



via memoria mauthausen

A new European Cultural Route to Places of Remembrance

A project developed and conducted by



Comité International de Mauthausen

Since its inception in 1949, the Council of Europe has built its core business on the **reconciliation and reestablishment of dialogue among Europeans, as well as on the respect of the rule of law, human rights, and democratic values:**

the *Comité International de Mauthausen* believes that in this framework, a new cultural route based on one of the most horrible atrocity crimes perpetrated during the Nazi regime, i.e. the negation of human dignity through deportation, forced labour and genocide, will have its legitimate place.



Comité International de Mauthausen

Albanie | Allemagne | Autriche | Belgique | Biélorussie
Bulgarie | Espagne | États-Unis d'Amérique | France
Grèce | Hollande | Hongrie | Israël | Italie | Luxembourg
Pologne | Russie | Serbie | Slovaquie | Slovénie
Tchéquie | Ukraine

The *Comité International de Mauthausen*

- **During Winter 1944/45:** founded illegally in the concentration camps of Mauthausen, Gusen, Melk, Ebensee to organize resistance and international solidarity
- **Today:** Umbrella organization of actually 22 member states with survivors and 2nd and 3rd generation
- The **Mauthausen Oath** (May 16th, 1945) our guideline: *follow a common path; the one of freedom - indispensable for every population, of reciprocal respect, of collaboration in the great work of constructing a new world that is free and just for all;*

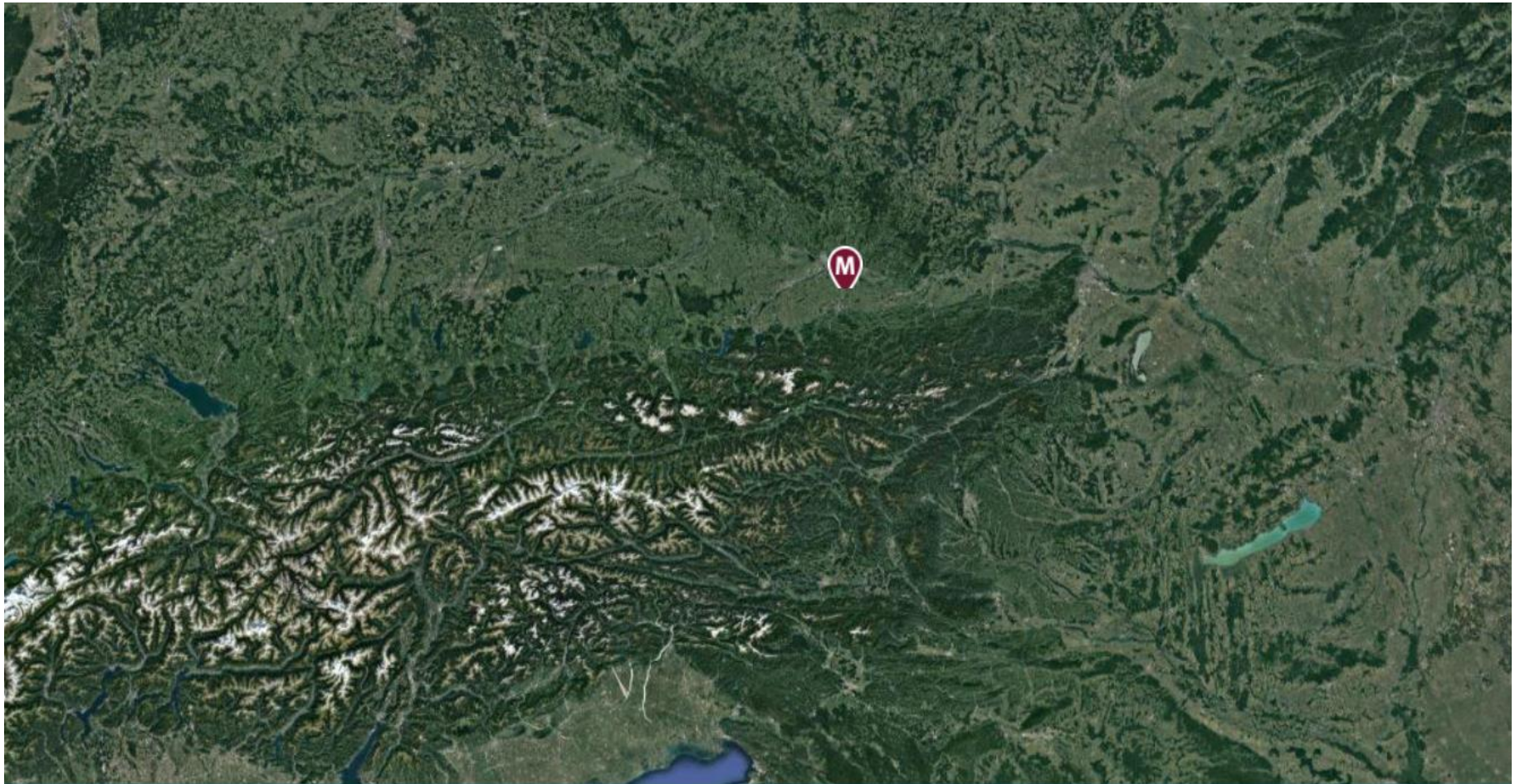
Theme of the route

- The Mauthausen Concentration Camp was the **only main concentration camp** on occupied Austrian territory.
- Just 6% of all prisoners were of German language – all in all we counted **72 different nations** among the approx. 200,000 prisoners. All European nations (and also some from overseas) were among the victims in Mauthausen.

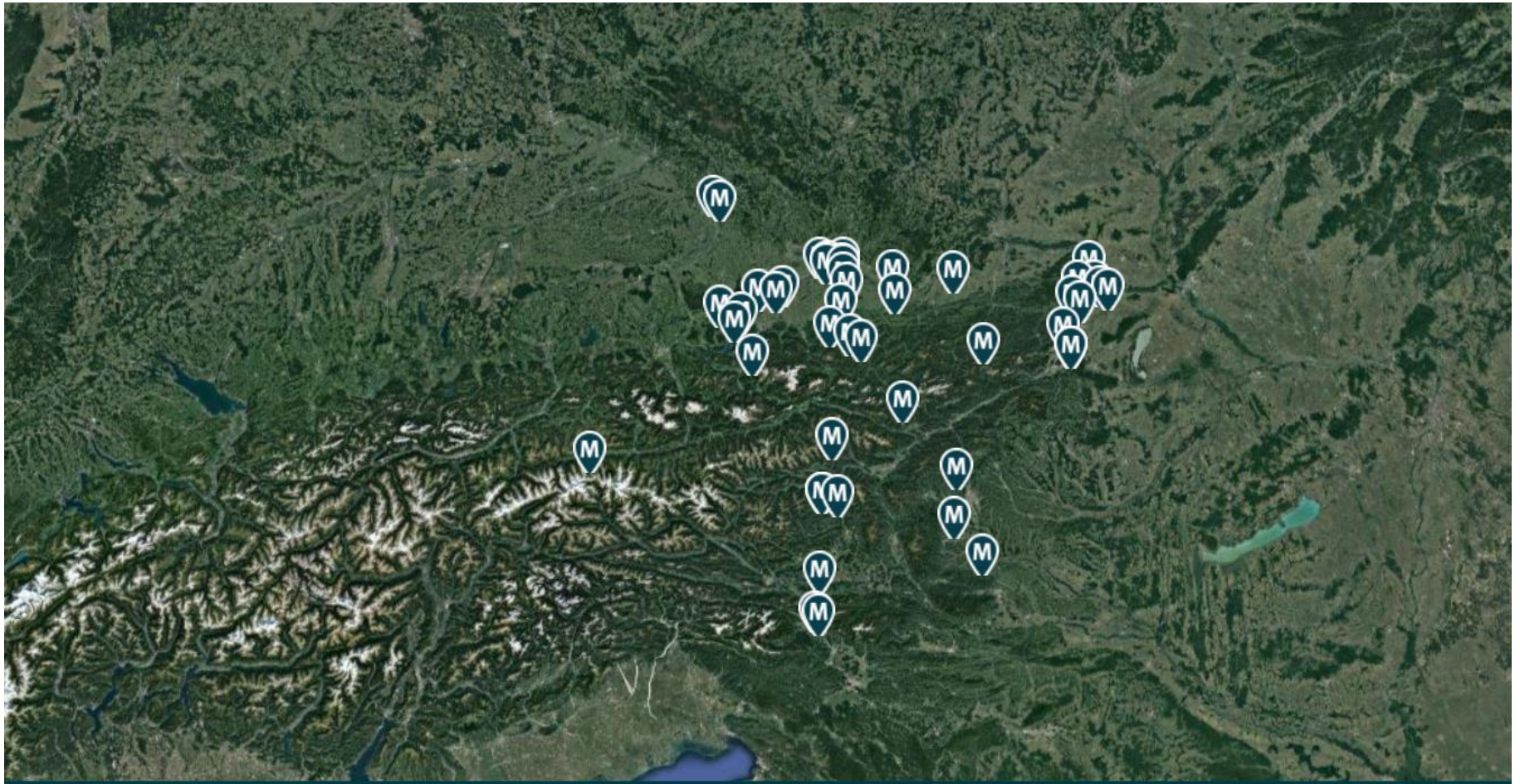
Theme of the route

- The **visibility of the routes** of those 200,000 prisoners to and from Mauthausen and their **narratives** are the main topic of this new Cultural Route.
- The system of the Mauthausen Concentration Camp consisted of 50 sub-camps. All these camps were also related to other concentration camps in Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe.

Mauthausen Concentration Camp



Mauthausen Sub-camps



Objectives of the route

- The first objective (and first step) is to **connect these routes** from the Mauthausen main camp to the sub-camps:
- Memorials already exist on the spot of former sub-camps. Today, these camps are visited by descendants of survivors and many other people, but a **connecting narrative** and a **consistent system of information** is missing.

Objectives of the route

- The second objective (and second step) is to **connect the Mauthausen system** with all the **other camps** in Germany and Nazi-occupied Europe:
- Just a few prisoners came directly from their home countries to Mauthausen. Most of them were **transferred from other camps**, prisons or ghettos.

Objectives of the route

- The third objective (and third step) is to **illustrate the *death marches*** at the beginning of 1945 to **Mauthausen** until the liberation of May 5, 1945:
- Prisoners from Auschwitz, Groß Rosen, Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrück, Mittelbau-Dora, Flossenbürg and many other camps.
- Also more than 25.000 Hungarian Jews from the so-called « Süd-Ost-Wall ».

Objectives of the route

- The fourth objective is to make visible the **diversity of remembrance cultures** in all affected countries:
- In all of these mentioned 72 nations there are **different national narratives**, also related to the time after WWII.

Mission of the route

- Our mission is to realise a **route of historic importance** related to the history of the camps.
- We will include educational aspects and relate history to the situation of today
- So, the second and at least equally important part of our mission is to give **European youth a chance to learn from History.**

Current and potential members

- The founding organisation is the **Comité International de Mauthausen** with its 22 member states.
- Closely related is the **Mauthausen Komitee Österreich** with its local and regional subgroups in all places of former sub-camps.
- Austrian communities, regions and provinces from all places related to Mauthausen.

Current and potential members

- All other camp memorials from all over Europe.
- All other International Committees from the other concentration camps.
- Tourism federations in order to develop sustainable tourism in these places, which adds value.

Cf. *The Mauthausen Appeal* May 21, 2019 to actual and forthcoming Members of the European Parliament:

- signed by the International Committees of Mauthausen, Auschwitz, Buchenwald-Dora, Dachau, Flossenbürg, Natzweiler-Struthof, Neuengamme, Ravensbrück, Sachsenhausen, ANED and FIR:
- *(...) As the guardians of the memory of the victims of the Nazi camps, we urge all Europeans to resist hate speech, nationalist, racist, xenophobic, antisemitic ideologies, as well as the illusion maintained by demagogical politicians according to which their prosperity and their happiness would be founded upon the rejection of the Other because of her/his ethnic origin, beliefs or political convictions.*

Responsible network

- name: **Via Memoria Mauthausen**
- headquarters: **Vienna**
- legal status: **NGO association** according to Austrian laws
- This association should be as broad as possible in terms of membership. The *Comité International de Mauthausen* will act as a steering committee to all decisions on principle.

Sources of funding

- member fees
- funds like Leader Region for developing touristic aspects
- funds like Erasmus + for developing educational aspects
- funds like Österreichischer Nationalfonds for developing historic research

Main future activities

- first step: Creating this route in Austria, Germany and Slovenia (in all 3 countries, there were sub-camps of Mauthausen)
- second step: Expanding this route to other former camps and prisons - including all other European states
- third step: Including documents and narratives from all groups of victims into this route.

Thank you for your attention!