

# **COUNTRY REPORT OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC ON THE FULFILMENT OF ITS COMMITMENTS ARISING FROM THE DECLARATION OF THE STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON THE HOLOCAUST**

## **1. General Activities**

The Czech Republic formally became member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (former Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research) in 2001. By joining the Alliance, the Czech Republic continued the work of the “Joint working committee on the mitigation of certain property injustices caused to Holocaust victims”, active between 1998 and 2002. The Committee, led by the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Pavel Rychetský, studied the history of Nazi persecution of the Jewish population, in particular the Aryanisation of Jewish property in today’s territory of the Czech Republic. Following the Committee’s initiative, the Czech Republic Parliament passed Act No. 212/2000 on the mitigation of certain property injustices caused by the Holocaust on 20 June 2000.

In addition to these activities, the Czech Republic Government has launched a number of other initiatives over the past few years, with the aim to address consequences of the Holocaust, mitigate injustices and raise public awareness of the causes, history and consequences of the Holocaust.

Following its Chairmanship of the ITF (IHRA) in 2007, the Czech Republic, holding the EU-Presidency in 2009, organized the Holocaust Era Assets Conference as an official event of the presiding country. The Conference covered a wide range of Holocaust related issues, including property issues, social condition of the Holocaust survivors or the Holocaust remembrance and education. The outcomes of the Conference were Terezín Declaration endorsed by 47 countries (<http://www.eu2009.cz/en/news-and-documents/news/terezin-declaration-26304/index.html>), and the Joint Declaration of the European Commission and the Czech EU-Presidency. Following the Conference, the Czech Republic Government initiated the establishment of the European Shoah Legacy Institute ([www.shoahlegacy.org](http://www.shoahlegacy.org)), a public benefit organisation founded as a forum for the exchange of views and for initiatives of experts, international organisations and governments who took part in the Conference. Presently, the Institute deals mainly with restitution issues (immovable property, works of art and Judaica) and social condition of the Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazi persecution. In 2011, the Czech Republic Government decided to transform the Documentation Centre for Property Transfers of Cultural Assets of WW II Victims into a public benefit organisation coordinated by the Ministry of Culture. The Documentation Centre’s work consists of tracking down stolen works of art, mediating the exchange of

information and facilitating negotiations between the country's authorities and the original owners or their descendants. The Czech Republic supports, within its subsidy programmes, the NGOs taking care of the Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazism; these include in particular the Jewish communities and the "Živá paměť" (Living Memory) organisation and their projects of social counselling and of a new social care establishment in Prague, Hagibor. The amount of the subsidies increases every year, including in 2014.

Beside the effort to mitigate injustices caused by the Holocaust and to improve social condition of the Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazism, one of the main tasks for the future is to preserve the memory of the Holocaust and make it accessible to younger generations using modern technologies. The key challenge is to preserve the informational value while attracting the attention of young audiences. In this respect, the digital education system currently under the development in the Czech Republic has an important role to play; the project for the digital system was approved by the Czech Government in December 2013, and it should be used in compulsory primary and secondary education as well as in life-long learning programmes. From a broader perspective, a challenge is to coordinate the efforts and resources in preserving the European memory. The challenge lies in finding a system support for memorials and institutions involved in remembrance, education and research, and for projects and cooperation across the countries and institutions.

Last but not least, the Czech Republic is resolved to continue paying attention to the situation of the Roma minority as well as to specific issues related to World War II Roma genocide. This resolve is reflected - among other documents - in the Roma Integration Strategy for the 2015-2020 period that is to be considered and approved by the Government of the Czech Republic in the coming weeks.

## **2. Holocaust Research**

In the Czech Republic, the research into causes and consequences of the Holocaust has been in the focus of many governmental and mainly non-governmental and private organisations for many years. The absolute majority of practical research is done by non-governmental non-profit organisations, supported by the government through subsidy programmes for NGOs. Some special state-funded organisations such as Terezín Memorial and the National Pedagogical Museum and Library of J. A. Comenius also contribute to the research.

Beside dealing with the consequences of the Holocaust in the field of restitutions and social issues, which is the process that started virtually after 1989 and involved a number of research projects, over the last few years the attention of researchers has turned to the topic of the Roma genocide, in particular the Protectorate-period Roma concentration camps in Lety u Písku and Hodonín u Kunštátu where the National Pedagogical Museum and Library of J. A. Comenius currently build the Roma Holocaust Memorial ([www.nmpk.cz](http://www.nmpk.cz)). The research was influenced by a new legislation on archives and records management (Act No. 499/2004) which entered into force on 1 January 2005. The amendment shortened the protection periods and provided for easier access of researchers to archived documents.

One of the main Holocaust research centres in the Czech Republic is Terezín Memorial ([www.pamatnik-terezin.cz](http://www.pamatnik-terezin.cz)). It works in cooperation with other institutions, in particular with

Terezín Initiative Institute, a foundation of the international association of former prisoners of Terezín ghetto, and with the Jewish Museum in Prague.

In the recent years, the historical research department of Terezín Memorial has concentrated on the project of digitalisation of its collections and on creating a special database of persons persecuted by Nazi occupational regime during World War II. Together with the Jewish Museum in Prague, Terezín Memorial also participates in implementing the international EHRI - European Holocaust Research Infrastructure project. Within this project, it cooperates with the Jewish Museum and Israeli partners Yad Vashem and Beit Theresienstadt to develop a web portal providing access to archived documents related to Terezín ghetto history.

In 2010, the Institute of Czech Literature and Comparative Studies at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague established a Centre for the Study of the Holocaust and Jewish Literature. The aim of the Centre is to study literature related to the Holocaust and Jewish culture in the Czech Lands and Central Europe. Members of the Centre have been systematically engaged with these topics for the past several years, organising international symposia mainly in cooperation with their colleagues from Germany and Poland.

The Centre is involved in pedagogical as well as scholarly work. Several B.A. theses on Jewish literature and the Holocaust have been defended at the Institute for Czech Literature and Comparative Studies of the Faculty of Arts at Charles University in Prague. Several doctoral dissertations and M.A. and B.A. theses on this topic are currently in progress. In addition to the existing courses (“The Theme of the Holocaust/the Shoah in Central European Literature” and “Jewish Themes in Czech Literature”), the establishment of a new interdisciplinary programme of study is being planned.

In 2012, the Centre was renamed the Prague Centre for Jewish Studies. Over the past years, its research focus has considerably broadened. Members of the Centre include Hebraists, German scholars, religionists, culturologists and art historians. The Prague Centre for Jewish Studies is a new major Holocaust research and educational centre in the Czech Republic, organising many seminars and lectures for students and the general public and devoting systematic attention to undergraduates engaged in Holocaust studies.

The aim of Terezín Initiative Institute (formerly Terezín Initiative Foundation [www.terezinstudies.cz](http://www.terezinstudies.cz)) is to support and pursue the research into the history of the “final solution” of the Jewish question in Czech lands and the history of Terezín ghetto and to make its results available to broader public, especially to the youngest generation. Among other activities, the Institute runs [www.holocaust.cz](http://www.holocaust.cz), an educational website which contains also a database of victims of the “final solution” of the Jewish question from the Czech lands and of the prisoners of Terezín ghetto from other countries. The Institute also publishes a science periodical named Terezín Studies and Documents (Theresienstädter Studie und Dokumente in German version); at present, its publication is temporarily suspended.

The Jewish Museum in Prague ([www.jewishmuseum.cz](http://www.jewishmuseum.cz)), besides its other activities, contributes significantly to the research and development of educational materials on the modern history of Jews in the Czech lands, and also takes part in tracing the origin of cultural, religious and other objects and their restitution. The Jewish Museum’s Shoah History

Department has some unique archival collections relating to Terezín and the persecution of Jews from the Czech lands, which have been fully digitalized with the support of the Claims Conference and the European Commission and are being published in the online catalogue of the Museum's collections (at <http://collections.jewishmuseum.cz>), including an oral history collection of more than 1,100 interviews. The Jewish Museum is also a coordinator of the EHRI project; its objective is to explore, in collaboration with Czech and foreign partners (such as Terezín Memorial, Yad Vashem, Beit Theresienstadt), a possibility to set up a portal providing an integrated online access to archival materials dispersed in archives of many different countries.

The Institute for Study of Totalitarian Regimes ([www.ustrcr.cz](http://www.ustrcr.cz)) is a government agency and research institute established by the Czech Government in 2007 to gather, analyse and make accessible records related to the Nazi and totalitarian regimes. The Institute is very actively involved in research and documentation projects (e.g. Anti-Jewish measures in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and their implementation (1939-1942)) as well as in education, developing educational programmes for schools and the general public (e.g. seminars, exhibitions, films, web projects, e-learning programmes).

The Documentation Centre for Property Transfers of Cultural Assets of World War II Victims ([www.cdmp.cz](http://www.cdmp.cz)) is an institution established by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic to study economic and historical issues related to Aryanisation of Jewish property (in particular of cultural assets).

The Library of the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University Prague, shelters Malach Centre for Visual History (<http://ufal.mff.cuni.cz/cvhm/>) which provides local access to three digital archives of videotaped oral history interviews; the Centre is open to researchers and members of the academy, as well as to general public. Registered users may use:

- Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah Foundation – Institute for Visual History and Education – almost 52 000 interviews in 32 languages
- Refugee Voices Archive of the Association of Jewish Refugees – 150 interviews in English - Archive of interviews from the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno – 40 interviews in Czech and Slovak

Starting from December 2013, the Multicultural Centre Prague runs a project “City without Jews” combining an interactive digital map with guided city walks to inform about the events of the first half of the twentieth century. The project includes visits of students to Malach Centre for Visual History to search information and data in order to set up an interactive map of Prague.

Based on the conclusions and recommendations of the “Joint working committee on the mitigation of certain property injustices caused to Holocaust victims”, the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic established, on 31 July 2000, the Foundation for Holocaust Victims ([www.fondholocaust.cz](http://www.fondholocaust.cz)). On 15 September 2000, the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic Parliament allocated CZK 300 million for the Foundation. These funds have been used to mitigate property injustices to Holocaust survivors who were

unable to recover their property in restitution for formal reasons. They have also been used for the improvement of social condition of the survivors, for the Holocaust education and remembrance and for preservation of Jewish monuments damaged during Nazi and communist rule. For the period starting from 2015, a subsidy of CZK 100 million from the state budget was allocated for the continuation of the Foundation. The Ministry of Culture will be providing these funds the Foundation on the basis of a long-term cooperation agreement.

The history department of the Museum of Romani Culture in Brno ([www.rommuz.cz](http://www.rommuz.cz)) has, since its foundation in 1991, documented and studied Roma genocide mainly in the territory of former Czechoslovakia. From the beginning, the museum's researchers have put emphasis on capturing important cultural values and events from the history of the Roma community through audio-visual recordings. Today, the Museum offers, to experts as well as to the general public, several hundred hours of recordings including personal histories of the twentieth century, interviews on traditional handicraft methods, fine art, literature, music, songs and dances, traditional cuisine, festivals and family celebrations, etc. From the beginning, the issue of the Roma genocide, often neglected or marginalized in the past, has been one of the main fields of the Museum's research.

The National Pedagogical Museum and Library of J. A. Comenius ([www.npmk.cz](http://www.npmk.cz)) have researched the history of the Roma Holocaust since 2011. The Museum coordinates its archival research with the work of history experts from Czech universities and other scientific institutions and, at the same time, develops a database of data about people interned in the so called "Gypsy camp", as well as documents on the life in the camp and its changes in the course of World War II. In connection with the currently prepared permanent exposition at Hodonín Memorial, the Museum does archival research into the history of the camp in Hodonín u Kunštátu between 1938 and 1950, mostly in cooperation with universities and students.

The Roma Holocaust is also addressed by the Committee for the Redress of the Roma Holocaust, Roma non-profit organisation founded with the aim to commemorate the events and to obtain compensation for the Roma Holocaust victims.

Despite the fact that the above cited examples indicate rising interest in research and remembrance of the suffering of Roma during World War II, the topic of Roma genocide has not been properly researched up to this day. This would require further projects of targeted research aimed at obtaining new historical evidence on crimes of the Nazi era. The Roma Holocaust should also receive more attention in the media and at schools.

### **3. Holocaust Education**

With effect from 1 January 2005, the new educational legislation (Act No. 561/2004) started a curriculum reform, introducing a system of Framework Educational Programmes and School Educational Programmes. In Framework Educational Programmes, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports defines principal educational areas, study fields and goals to be achieved for all levels of primary and secondary schools. Individual schools may then adjust and elaborate on these nationally valid and binding programmes in their School Educational Programmes.

The history curriculum of the Framework Educational Programme for primary and secondary education puts special emphasis on the history of the 19th and 20th century. The topics such as the Holocaust, the situation of Jews in the Czech society and anti-Semitism are part of all study programmes, including secondary vocational education. Programmes of secondary education with school leaving exam also include topics such as situation of Jews and Roma people in the society of 18th and 19th century, World War II, Nazism, fascism, war crimes and the Holocaust.

In 2013, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (*MEYS*) issued an amended version of the *MEYS's guidelines for the teaching of the 20th century history*. The Guidelines reflect the special character of modern and contemporary history studies, which deal with living historical memory, personal histories of the present generation and not yet fully researched archival materials. A special chapter is dedicated to the topical issue of the Holocaust deniers and their attempts to manipulate school children and youth. In addition to this, for all textbooks treating the above-mentioned topics the publisher must ensure that the texts are reviewed by a specialized institution (such as the Museum of Romani Culture, the Jewish Community or the Jewish Museum in Prague).

Education on the Holocaust and Jewish culture is part of the study programmes of many Czech institutions of higher education. In addition to its offer of courses on history and current issues, language and literature as well as regional issues, the higher education sector makes major contributions to research (e.g. Institute of International Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague; Prague Centre of Jewish Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague; Department of Middle Eastern and African Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague; Department of Biblical studies and Jewish Studies at the Hussite Theological Faculty, Charles University in Prague; Kurt and Ursula Schubert Centre of Jewish Studies, Palacký University in Olomouc). An important role is played by public research centres cooperating with higher education institutions (e.g. Centre for the Study of Minorities, Institute for Contemporary History, Academy of Sciences, and Documentation Centre for Property Transfers of Cultural Assets of World War II Victims).

In addition, higher education institutions contribute to the development of Romani studies. This rather new field of research began to properly develop in the Czech Republic as late as in the early 1990s, after the fall of the communist regime: the first Department of Romani Studies was established at Charles University in Prague. Today, research and education programmes on the language, culture and history of the Roma in the Czech Republic are in progress at several higher education institutions, mostly at anthropology and ethnology departments. Faculties of education offer special courses on Romani culture for future teachers (e.g. Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague; Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague; Faculty of Arts, University of West Bohemia; Faculty of Arts, University of Pardubice; University of Ostrava; Faculty of Education, Masaryk University in Brno; Faculty of Education, Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem).

In general, the number of the Holocaust related educational activities has increased significantly and so has also the room given to the topic in history textbooks and school

curricula. However, the integration of the Holocaust topic (and the Jewish and Roma history in general) into Czech history narratives remains a challenge.

In the field of the Holocaust education, Terezín Memorial plays a crucial role: since 1993, in addition to its activities including the research, care for the collections and museum events, it has been organizing educational projects for pupils and students of primary, secondary and tertiary education, concerning the genocide of the Jewish people during World War II. The Memorial also offers courses of life-long education for teachers; in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, it traditionally offers a series of four seminars. The cooperation is based on Czech Government Resolution No. 797 of 28 July 1999, according to which the Education Ministry, together with Terezín Memorial, had to set up a system of Holocaust education for teachers of primary, secondary and secondary vocational schools through special learning courses. Apart from the Jewish genocide, the seminars also address the Roma Holocaust and reflect current topical issues, such as threats of anti-Semitism, xenophobia, racism, neo-Nazism, rise of nationalism, etc. In 2013, for example, 107 one-day seminars and 36 multi-day seminars were organized for Czech schools; the seminars included exhibition visits, lectures, discussions with eyewitnesses, workshops and creative activities. The seminars involved more than 5,347 Czech pupils and students. Activities of the Terezín Memorial educational centre are also attended by school groups from abroad; in 2013, altogether 1,268 foreign visitors came to Terezín to attend 21 multi-day seminars and 24 one-day seminars. Between 2000 and 2013, altogether 1,857 teachers took part in a three-day seminar named “How to teach about the Holocaust”. For almost 20 years now, the Memorial has organized literary and art contests for primary and secondary school pupils on the theme of racial and political persecution during Nazi occupation as well as on current topics.

In 1996, the Jewish Museum in Prague opened its Educational and Cultural Centre on the occasion of its 90th anniversary; in 2012, this centre became the Education and Culture Department and it was accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports as an institution providing life-long education to teachers. As a non-governmental organisation, the Jewish Museum organizes lectures and seminars for about 12 thousand students each year both at its Prague and Brno branches; it therefore plays a major role in spreading education on the Jewish history and the Holocaust and in helping Czech schools to meet their educational goals in this field.

One of the main projects of the Education and Culture Department was to develop teaching materials on the history of the Czech Jews in the 20th century. The project named “Ours or foreign? Jews in the Czech 20th century” was carried out between 2011 and 2013 in cooperation with Terezín Initiative Institute and involved more than 500 teachers and 26,000 pupils of primary and secondary schools. The project focused on the main weaknesses in the teaching of modern history of the Jews, on anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, in particular on the fact that these topics are not sufficiently incorporated in the traditionally “nation-focused” Czech history curriculum. The project’s output was the publication “*Ours or foreign? Jews in the Czech 20th century*”, available to schools free of charge at the Jewish Museum in Prague or downloadable on-line at [www.nasinebocizi.cz](http://www.nasinebocizi.cz).

Another important institution engaging in the Holocaust education is the Museum of Romani Culture. Its education department offers lectures on various topics related to the Roma history, culture and traditions for primary and secondary schools, for university students and for the general public. Every year, the Museum receives about 3,000 pupils and students of Czech primary and secondary schools and universities. Educational programmes on the Roma Holocaust start with a visit to the fourth hall of the permanent exhibition which is dedicated to the topic of Roma genocide in World War II. The Museum prepared, in cooperation with the Jewish Museum's Brno branch, an interactive educational programme named "Porajmos-Shoah-Holocaust", requiring students to work with an interactive timeline, archival resources and personal narratives of eyewitnesses. As a part of the programme, students meet with Jewish or Roma eyewitnesses. Every year, the Museum organizes a one-week course for primary and secondary school pupils as a part of the European-wide Action Week against Racism. It deals mainly with the topic of Roma genocide and consists also of interactive workshops on racism, human rights, discrimination, migration, stereotypes and minorities.

The Museum of Romani Culture also collaborates with "*Živá paměť*" (Living Memory), a non-governmental organisation which offers lectures on Roma Holocaust and discussions with Roma eyewitness for primary and secondary school pupils and university students. The lecture programme named "*The disappeared Roma and Roma today*" takes place directly at schools and includes a history lecture and a personal narration of a Roma eyewitness. Over the 10 years of its existence, this programme addressed almost 10,000 Czech students.

Together with Prague Jewish Museum's Education Centre, the Museum of Romani Culture runs workshops on the Jewish and Roma Holocaust. In cooperation with Terežín Memorial, it organizes workshops for teachers on "*How to teach about the Roma Holocaust*". In 2010, the Museum set up an itinerant exhibition named "*Roma Genocide during World War II*", based on its permanent exhibition on this topic opened in 2007; the exhibition attracted more than 4,000 visitors from the whole Czech Republic. The Museum has been an official member of the Czech delegation to IHRA - the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance – for more than 10 years. Its representative is a member of the Subcommittee on the Roma Genocide, part of the IHRA educational working group. The Museum's active membership of the IHRA gave rise to a number of joint projects; one recent example is the launch of a multilingual website [www.romasinti.eu](http://www.romasinti.eu).

The National Pedagogical Museum and Library of J. A. Comenius also contributes to the Holocaust education; in connection with the newly established Hodonín Memorial, it has prepared a touring exhibition documenting the troubled history of the so called "Gypsy camp" and putting it in a broader historical and European context. Since 2012 when the exhibition was created, it has toured through more than 30 destinations in the Czech Republic (mainly primary and secondary schools, higher education institutions, but also castles and town halls). At schools, the exhibition has reached more than 6,000 children and young people. Moreover it was presented to the Parliament of the Czech Republic (April, June 2014) and at the headquarters of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg (May 2014).

In 2012, the Shoah Memorial Prague ([www.bubny.org](http://www.bubny.org)) was founded in Prague. The Memorial currently prepares a project for the reconstruction of Prague – Bubny train station at

Prague 7, the place from which almost fifty thousand Czech Jews were transported to concentration camps during World War II. The memorial will be built in cooperation with the Jewish Museum Prague, Terezín Initiative Institute, Czech Railways (ČD), the Czech-German Fund for the Future, the Jewish Community Prague, the National Pedagogical Museum and Library of J. A. Comenius and DOX Centre for Contemporary Art. It should open to public in 2016, on the 75th anniversary of the first transports from Prague. The Memorial is intended as a modern platform for dialogue with a permanent exhibition and a number of temporary exhibitions, discussion projects and educational facilities.

The permanent exhibition should deal with a broad range of today's topics connected with the stigmas of our recent past. Unique testimonies of those who survived, passive witnesses as well as active organizers of transports, will receive their space and serve the educational purpose. A strong motive of the exhibition is to bring to life the direct experience of war events' eyewitnesses in order to make it accessible to the third and fourth after-war generation. The first educational project to be launched by the Memorial in form of an exhibition and an application for mobile phones and tablets is a digital guide of Prague 7, enabling the user to discover invisible layers and testimonies of the district's recent past.

#### **4. Holocaust Remembrance**

##### **4.1 Historic and Memorial Sites**

The Czech Republic promotes the remembrance of the Holocaust and Nazi regime victims on a long-term basis, by supporting the establishment and operation of memorials, as well as by organizing remembrance events with the participation of public officials. The principal Holocaust remembrance site is the town of Terezín with its Terezín Memorial, establishment operated by the Ministry of Culture, founded on the site of former Nazi repressive facilities.

Another two important state-established and state-operated remembrance sites to the victims of Nazism are found in Lidice and Ležáky, villages obliterated during World War II. Remembrance events are also held at dozens of other places that witnessed violence against civilians during the occupation.

In 2009, the Czech Republic Government approved resolution No. 589/2009 to establish remembrance sites for victims of the Roma Holocaust at Lety u Písku and Hodonín u Kunštátu, sites of Nazi concentration camps. The remembrance site at Lety u Písku is maintained by the Ministry of Culture. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports was given the task to acquire Žalov recreational facility in Hodonín u Kunštátu and rebuild it into an international educational and conference centre for the Roma Holocaust remembrance. Following Government Resolution No. 158/2011, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, modified the project and decided to establish the Roma Holocaust Memorial in Hodonín u Kunštátu. The aim of the Memorial will be to provide education and information especially on the Roma Holocaust in connection with the Jewish Holocaust and oppression of the population during World War II, and to offer detailed information on the so called "Gypsy camp" in Hodonín. The Memorial should be finished and open its doors to the public in 2017.

In 2007, the Museum of Romani Culture opened the fourth part of its permanent exhibition dedicated to the Roma genocide during World War II. In the display, visitors will find information about Nazi persecution of the Roma people, about “Gypsy camps” under the Protectorate or about Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination and concentration camp. The information is illustrated by personal accounts of the events, historical documents and photos. Other activities on the topic of the Roma Holocaust include events, especially exhibitions, organized by the Committee for the Redress of the Roma Holocaust, or an interactive educational DVD in Czech, English and Romany named “Lety u Písku – a place about which we cannot remain silent”, published by Lidice Memorial. The DVD informs about the camp in Lety and more generally about broader issues connected with the Roma genocide.

The Memorial to Holocaust victims in Prague’s Pinkas Synagogue is a unique place of memory. Established in the 1950s at the time of one of the most vicious Communist anti-Semitic campaigns, it consists of a list of approximately 75,000 Jewish Holocaust victims whose names are written on synagogue walls. At the time of its establishment, this subdued but very impressive memorial (one of the first major Holocaust memorials based on names) could only exist outside of the public space, in a synagogue where, in the eyes of the Communist regime, it posed no challenge to the mainstream and regime-directed remembrance of WWII.

In general, the visitors’ interest in the main memorials of World War II victims is slightly increasing. The Holocaust memorials seem to attract different groups of visitors than other remembrance sites connected with World War II historical events. As a rule, the attendance rate rises on important anniversaries and returns back to standard afterwards. Despite the growing interest of visitors in the memorials, 80 percent of them are foreign tourists, mainly young people. Decrease in the number of Czech visitors is particularly noticeable in the number of young visitors, which has gone down by 50 percent over the last five years. Studies suggest that the decrease is due to limited budgets of schools; as a result, schools cut down on costly visits and prefer organizing lectures with the Holocaust survivors directly at school.

However, it is important to note that the decline in the number of Czech visitors could be identified only in the 2013 statistics that were available at the time of drafting this report. New statistics for 2014 show that the drop in the number of Czech school groups visiting the sites was only temporary. Apparently it was due to the recent economic crisis that put a strain on both household and school budgets. Today, the trend is beginning to reverse – the number of visitors, mainly school groups, has risen by 17 percent. The memorials of national resistance (in particular the two main remembrance sites in Lidice and Ležáky) have seen a slight decrease in the number of Czech visitors, including students. In absolute figures, these two remembrance sites attract almost as many Czech visitors (43,000 - 45,000 a year) as Terezín Memorial (about 47,000 - 55,000 a year).

## **4.2 Cultures of Remembrance**

The Czech Republic has a long tradition of the official remembrance of the events associated with the Holocaust and other Nazi crimes. Public holidays and other special days are defined by the Act No. 245/2000. Following the decision of the Czech Republic Parliament, the so-

called special days have been extended to include the following dates connected with the Nazi occupation and crimes perpetrated in Czechoslovakia: 27 January – the Day of the Holocaust victims remembrance and of the prevention of crimes against humanity, and 10 June – the anniversary of the obliteration of Lidice.

The official celebration of the Day of the Holocaust victims' remembrance and of the prevention of crimes against humanity is organized by the Senate of the Czech Republic Parliament, together with the Foundation for Holocaust Victims and the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic. Similar events to commemorate this Day are also organized by other of the 10 Jewish communities in the Czech Republic, usually in cooperation with local municipal authorities.

The Czech Republic's list of public holidays and special days includes remembrance days of the World War II events and of the fight against the totalitarian regime, such as 17 November the Day of the fight for freedom and democracy (1939 – closure of Czech universities by the Nazis, 1989 – student protests against the communist rule), 5 May – the May uprising of the Czech people, 8 May – the Victory Day, 27 June – the Remembrance Day of the victims of the communist regime (1950 – execution of Milada Horáková).

The principal official ceremonial event to commemorate the Holocaust victims is Terezín Commemoration Ceremony, traditionally held on the third Sunday of May and attended by the Holocaust survivors, senior state officials and representatives of other organisations. Moreover, in many towns the Holocaust Remembrance Day – Yom HaShoah is celebrated by a public reading of the names of the Holocaust victims, with the participation of politicians as well as representatives of the civil society. On 8 March, the Czech Republic annually commemorates the extermination of so-called Terezín family camp prisoners (3,792 people) in Auschwitz-Birkenau, which was the largest mass murder of Czechoslovak people during World War II. With the IHRA support, the Jewish Museum in Prague currently runs a project with the aim to highlight the 8 March as a remembrance day of special importance for the culture of remembrance in the Czech Republic.

The Museum of Romani Culture annually organizes events on the Day of the Holocaust victims remembrance, on 7 March – the anniversary of the first Roma transport to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp in 1943, and on 21 August – the anniversary of the first mass deportation of Roma prisoners from the second Roma concentration camp in Hodonín u Kunštátu to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1943. The event to commemorate this largest transport of Roma prisoners is traditionally held at Hodonín Memorial and Žalov Memorial on a Sunday of August nearest to the 21 August anniversary. An official ceremonial event named “Commemoration of the Roma Holocaust victims and of the establishment and closure of Lety Roma concentration camp” is held on 1 August of each year and is attended by the Prime Minister and other public representatives.

## **5. Holocaust Denial and Other Hate Crimes and Their Relation to Anti-Semitism**

The racist and other intolerance-related phenomena in the society have been systematically addressed by the Czech Republic Government since 1993. The Czech Republic's legislation

does not recognize “hate crime” as such. However, with regard to the national security and to the protection of vulnerable groups of people, the elements of hate crime are incorporated in the definition of the crime of extremism.

On 1 January 2010, the new Criminal Code (Act No. 40/2009) entered into force, specifying the terminology related to the Holocaust denial and other hate crimes and introducing some new relevant crime definitions. Under the new crime definition, a person who publically denies, casts doubt on, advocates or attempts to justify the Nazi, communist or other genocide or other crimes against humanity is liable to imprisonment for a term of six months to three years. A person who establishes, supports or promotes a movement demonstrably aimed at suppressing human rights and freedoms (or publically expresses sympathy towards such movement) or promotes racial, ethnic, national, religious or class-related hate or hate against any other group of people shall be sentenced to imprisonment of up to ten years. Despite the new stricter crime definition, the number of people sentenced for hate crimes remains more or less the same over the monitored period (without major fluctuations in each year).

Over the last few years, there has been a decrease in the number of crimes with anti-Semitism connotations (with the exceptional increase from 6 to 15 in 2013). In 2012, 9 such crimes were recorded, which is half the number of 2011. The proportion of such crimes in the total number of extremist crimes was 5.2 percent. The total number of extremist crimes in the Czech Republic has been steadily decreasing over the last five years (265 in 2009, 252 in 2010, 238 in 2011, 176 in 2012) with the exception of 2013, when it rose to 211.

As regards manifestations of anti-Semitism, their incidence remained more or less the same between 2008 and 2013, with the exception of electronic media where the increase was considerable. Over the monitored period, the following manifestations of anti-Semitism were recorded: physical attack (2008 - 1 case, 2011 - 1 case and 2013 - 1 case), attack on property (2008-2, 2009-6, 2010-5, 2011-6, 2012-6, 2013-3), threatening (2008-2, 2009-1, 2010-3, 2011-4, 2012-0, 2013-3), harassment (2008-15, 2009-4, 2010-8, 2011-7, 2012-10, 2013-6), texts, websites, images and videos (2008-28, 2009-17, 2010-31, 2011-26, 2012-82, 2013-156). In 2013 when the rest of Europe experienced a significant increase in physical manifestations of anti-Semitism, the Czech Republic saw a decrease in the incidence of such acts. On the other hand, the 50-percent increase of anti-Semitic manifestations in electronic media is alarming. Most of them are found on the websites and discussion fora of Czech right-wing extremists.

In December 2013, the Czech Republic Government passed a resolution on the measures to be taken in the event of social unrest; the resolution requires the ministers to use the media to respond, in an efficient and coordinated manner, to false information about the Roma concerned and about the steps taken to deescalate social tensions. Following the resolution, the Czech Republic Police and the Ministry of the Interior have issued a guidelines for communication with the media to prevent security risks in socially excluded neighbourhoods; the handbook contains e.g. a recommendation to monitor and actively disprove the emerging false information and myths (concerning Roma and other minorities).

From 2011, the Report on Extremism in the Territory of the Czech Republic includes also statistics on crimes motivated by hate against the Roma. As regards the Roma issue, the Czech Republic does not keep records of ethnicity of perpetrators or victims of crimes. In order to be classified as a crime motivated by hate against the Roma in the police statistics, the crime must meet the following criteria: 1) the police officer identifies the crime in the police record as a crime with extremist connotations, 2) the victim identifies himself/herself as Roma, or the damaged property has a clear connection with the Roma minority.

In 2012, there were 52 crimes motivated by hate against the Roma recorded, which is a decrease compared to 2011 when the number was 69. These crimes accounted for 30.1 percent of the total number of crimes with extremist connotations. This number further decreased to 42 crimes in 2013.