



Hungarian  
Chairmanship 2015  
15th Anniversary

## IHRA Hungary's Programme for the Chairmanship 2015-2016

### **I. Background and commitments**

Hungary is proud to take over the Chairmanship of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) from the United Kingdom on 9 March 2015.

We take the opportunity to thank the UK Chair Sir Andrew Burns and his team for leading a very successful Chairmanship with the significant help of the Executive Secretary Kathrin Meyer and her colleagues. We would like to continue this work and we believe that IHRA has made great progress during the past Chairmanships. Hungary takes over an intergovernmental organisation which is indeed well functioning and structured.

Hungary was among those countries which signed the Stockholm Declaration in 2000 and two years later it became a full Member Country of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. The subsequent years we witnessed milestone commemorative events, which included the launching of a National Holocaust Memorial Day in 2000, the inauguration of the Holocaust Memorial Centre in Budapest and the opening of the new permanent Hungarian exhibition at the Auschwitz Memorial, both in 2004. It is a great honour for us that Hungary chairs IHRA for the second time.

Hungary remains fully committed to the principles and objectives of the Stockholm Declaration. We are painfully aware of our loss and the national tragedy caused by the Holocaust and will do everything to not just prevent it from happening again, but also to facilitate related teaching, remembrance and research to keep awareness alive for the upcoming generations.

In the pursuit of these goals the Hungarian Government has made and keeps making serious efforts; it declared the year 2012 as the Wallenberg Year and dedicated the year 2014 to the remembrance of the 70th anniversary of the Hungarian Holocaust.

We need to fight against antisemitic voices with all possible ways and means. The government of Hungary is committed to the principle of "zero tolerance policy" in connection with all forms of hate speech and deeds, including antisemitism and anti-Roma attitudes. Incidents of antisemitism have been promptly followed-up by high-level official condemnations on the part of the Hungarian government, as well as by legislative responses and law-enforcement means.

The governmental efforts and the Hungarian IHRA Chairmanship are of considerable importance also in their impact on the Hungarian society. We are convinced that due to these efforts we can strengthen and further improve the importance of the fight against antisemitism, discrimination, exclusion and xenophobia. In this endeavour, we are fully committed to joining our efforts with the Hungarian Jewish organisations and civil society groups, whose support and cooperation we have enjoyed during our preparation for the Chairmanship, and keep counting on in the implementation of it and beyond.



From an educational perspective one of the most positive impacts for Hungary of joining IHRA has been the growing awareness that agreed and acknowledged professional standards exist and can be accessed. Similarly, the possibility to share the best practices of commemoration and memorialization including the Holocaust Memorial Day and education practices has been largely beneficial.

During our Chairmanship we wish to contribute to the efforts IHRA has been undertaking in guarding and implementing the goals and principles of the Stockholm Declaration, in as many countries as possible, and in convincing interested countries to join the organisation.

## **II. Principal objectives and messages**

During the course of recent years IHRA has made great progress and substantial changes were accomplished in the working mechanism of the organisation; the Multi-Year Work Plan was conceived during the Dutch Chairmanship, a new name, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, was adopted during the Belgian one, while a working definition of Holocaust denial and distortion was agreed, and also a new visual identity was introduced during the Canadian Chairmanship. The UK Chairmanship defined ambitious goals in a White Paper, which we consider as a strong basis for our program. The Hungarian Chairmanship pays particular attention to the continuity of the implementation of priority initiatives within the framework of strategic goals laid down during the previous terms. We are looking forward to cooperation with the members of the Troika not only during our Chairmanship but also subsequent to it.

The Stockholm Declaration, the foundation of IHRA, was endorsed by 46 participating countries at the Stockholm International Forum in 2000. We join those voices who believe that 15 years after the adoption of the Declaration, we should send a powerful message once again by reaffirming the principles and objectives of the Declaration.

### **Priorities of the Hungarian Chairmanship**

The Hungarian Chairmanship endeavours to put combating antisemitism, Holocaust education and the Roma genocide at the centre of its Chairmanship program.

We condemn every form of antisemitism anywhere in the world in the strongest possible terms. We share the view that whatever form it takes all phenomena of antisemitic character challenge our values related to democracy and human rights, and thus pose a clear danger to the security of our societies. We also share the general assessment that political antisemitism is on the rise in Europe, which fuels antisemitic acts and incidents. We consider it an extremely dangerous vicious circle that can only be broken by political determination in the spirit of zero-tolerance towards this ugly form of discrimination and hatred. The rise of extremism and xenophobia is a complex challenge that requires a comprehensive approach. Prompt measures, such as clear political and legal responses, should be complemented by efforts that have a long-term, sustainable impact in the field of education, social cohesion, and various forms of awareness-raising activities. Therefore, during our Chairmanship we intend



to pay special attention to the promotion of the use of IHRA teaching guidelines developed by the Education Working Group, in the teacher training programs of the member countries.

Within the framework of the Multi-Year Work Plan an Education Research Project was launched in order to examine new trends in the field of teaching and learning about the Holocaust. We welcome the idea to hold the final conference on the outcome and conclusions of this research during the Hungarian Presidency. We intend to continue the visits of IHRA representatives to participate in programs related to Holocaust Memorial Day within the framework of the Holocaust Memorial Days project of the Multi-Year Work Plan. During our Chairmanship special focus will be placed on cultural events (exhibitions, concerts, film screenings, etc.) as well, in order to address people through the language of culture and raise awareness about the principles of the Stockholm Declaration.

Antisemitic political language, especially on the Internet, is more and more widespread, and it is extremely challenging to strike the right balance between efficiently countering it while fully respecting the principle of freedom of expression. During our Chairmanship we will strive to raise this issue and work out instruments and common policies to tackle this dangerous phenomenon of our time.

We are committed to commemorating the Genocide of the Roma under National Socialism. We will organise a conference on this issue with special focus on the current situation of Roma communities. We look forward to involving and cooperating with the Committee on the Genocide of the Roma and the Hungarian local Roma communities and NGOs in this regard. The results of this conference will be published in a booklet.

Our Chairmanship wishes to pay special attention to mark and preserve historical sites across Hungary where Holocaust-related events occurred. One of the priorities of the Hungarian Government is to support and help the renovation of Jewish cemeteries and synagogues and involve students in the renovation process, which gives an opportunity to raise their awareness about the Holocaust, the importance of the fight against antisemitism, genocide, ethnic cleansing and xenophobia. We also wish to cooperate with the Permanent International Partners in light of their related goals and ambitions. Concerning social allocations for the Jewish victims of Nazism we are proud to have spent a great amount of financial means on these aims and we wish to stress the importance of this question for the other member states of IHRA.

#### Further strengthening the visibility of IHRA

During the Hungarian Chairmanship we hope to further strengthen the visibility of the Alliance, therefore we shall enhance our internal and external communications and continue using all the communication and media tools (monthly newsletter, Twitter), which were introduced during previous Chairmanships. Our aim is to bring the organisation closer to the citizens by organising workshops in Hungary in order to present the achievements IHRA has already reached. The possibility for the Working Groups and Committees to hold IHRA conferences on a rotating basis would also contribute to the achievement of this goal. We need to emphasize the role of the Grant Strategy in connection with the aim of bringing the Alliance closer to the citizens.



### Outreach and enhancement of cooperation with the permanent international partners of IHRA

IHRA is an intergovernmental body with 31 member and eight observer countries, while originally 46 states attended the 2000 Stockholm Forum. Taking forward the efforts of previous and current Chairmanships we need to further develop contacts with some of those countries which participated in the Stockholm Forum, but are not yet affiliated with IHRA. Also, our intention is to continue efforts to explore the possibilities of future cooperation, especially with some of the countries in the Balkans and North Africa.

Outreach to Ukraine remains to be a strong possibility also for the Hungarian Chairmanship, taking into consideration the political and security situation of the country. We will continue the practice of inviting special representatives from the above mentioned countries to participate in the plenary meetings during our Chairmanship, which will also create a possibility to identify their intentions to start a formal cooperation with IHRA. We also need to engage more with those countries where NGOs, Jewish communities but also political representatives show interest in cooperation with IHRA. Further intensification of cooperation with the Vatican is also an important goal for us.

We are committed to maintaining the strong ties with the Permanent International Partners of IHRA (United Nations, UNESCO, OSCE/ODIHR, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Council of Europe, Claims Conference and the International Tracing Service (ITS)) by developing joint projects beyond IHRA countries in order to promote the principles of the Stockholm Declaration, to foster Holocaust education, remembrance and research, and raise awareness about the work of IHRA.

### Structural Changes

The proposed structural changes of the Canadian and British Chairmanships aiming to reduce the costs of meetings and to shift the focus to more substantive and content-related issues shall be continued, and subsequent to further consultations should be accomplished in practice.

## III. Programs

### *2015*

#### **9 March: Ceremony on taking over the Chairmanship from the UK**

Venue: Embassy of Hungary in Berlin

On the margins of the event Hungary presents an exhibition entitled "*Synagogue architecture in Central-Eastern Europe between 1782-1944*".

#### **16 April: Memorial Day for Hungarian Victims of the Holocaust**

Participation at the related commemorations as Chairman of IHRA.

#### **8-11 June: First Plenary of the Hungarian Chairmanship**



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Venue: Budapest

Various cultural events will be organised related to the plenary.

**2 August: Roma Genocide Remembrance Day**

Participation at the related commemorations as Chairman of IHRA.

**September-October:** The Hungarian Chairmanship organises together with the competent IHRA Committee a conference on the Roma Genocide.

**2-5 November: Second Plenary of the Hungarian Chairmanship**

Venue: Debrecen

One or two days prior to the second plenary of the Hungarian Chairmanship we will organise a conference together with the IHRA Committee on Anti-Semitism and Holocaust Denial on the issue of the use of Holocaust related imagery and language in public discourse.

Various cultural events will be organised related to the plenary.

**2016**

**Around 27 January (International Holocaust Remembrance Day): academic conference**

Venue: Budapest – the Parliament, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences or other prestigious venues.

Topic: *“The Phenomena of Rising Anti-Semitism in Western and Central-Eastern Europe”*

**March:** Ceremony on handing over the Chairmanship – end of the Hungarian Chairmanship.

**IV. Follow-up**

Our aim is to follow the practice introduced by the Canadian Chair to summarize the activities of the Hungarian Chairmanship in an annual report.

Budapest, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Szabolcs Takács  
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