systematic work on remembrance with young people for many years now, such as the projects “Immortal regiment”, “Memory Watch”, “Candle of Memory”, “Faces of Victory”, “Day of the unknown soldier”, “The tree of Victory”, “In memory of the heroes” and many others.

The year of 2020 was declared as the *Year of Commemoration and Glory* in the Russian Federation in order to preserve the historical memory and to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic war.

TO LEARN, TO UNDERSTAND AND TO CREATE: ON-LINE SEMINAR IN 2020

With the current resurgence of racialised ideologies and rising antisemitism, learning from the past with the framework of human rights is fundamental to preserve human dignity and to prevent further human rights violations.

Youth work and human rights education play an important role in this respect by allowing young people to learn together and address topics that may be sensitive but cannot be avoided. Remembrance and learning from the past are important when working in intercultural learning activities, especially with respect to such topics as human rights, promoting peace, and counteracting discrimination and violence among young people.

Discussing these topics with young people can give context and meaning, can empower them to become critical thinkers, responsible and active global citizens who value human dignity and respect for all, who reject antisemitism, racism and other forms of prejudice that can lead to violence and genocide.

The training seminar in 2020 has been built upon experience accumulated during previous editions of the seminar since its inception in 2014, and the *Guidelines on Remembrance activities for and with young people*, prepared during a workshop held in December 2019 at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg.

The activity is a part of the 2020 Action plan of the Framework Programme on cooperation between the Council of Europe and the Russian Federation in the field of youth policy as a contribution to implementing one of the objectives of the Framework Programme – promoting intercultural dialogue, peacebuilding and cultural diversity.

The situation with the COVID-19 pandemic has made the residential training-seminar impossible to be held. However, the need and opportunity for this event as a space for dialogue and discussion at the occasion 75 years of the end of the Second World War and of the 70th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights remain intact.

The Council of Europe and the partner from the Russian Federation took a decision to transfer the activity to an on-line event which will be held from **14-18 December 2020** at the Zoom platform with the e-learning phase prior and after the activity.

CO-ORGANISERS

The seminar is co-organised by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation and the National Youth Council of Russia, and with the support of MIREA – Russian Technological University.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR

Aim: to strengthen the relevance and quality of Remembrance work with young people while promoting peace, human rights and intercultural dialogue.

The **specific objectives:**

- to discuss participants' understanding of remembrance, human rights, intercultural dialogue and reconciliation;
- to share and critically reflect on remembrance education practices of participants with a view to applying the *Guidelines on Remembrance activities for and with young people* (drafted at a consultative meeting held on 8-9 December 2019, Strasbourg);
- to reflect on the meaning of the commemorations of 75 years since the end of the Second World War, the 75th anniversary of the United Nations and the 70th anniversary of the European Convention on Human Rights, for young people and society today;
- to remember the victims of the Second World War as a contribution to the 75th anniversary of its end and to contribute to the perpetuation of this memory and the role of young people can play in that;
- to explore current challenges related to remembrance and history learning, and ways to respond to them (including the revision, rewriting and manipulation of history);
- to enhance the role of youth work and youth organisations, in the Russian Federation and other member states of the Council of Europe, in upholding the values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

PROGRAMME AND METHODOLOGY

The seminar will run for 5 days from **14-18 December** and will require regular involvement from the participants every working day for four / six hours from 10h to 14h / 16h (Central European Time).

The seminar will be held on a Zoom platform and will include group activities on sharing experiences, and dialogue between the participants, common sessions with invited experts and guests, workshops, and sessions on follow-up actions.

In addition, there will be four online modules on the Moodle educational platform of the Council of Europe Youth Department.

The programme is based on and derives from the methodological approaches and principles of human rights education. The programme will focus on building a trusting, open, safe and reflective atmosphere in order to develop critical thinking of the participants and to foster a deep relationship between the participants and the theme.

The programme will be built on participants' experiences, complemented with input from experts and survivors of the Second World War.

PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS:

The seminar will bring together some 60 participants from the countries party to the European Cultural Convention, together with a selected number of participants from other countries directly concerned by the objectives of the seminar.

All interested candidates should:

- be active in a youth organisation, network or initiative groups working on the topic of remembrance of the Second World War;
- be multipliers (youth workers, youth leaders, trainers, teachers, etc.) involved in activities with young people on Remembrance of the Second World War;
- be involved in the remembrance education projects, including in the areas such as historical and political sciences, research, search movements, memorial sites and museums;
- have a relevant experience in working with human rights education / remembrance education / intercultural dialogue, peacebuilding and reconciliation;
- be motivated to participate in the seminar and engage in the learning process;
- be open and focused on the development and improvement of dialogue between youth organisations from different countries;
- have the motivation and capacity to initiate follow-up initiatives, projects and programmes as a follow-up to the seminar in their working environments and/or in cooperation with other participants in the seminar;
- be able to work independently in Russian or English;
- have access to the Internet and be ready to allocate 4-6 hours per day within the working days of the seminar;
- to be able to attend the whole seminar and all its programme elements.

By virtue of the agreement with partners from the Russian Federation, participants from this country may be over-represented in relation to other member states of the Council of Europe.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

The Council of Europe welcomes applications from all candidates who fulfil the specific profile of the activities, following the general conditions applicable to Council of Europe Youth Department activities as they appear in <https://youthapplications.coe.int>

Gender and geographical balance will be taken into account when making the selection of the group, along with bringing in a variety of practices and experiences of working on the topic with young people.

Applicants from countries party to the European Cultural Convention other than the Russian Federation will be pre-selected by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. Applicants from the Russian Federation will be pre-selected by the Russian partners.

All interested candidates from state parties to the European Cultural Convention *other than the Russian Federation* will have to duly complete the application form available at <http://youthapplications.coe.int> by **14:00 (CET) 30 November 2020** and upload with it a support letter from their organisation/institution.

All interested candidates **from the Russian Federation** should complete the application form available at <https://forms.gle/kCxpeAw66DqKiPyf9> and submit a support letter from their organisation/institution to the email address: projects@youthrussia.ru by **16h (Moscow time) 30 November 2020.**

All applicants will be notified on the results of the selection by **3 December 2020.**

ENQUIRIES

For further information, please contact:

Marina Filaretova, Programme Officer at the Council of Europe Youth Department, marina.filaretova@coe.int

Olga Popova, Deputy Chairwoman of the National Youth Council of Russia, popova@youthrussia.ru

For technical assistance with the application form uploaded the Council of Europe Youth Department platform, please address: youthapplications@coe.int.

Other activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe and the National Youth Council of Russia:

If you are interested in participation in the activities related to international youth work, human rights education and intercultural dialogue, but your profile does not fully correspond to the requirements of this Seminar, please note that the Youth Department of the Council of Europe and the National Youth Council of Russia organise other activities and training courses. For details please consult the following webpages:

www.coe.int/youth www.youthrussia.ru