

# Lety u Pisku, Czech Republic

## Memorial Sites

15 November 2016

**Czech Government approves a bill to close industrial pig farm on site of former concentration camp for Roma after decade-long protests.**

During their Iasi Plenary Meetings from 7-10 November, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) welcomed the decision of the Czech government to close an industrial pig farm situated on the site of the former concentration camp at Lety u Pisku, which existed between 1 August 1942 and 4 May 1943. Approximately 1,300 prisoners passed through the camp where 362 people died; a further 540 perished during mass transports to Auschwitz Birkenau, German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945).

In a joint statement, IHRA Chair, Mihnea Constantinescu, and Chair of the IHRA Committee on the Genocide of the Roma, Martina Maschke, said: “We commend the Czech Government on their action to remove the pig farm and pledge our support to ensure that the site is turned into a respectful and educational place of remembrance. The next steps for the cooperation between the IHRA Committee on the Genocide of the Roma, the IHRA Museums and Memorial Working Group and the Czech partners are already underway.”

Although a memorial to the concentration camp was consecrated in 1995, since the mid-1990s Czech authorities have been urged, by among others the EU, Council of Europe and UN Human Rights Committee, to remove the pig farm that was established in the 1970s. Additionally, the IHRA Committee on the Genocide of the Roma and the IHRA Memorials and Museums Working Group had consistently brought the matter to the attention of IHRA Member Countries and the Czech authorities. Delegations from the IHRA visited the Lety site and held high-level political meetings in [March 2015](#) and on [12 July 2016](#).

At the IHRA Plenary Session in Prague in 2007 [IHRA Members Countries](#) adopted a resolution recognizing the extraordinary importance of researching and marking for posterity the physical locations where Holocaust-related events occurred and pledged to undertake all possible measures preserve them and prevent their misuse. The Czech Republic has been an IHRA Member Country since 2001.

With the adoption of the [International Memorial Museums Charter](#) in 2012, IHRA Member Countries once again affirmed their support for the preservation of historic sites, sources and artifacts, a commitment also pledged in the 2000 [Stockholm Declaration](#) to which IHRA Member Countries are signatories. An [Addendum](#) to the Charter, which was adopted in November 2016, outlines key considerations that IHRA Member Countries should adhere to in protection of sites.

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## Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust

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We, High Representatives of Governments at the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, declare that:

- 1. The Holocaust (Shoah) fundamentally** challenged the foundations of civilization. The unprecedented character of the Holocaust will always hold universal meaning. After half a century, it remains an event close enough in time that survivors can still bear witness to the horrors that engulfed the Jewish people. The terrible suffering of the many millions of other victims of the Nazis has left an indelible scar across Europe as well.
- 2. The magnitude of the Holocaust,** planned and carried out by the Nazis, must be forever seared in our collective memory. The selfless sacrifices of those who defied the Nazis, and sometimes gave their own lives to protect or rescue the Holocaust's victims, must also be inscribed in our hearts. The depths of that horror, and the heights of their heroism, can be touchstones in our understanding of the human capacity for evil and for good.
- 3. With humanity still scarred** by genocide, ethnic cleansing, racism, antisemitism and xenophobia, the international community shares a solemn responsibility to fight those evils. Together we must uphold the terrible truth of the Holocaust against those who deny it. We must strengthen the moral commitment of our peoples, and the political commitment of our governments, to ensure that future generations can understand the causes of the Holocaust and reflect upon its consequences.
- 4. We pledge to strengthen** our efforts to promote education, remembrance and research about the Holocaust, both in those of our countries that have already done much and those that choose to join this effort.
- 5. We share a commitment** to encourage the study of the Holocaust in all its dimensions. We will promote education about the Holocaust in our schools and universities, in our communities and encourage it in other institutions.
- 6. We share a commitment** to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and to honour those who stood against it. We will encourage appropriate forms of Holocaust remembrance, including an annual Day of Holocaust Remembrance, in our countries.
- 7. We share a commitment** to throw light on the still obscured shadows of the Holocaust. We will take all necessary steps to facilitate the opening of archives in order to ensure that all documents bearing on the Holocaust are available to researchers.
- 8. It is appropriate** that this, the first major international conference of the new millenium, declares its commitment to plant the seeds of a better future amidst the soil of a bitter past. We empathize with the victims' suffering and draw inspiration from their struggle. Our commitment must be to remember the victims who perished, respect the survivors still with us, and reaffirm humanity's common aspiration for mutual understanding and justice.

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## About the IHRA

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The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is an intergovernmental body whose purpose is to place political and social leaders' support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance and research both nationally and internationally.

IHRA (formerly the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, or ITF) was initiated in 1998 by former Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson. Persson decided to establish an international organization that would expand Holocaust education worldwide, and asked then President Bill Clinton and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair to join him in this effort. Persson also developed the idea of an international forum of governments interested in discussing Holocaust education, which took place in Stockholm between 27-29 January 2000. The Forum was attended by the representatives of 46 governments including; 23 Heads of State or Prime Ministers and 14 Deputy Prime Ministers or Ministers. The Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust was the outcome of the Forum's deliberations and is the foundation of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

IHRA currently has 31 member countries, ten observer countries and seven Permanent International Partners. Members must be committed to the Stockholm Declaration and to the implementation of national policies and programs in support of Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. The national government of each member country appoints and sends a delegation

to IHRA meetings that is composed of both government representatives and national experts, providing a unique link between the two levels.

In addition to the Academic, Education, Memorials and Museums, and Communication Working Groups, specialized committees have been established to address antisemitism and Holocaust denial, the genocide of the Roma, and comparative approaches to genocide studies. The IHRA is also in the process of implementing a Multi-Year Work Plan that focuses on killing sites, access to archives, educational research, and Holocaust Memorial Days.

One of IHRA's key roles is to contribute to the funding of relevant projects through its grant strategy. The purpose of the Grant Programme is to foster international dialogue and the exchange of expertise, increase government involvement in program creation, and target projects with strong multilateral elements in order to create sustainable structures for Holocaust education, remembrance, and research.

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