



Work Package 1

Workshop Münster - The Police and the Holocaust

At the end of October, a new transnational educational project focusing on the history of the police during the Holocaust was launched at the Villa ten Hompel in Münster. Titled *“The Police and the Holocaust,”* the project brings together German and Austrian police officers. The central theme of the project is the question of how understanding the police’s involvement in Nazi crimes impacts the modern police force in both countries.

The initiative is funded by the EU and carried out by three key partners: the Villa ten Hompel, the World Jewish Congress (WJC), and the NGO *what matters*, which are all in their individual approaches specialized in educational projects on the Holocaust and combating antisemitism. The project aims to encourage policymakers and public officials to establish sustainable initiatives and integrate Holocaust education as a core element of police training in the future.

The project introduces two innovative approaches to Holocaust education:

1. It targets law enforcement personnel specifically, tailoring programs to their professional context.
2. It incorporates lesser-known Holocaust sites into educational curricula, fostering a nuanced understanding and greater awareness of the Holocaust’s complexities.

Education is a crucial tool in combating antisemitism and ensuring that future generations in Europe recognize the dangers of hatred and extremism that led to the Holocaust. With the exceptional expertise of the Villa ten Hompel, the project seeks to address significant gaps in knowledge about the role of police institutions during the Holocaust among German and Austrian officers. The goal is to provide law enforcement agencies with a comprehensive understanding of their historical context.

The project’s launch event in Münster served as the first workshop. It focused on participants getting to know each other and discussing their expectations and aspirations. Special emphasis was placed on the personal values of the officers and their relevance to contemporary policing. Participants engaged with the permanent exhibition *“History – Violence – Conscience”* in a participatory tour, where they identified key points of interest.

The tour highlighted the scope of the crimes committed by the German Ordnungspolizei, the significant individual choices available to officers, and the professional continuities and lack of reckoning within postwar German society. This reflective approach helped the participants to connect the past with their professional roles today, fostering a deeper awareness of the moral and ethical dimensions of policing.

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