

## **Country Report on Holocaust Education in Task Force Member Countries**

### **LUXEMBOURG**

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#### Summary

During the first 20 to 25 years after World War II, there was not a great need in Luxembourg for special education on the Holocaust because the memory of it was kept alive by the survivors.

In the early 1980s, however, it became evident that Holocaust memory was fading as many of the survivors grew old and passed away.

Robert Kriepps, a former Minister for Cultural Affairs and a prisoner in the Hinert and Natzweiler concentration camps, initiated the first education program in Luxembourg by publishing a small booklet on the German occupational policy in Luxembourg and the sufferings that ensued. Written by Luxembourg historians, it was published in a single edition of 10,000 and distributed to all students in Luxembourg aged 15 and older.

The local administrations are offered conferences on a range of subjects related to World War II, including antisemitism, the deportation of the Jewish population, and the resistance. The history curriculum includes long chapters on the war, including the Holocaust, and is a part of all secondary schools as well as some primary schools.

**Full report following the question guideline:**

**1. What official directives from government ministries and/or local authorities regarding the teaching of the Holocaust exist in your country?**

Curricula are defined by the so-called “commissions nationales”, comprising teachers who are experts in their fields, and must be approved by the appropriate Minister of Education.

Each year, the number of lessons to be taught at each level in each subject are established in a “règlement grand-ducal” following the suggestions made by the national commissions for curricula.

**2. If the Holocaust is not a mandatory subject, what percentage of schools chooses to teach about the Holocaust?**

As the subject is an established component of the official curriculum, teachers must treat the Holocaust as a central theme. However, the teacher determines how detailed the study will be.

**3. How is the Holocaust defined?**

The Holocaust is defined by the French and German history books in use in Luxembourg schools.

**4. Is the Holocaust taught as a subject in its own right, or as part of a broader topic?**

**Explain the reasoning behind this decision.**

The official curriculum deems the study of World War II, and in particular the Shoah, a compulsory subject. The Holocaust is taught in the context of the war.

**5. At what age(s) do young people learn about the Holocaust in schools? Do students encounter the Holocaust in schools more than once? Please give details.**

In general, students aged 15 to 19 study the historic facts of World War II. Some elementary knowledge of the topic, however, is taught in primary school when the students are 12 years old.

Primary school in Luxembourg begins at age six (children must have turned six by September 1 to begin that year) and lasts six years. After primary school, secondary school continues for 7 years and culminates in different certificates (diplôme de fin d'études secondaires, diplôme de fin d'études secondaires techniques, or diplôme de technicien) or, alternatively, for 6 years and culminates in a vocational-training certificate [Certificat d'Aptitude Technique et Professionnelle (CATP)].

**6. How many hours are allocated to teaching and learning about the Holocaust in schools?**

Depending on the importance the teacher attributes to the subject and the age of the students, the Holocaust can be covered in two to six lessons, excluding visits to concentration camps abroad or other memorial sites.

**7. In what areas of study (history, literature, sociology, theology) is the Holocaust taught?**

**In each case, briefly outline the rationale for teaching the Holocaust in this particular subject area.**

The Holocaust is taught in a multidisciplinary way. Though it is essentially taught as a part of the history curriculum, it can also be covered in religious science or language (French, German, and English) courses. Each discipline, however, has its own pedagogical approach to the subject: In language classes, the Holocaust is primarily covered via the comprehension and analysis of the points of views of various authors, whereas religious science approaches it from the perspective of human rights or the history of the Jewish people.

**8. (a) What historical, pedagogical and didactic training is provided to teachers of the Holocaust at either the university level or the professional development level in your country?**

University Education

The courses offered at the University of Luxembourg relate to the subject of human rights across the disciplines, including psychology, sociology, and the sciences, as well as in the social domain, intercultural education, social and moral education, and ethics. The teacher-training department organizes two modules that cover human rights. The University of Luxembourg is also developing a program that would lead to a European master's degree in human rights.

**b) How many teacher-training sessions are held each year, and how many teachers are involved?**

The Continuing Education of Teachers

Each semester, the Ministry of Education offers up to six courses to teachers relating to human rights. One or two courses are devoted exclusively to the Holocaust.

Unfortunately, however, teachers have shown only limited interest in human rights and most of the training courses offered to them on this subject are cancelled as a result. In an attempt to remedy this, the Ministry of National Education has invited teachers to enrol in an Internet course taught by Dr. Fritzsche, a University of Magdeburg professor and UNESCO chair. It is hoped that this will provide a new way of training teachers in accordance with the Lifelong Learning program.

On the other hand, the educational trips to Auschwitz undertaken by six to eight classes of general and technical secondary education (about 120 to 150 children) are widely welcomed each year. Apart from Auschwitz, visits are also organized to the camps at Natzweiler and Bergen-Belsen. Chaperones always accompany the children.

**c) What funding is available for training in the teaching of the Holocaust in your country?**

Symposiums, seminars, training courses, and study days are financed by the State budget, established each year by law. The amount covers all courses offered and is not limited to courses offered in connection with human rights or the Holocaust.

**9. Has your country instituted a national Holocaust Memorial Day? If so, in which ways is this day marked and commemorated? What difficulties have you encountered in establishing this day of remembrance in the national consciousness?**

In Strasbourg on 18 October 2002, the assembly of the European Ministers of Education returned to the decision made in Cracovia in October 2000 by the Permanent Conference of the European Education Ministers to organize a “Journée de la Mémoire, de l’Holocauste, et de la Prévention des Crimes contre l’Humanité”. After having considered national practices and priorities, the date of 10 October was chosen as the “Journée de la Commémoration Nationale” because it is the anniversary of the 1941 referendum. The first “Journée de la Mémoire” was organized in 2003 and was a great success in general and technical secondary schools. Primary education was also involved in the initiative.

The date of commemoration was changed, however, from 10 October to 27 January with the decision made by the UN in November 2005 (42nd plenary session). Schools will observe the “Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and Prevention of Crimes against Humanity” on 27 January beginning in 2007.

In 2005, on and around 10 October, schools organized film presentations, exhibitions, and conferences with survivors. Students visited Holocaust memorials and historic sites, including Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, and Natzweiler-Struthof, throughout the school year.

**10. Has your country established a national Holocaust memorial and/or museum? What numbers of students visit this memorial/museum each year?**

Luxembourg does not have a national Holocaust memorial and/or museum . However, we have established a number of sites commemorating World War II, including:

Le Mémorial de la Déportation à Luxembourg-Hollerich (includes a special section on the Holocaust)

La Villa Pauly in the capital city centre (ancient headquarters of the Gestapo in Luxembourg; includes a documentation centre with a special section on the Holocaust)

La Croix de Hinzert à Luxembourg-Limpertsberg (monument national de la résistance et de la déportation)

Le Monument National de la Solidarité Luxembourgeoise in the capital city centre (commemoration of all victims of WWII)

Le Musée National de la Résistance à Esch-sur-Alzette (includes a special section on the Holocaust)

**11. Please estimate the percentage of students in your country who visit authentic sites, and list three primary sources of funding available in your country for visits to authentic sites.**

Each year, all secondary schools are invited to visit concentration camps and other sites of memory. These visits can be financed by the concerned ministries (National Education or Culture) or by the foundation FONARES (Fondation Nationale de la Résistance; National Council of Resistance), as well as by other organisations (e.g., Fondation Auschwitz).

History teachers and teachers of religious education have organized trips to Dachau, Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, and Natzweiler-Struthof. The FONARES provides financial aid to groups who wish to visit a former concentration camp so long as they produce a report on their visit afterwards. Year after year, the Amicale des Anciens de Mauthausen organizes two one-week trips to Mauthausen and other camps, one for young people and one for adults. Lastly, the European Centre of Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, organizes a meeting twice a year among American students, members of the Luxembourg, and members of resistance and Holocaust survivors.

**12. What are the three major textbooks used in teaching the Holocaust in your country?**

**How many pages do your school textbooks allocate to the Holocaust, and on which aspects do they focus?**

**What strategies of differentiation are typically used to make the study of the Holocaust accessible to students of different ages and with different learning needs?**

### Primary Education

In the sixth year of primary education, the curriculum features 26 pages in the history book *Die Zeitmaschine* detailing the repercussions of World War II for Luxembourg.

### Secondary Education

The curriculum of the six years of general secondary education, up to the year preceding A-Level (II<sup>e</sup>), makes the study of World War II (including the Shoah) compulsory. Activities such as

visiting museums or exhibitions, or possibly even concentration camps, may be organized within this context.

The curriculum of the third year of the technical secondary education (9<sup>e</sup>) establishes the Shoah under Point Four of the study of World War II. The subject may be treated as project work or group work. It is up to history teachers to organize visits to concentration camps or to a memorial in Luxembourg.

### **13. How far and in what ways is your country's own national history integrated into the teaching of the Holocaust?**

Of particular note is the drama group Namaste, active in a secondary school in the south of the country, which has worked for 25 years to encourage children to combat racism and xenophobia. The group does not hesitate to tackle delicate subjects like resistance and collaboration. A DVD of their work has been sent to all secondary school.

A more recently initiated project is *Contre l'Oubli* ("Against Forgetting"), undertaken by a technical secondary school in the capital. This multidisciplinary program addresses so-called "collective memory." A travelling exhibition on the concentration camp at Natzweiler-Struthof, a pedagogical brochure, conferences, and roundtable discussions with those who witnessed the horrors of the camps have all contributed to an effective consciousness-raising campaign. A 12-minute documentary has been produced and is available as a pedagogical tool for teachers who choose to cover the concentration camps or related topics. Supported by the Ministry of

Education and the Service National de la Jeunesse, the documentary is organized around the theme of young people facing the unspeakable.

**14. What are the three major obstacles to teaching and learning about the Holocaust in your country?**

Despite the particularities of our country, one can say that, on the one hand, the teaching of the Holocaust does not present any problems in Luxembourg, while on the other hand it is widely appreciated and supported by associations and governmental organisations. Indeed, Luxembourg youth is rather sensitive to the events of World War II and specifically the Shoah.