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Final Report on Supporting Local Holocaust Research and Archive Networks

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Abstract (for dissemination)	In the context of stimulating the development of local networks in places where practitioners often work in isolation and have insufficient access to expertise and resources, EHRI created a Mobile Experts Lab which was able to support the local challenges of archives and researchers in the field of access to and use of Holocaust documentation. This Experts Lab was able to offer services in seven different fields with a plethora of experts hailing from different EHRI institutions, all around the world. By helping over 19 institutions the Experts lab's activities demonstrated its critical role in advancing Holocaust documentation and research by facilitating knowledge transfer and strengthening institutional capacity.
Management Summary	n/a

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1 Introduction

The development of international communities of experts has played a central role in the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) since the start of the project in 2010. EHRI made great advances in connecting international experts with regard to Holocaust documentation from a large range of areas: collection management, preservation, conservation, cataloguing, and access.

The focus of Work Package 4 (WP4), "Localisation and capacity building" lays on deepening and enhancing this emerging international collaboration. WP4 particularly focuses on stimulating the development of local networks in places where practitioners often work in isolation and have insufficient access to expertise and resources. Thus, priority is given to geographical areas and archives where there is less knowledge in the handling of Holocaust documentation and places where specialists have fewer opportunities to meet their peers in Europe. This can, for example, be the case for archives in Southern and Eastern Europe, smaller archives, as well as archives that are not solely devoted to the topic of the Holocaust or where the staff only has limited knowledge about this specific field.

By fostering an exchange between emerging local networks and international experts, WP4 contributed to local capacity building and gathered a better understanding of the challenges that Holocaust experts face in different local settings.

Hence, WP4 employed a variety of tools, such as workshops, seminars, a mobile experts' lab, communication networks, online publications and more.

2 Support Local Holocaust Research and Archive Networks through the establishment of the EHRI Mobile Experts Lab

Task 4.2, "Support local Holocaust research and archive networks and develop an EHRI ambassador network and an EHRI Experts Lab," was able to leverage EHRI's experience as a body that brings together experts from various disciplines and various countries to support the local challenges of archives and researchers in the field of access to and use of Holocaust documentation. This support - based on the tools developed by EHRI and on the expertise of EHRI partners - was tailored to specific local needs and priorities which, in the context of this action, led to the creation of the EHRI Mobile Experts Lab (Experts Lab).

2.1 Methodology for Establishing the Experts Lab

In Deliverable 4.1¹ a detailed methodology for establishing the Experts Lab was drawn up, including mapping the grass-roots needs for would-be services delivered by the Experts Lab. Acting upon a survey sent out to a contact list of contributors to the EHRI Portal, where 185 responses were received from across Europe, it was decided to provide a portfolio of 10 services. However, as the Experts Lab started its work, changes were made to that list, due to a few factors. Some services were in less demand and some were not requested at all. In addition, the Experts Lab staff changed over time, and in some cases, we were not able to replace the expert and could not therefore offer the service that we had initially planned.

In practice, the following 6 services were offered by the Lab:

¹ <https://www.ehri-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/D4.1-Guidelines-for-supporting-local-Holocaust-research-and-archive-networks.pdf>

	Experts Lab Services	Expert	Affiliated Institution of the Expert
1	Name records and indexing names	Sonja Nilson	Arolsen Archives (ITS)
2	EHRI Portal tools (Data Integration, in cooperation with Work package 9)	Herminio García González	KD
3	Handling of Photographs	Jonathan Matthews, Maaty Frenkelzon	YV
4	Working with the Arolsen database	Giora Zwilling, Franciska Schubert	Arolsen Archives (ITS)
5	Digitization and advice on arranging materials for digitization	Krzystof Czajka, Magdalena Romansowska	JHI
6	EHRI's Data Provider Agreement	Dirk Luyten	SAB/CegeSoma

2.1.1 Name Records and Indexing Names and Working with the Arolsen Database

As part of EHRI's commitment to enhancing collaboration and capacity building, the Arolsen Archives (ITS) provided expert services on name records, indexing names, and working with the Arolsen Database, to a range of institutions.

Name records are the digital expression of biographical data of specific persons as registered on and extracted from specific sources. Names indexing is the process of deciphering and extracting the data items from the specific source and entering them into the different fields of the name record. The challenges of correctly recognizing, and interpreting the data and the choice and assignment of the data items to the suitable fields of information of the name record was therefore important to discuss and elaborate on in the consultancy. This consultancy aimed to support archival work, improve metadata integration, and promote best practices in data management. In addition, consultancy was provided to help institutions understand which services at Arolsen are at the disposal of both researchers and other interested persons, and how to best use the Arolsen Archives' database. Therefore, the Arolsen Archives' experts, Giora Zwilling, Sonja Nilson, and Franziska Schubert sought to serve institutions in need of help.

During the course of this task, the Arolsen Archives collaborated with various institutions, located in Germany, which looked for assistance in the above-mentioned fields. The consultancy was provided in multiple ways and formats: Zoom meetings, phone conversations, and in-person meetings.

One of the institutions the Experts Lab's members worked with was the Memorial for Victims of Nazi "Euthanasia" in Bernburg. Meetings were initially held via Zoom, and later a follow-up was provided via phone calls. This process allowed the institution to integrate its metadata into the Arolsen Archives' database: Sonja Nilson received the data and colleagues from two other departments prepared and then imported the data into the Arolsen database.

Another institution which received support, first through Zoom, and then later through an in-person meeting, was Archiv der Münchner Arbeiterbewegung e.V. The meetings paired the Experts Lab's experts with Archiv Arbeiterbewegung's archivists in order to provide support to prepare their metadata for integration into the Arolsen archives' systems.

Two Memorial Sites and a municipal archive also participated in Zoom sessions with the Arolsen experts. The meeting with the Memorial Site Dachau focused on the use of the Arolsen Archives' database, while the archivists from the Memorial Site Flossenbürg received assistance on various archival tools and metadata structuring. The Municipal Archive Haslach also received guidance on digital documentation practices through Zoom communication.

Although many institutions who requested assistance from the Arolsen experts chose online sessions, others participated in workshops held in person. For example, employees of the University of Marburg took part in in-person advanced workshops on metadata management. Similarly, the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) also participated in in-person workshops that provided detailed instruction on archival integration.

The Czech National Archives in Prague benefitted from Zoom and in-person sessions for technical support on database usage. Finally, the Jewish Digital Cultural Recovery Project, based in Berlin, had an in-person meeting during which they received consultation on strategic planning sessions for metadata alignment.

With regard to follow-up, this varied depending on the institution and the scope of collaboration. For institutions such as the Memorial for Victims of Nazi "Euthanasia" in Bernburg and the Archiv der Münchner Arbeiterbewegung, there was repeated contact to refine metadata and resolve technical challenges. Continued engagement was maintained also with the Memorial Site Flossenbürg, the National Archive Prague, and VWI to address specific institutional needs and update metadata practices.

These expert services were critical for several reasons. First, they provided essential support in restructuring and preparing metadata for integration, and ensuring compliance with best practices for data storage. Second, they contributed to capacity building by helping institutions understand and effectively utilize the Arolsen Archives' database. Third, these services improved data accessibility by enhancing the visibility and usability of archival holdings through better metadata practices. Finally, they facilitated knowledge sharing by proactively addressing the challenges faced by smaller archives, which often lack technical expertise or sufficient resources.

Institutions derived several advantages from these expert services. One significant benefit was enhanced data quality, as workshops facilitated the restructuring of metadata, enabling more efficient sorting, searching, and integration into larger archival systems. Additionally, the collaboration created valuable networking opportunities by fostering connections between local and international archives, promoting shared goals and the exchange of knowledge. Finally, custom solutions were developed to address the unique needs of each archive, ensuring practical and sustainable outcomes tailored to their specific requirements.

Training on "tidy data" principles was recommended to improve data management skills. This included introducing concepts through resources like the Library Carpentry course on spreadsheets. Additionally, emphasis was placed on aligning archival data practices with the FAIR principles - Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability - to enhance the usability and sustainability of the archives.

Through its expert services, the Arolsen Archives played a vital role in strengthening the capacities of diverse institutions. By addressing metadata challenges, fostering collaboration, and promoting best practices, these efforts significantly contributed to the broader goals of EHRI in advancing Holocaust documentation and research.

2.1.2 EHRI Portal Tools

As initially planned and described in the task's DoA, the Experts Lab worked in coordination and cooperation with the WP9 Mobile Data Integration Lab. Therefore, one of the services

provided aimed to help institutions that face technological difficulties, and to assist them with data integration. In 2023, such assistance was discussed with three archives in Novi Sad, Serbia: the Archives of Vojvodina, the Historical Archives of the City of Novi Sad, and the Museum of Vojvodina. This gave the Experts Lab the opportunity to organize a one-day in-person training for the institutions all together. The training took place at the end of 2023 during a visit by the EHRI data integration expert, Herminio García González of KD. In this case, it was specifically important for the Experts Lab to focus on geographical areas, like Serbia, where less knowledge in handling Holocaust documentation was observed. It was also an example where local specialists meet comparatively little in person with their peers in Europe. These include lesser opportunities for access to EU funding programs and limited participation in international forums and initiatives due to language barriers. This exchange between the local archivists, and EHRI's data integration expert thus helped the project's mission for local capacity building and increased the understanding of the challenges that Holocaust experts face in different local settings.

The agenda for the full day workshop included a number of topics: information on the EHRI project and the EHRI Portal, the difference between integrating the data manually and semi-automatically into the Portal, checking the participating institutions' information on the Portal, and creating their user profiles and assigning them permissions to manage their own institutions' data on the Portal. This introductory part was followed by a hands-on session, which included creating or updating the institutions' information, integrating the collections' descriptions into the Portal, and deciding what data integration route fits each institution. In addition to this full day seminar, there was follow-up correspondence with the institutions. We can highlight the exchanges with Mr. Aleksander Bursac from the Archives of Vojvodina which not only contributed to a better coverage of his institution in the Portal, but also led to some improvements of the Portal administration interface, which were promptly reported and fixed.

As mentioned, this particular service was critical for EHRI since Serbia is an area where there is less access to EHRI resources and knowledge is less spread. Therefore, the visit by the data integration lab's expert increased Serbian institutions' awareness of EHRI activities and services and that translated into an increased visibility on the EHRI Portal. On a practical level, this produced thorough institution descriptions, and detailed top-level archival descriptions on the Portal.

Here is a summary of the encounter: The Archives of Vojvodina² created a complete institutional description with 7 detailed top-level archival descriptions. The Museum of Vojvodina³ updated its institutional description and created two top-level archival descriptions. The Historical Archives of Novi Sad City⁴ made updates to the institutional description. Given that this was the first time EHRI was in contact with these institutions, the example of the Vojvodina archives surpassed expectations for their results.

In conclusion, the results of this visit and the online communication with the local archivists proved the importance of this specific expert service in the Experts Lab and the cooperation between WP4 and WP9 and, respectively, the Mobile Experts Lab and the Data Integration Lab. It was important as the institutions got to know EHRI and the different aspects of its services. From the feedback provided to the data integration expert, we learned that the EHRI project seemed too distant for some of the people and institutions not directly included in the project, and therefore they lacked the knowledge and tools to start. The important steps of introducing them to the project, including a general description of EHRI and its services, the Portal and how to work on it, in certain cases turned out to be a *conditio sine qua non* just to

² <https://portal.ehri-project.eu/institutions/rs-006043>

³ <https://portal.ehri-project.eu/institutions/rs-006617>

⁴ <https://portal.ehri-project.eu/institutions/rs-006046>

start the collaboration. In addition, reaching out to areas, particularly in the East, made sense as they might not have other opportunities to collaborate. The EHRI Portal benefited from content submitted from this particular region and therefore, this encounter underlines the importance of focusing on data integration to these specific regions for the advantage of the institutions and the Portal itself.

2.1.3 Handling of Photographs

Pre-war, wartime, and immediate post-war Holocaust-related photographs are important historical resources for both research and visual commemoration. Therefore, the task's team felt there was a need to provide consultancy in relation to photography. Often, photographs are stored in archives distinct from document archives, and so offering an expert who could focus on the particular challenges of photographic archiving was important. This is especially relevant today, as new technologies like AI threaten to challenge the authenticity of photographs, and where archival photographs, which serve as irreplaceable records of the past, need unique tools for proper handling to prevent damage such as fading, tearing, or chemical deterioration. Topics to be addressed were: research methodologies for determining persons, dates, places, events, etc., best practices for cataloguing, and recommendations for providing accessibility and aiding researchers, educators, the media, and the public at large. This expert service was added to the lab's portfolio in addition to the creation of a group of external experts in Holocaust photography working under task T4.1. This activity is reported on in Deliverable 4.6 (Final report on developing an international community of experts in preserving, mapping, cataloguing and curating Holocaust collections and linked data).

2.1.3.1 Online Lecture: Methodological Challenges of Photography Collections and Cataloguing

Based on the survey results conducted in Deliverable 4.1, we decided to offer an online lecture regarding the best uses for handling photographs. In consultation with the Experts Lab's photography expert, Jonathan Matthews (at the time, Head of Yad Vashem's Photo Archives), it was decided to organize and offer - to all institutions interested - a webinar lecture titled "Methodological Challenges of Photography Collections and Cataloguing." The lecture, offered on Zoom, covered topics such as the organization of photographs, handling of digital materials, and how the interpretations and growing research concerning photographic materials result in revelations that may change the manner in which a photograph is contextualized by the archivist. In addition, the lecture touched upon some of the significant advancements of artificial intelligence and how these could both aid and create new challenges for archivists in ensuring the authenticity of visual material. In addition, private 1:1 sessions were offered as a follow-up to the lecture, where the photography expert provided advice to interested institutions on issues and challenges they were currently facing.

The webinar was planned and organized in coordination with WP2. Working together, a marketing plan was created, which included: uploading the advertisement on the EHRI 'latest news' page⁵; publishing the event in the EHRI newsletter; and disseminating the information on relevant social media sites. In addition, an email was sent out to institutions that had been contacted in the original survey from D4.1.

⁵ <https://www.ehri-project.eu/ehri-online-lecture-19-april-methodological-challenges-photography-collections-and-cataloging>

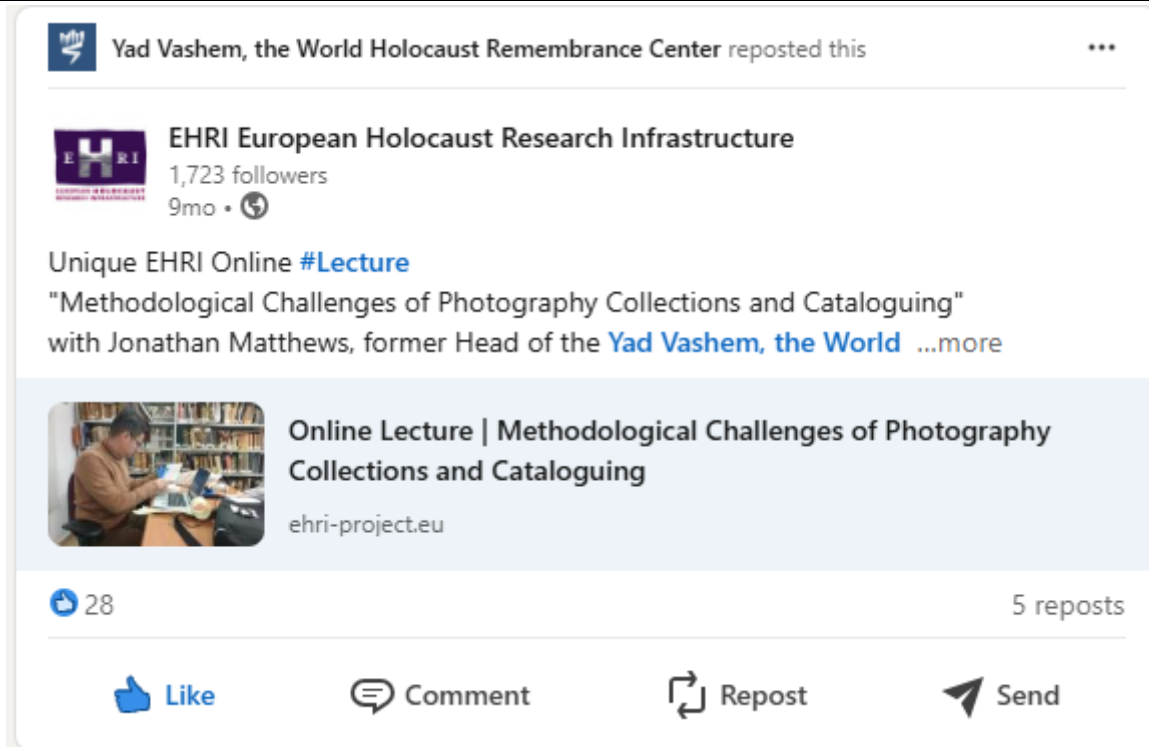


Figure 1: Yad Vashem's LinkedIn page, reposting EHRI's LinkedIn page, with the promotional image for the Online Lecture

The marketing plan also included: promotion, led by WP2, including follow up communication via emails, and additional social media posts; updates in internal institutions mailing list (for example, Yad Vashem); a follow up plan which would receive feedback through a Zoom survey; and a recording of the lecture, which was then posted on EHRI's YouTube channel. It was decided to send a follow up email after the lecture with a link to that recording, a link to sign up for EHRI's newsletter, and a last opportunity to sign up for a 1:1 session.



EHRI Newsletter - March 2024

Online Lecture | Methodological Challenges of
Photography Collections and Cataloguing

13/03/2024

**with Jonathan Matthews,
former Head of Yad
Vashem's Photo Archives**

April 9th, 2024 at 2:30 PM CET

The European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) and partner Yad Vashem invite you to a unique online lecture, which will discuss and dissect ongoing and new issues within the world of Holocaust photography collections.

The lecture is aimed at (photo) archivists, historians or researchers working with photographs.

Figure 2: A screenshot of EHRI's March 2024 Newsletter, including an update on the Online Lecture

The Zoom lecture took place on April 9th, 2024, and focused on the subjects listed above, as well as Matthews' own experience as the Head of Yad Vashem's Photo Archives. More than 150 people registered for the event, and 88 people were present for the lecture. The actual attendance rate was quite typical for Zoom lectures, and in fact, many of those who registered did so in order to receive follow-up information, including the recording. The lecture was viewed mainly across Europe, the United States, and Israel, and included representatives from different archives and museums, archivists, independent researchers, and non-professionals interested in the subject. There were both big and small institutions present. Here is a small sample of some of the institutions represented: USHMM, National library of Serbia, Jewish Museum in Prague, Bergen-Belsen Archives, Richmond University in London, Joods Cultureel Kwartier in the Netherlands, Jagiellonian University, Memorial de la Shoah, the State Archives of the Republic of North Macedonia, and the National Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia.

The feedback from the webinar was positive. At the end of the lecture, the participants were asked to fill in a feedback form which garnered 42 responses. Virtually all of them, 41 people responded that the training met their expectations, whereas only one person replied "partly." Asked what they liked most about the training, the answers included the specific examples provided by the speaker, his insights and reflections, the challenges facing Yad Vashem in photo cataloguing, and the practical advice provided regarding working with archives. In particular, people pointed out how Jonathan Matthews explained the potential challenges archivists will face with the growth of AI, the issues surrounding acquisition policy with atrocity photos, and the degree to which archivists and researchers today are able to identify people and places in those photographs. Asked for takeaways from the lecture, respondents were impressed with the recent research into famous Holocaust photographs (in this case, the well-known photo known as, "the Last Jew in Vinnitsa"⁶), tips about processing for archives,

⁶ <https://academic.oup.com/hgs/article/37/3/349/7492420>

complications in authentication, the challenges in using photos as historical sources, and the difficulties that archivists must face when deciding how to prioritize Holocaust materials.

The recording of the lecture was posted online, on EHRI's YouTube page⁷. The recorded version was requested by additional individuals and institutions, and therefore the range was even larger than those who attended in real time. As of February 10, there are 195 online views of the lecture.

Reflecting upon the lecture, the number of participants, its reach across people and institutions, and the positive feedback, the lecture as a tool used by the Experts Lab was successful.

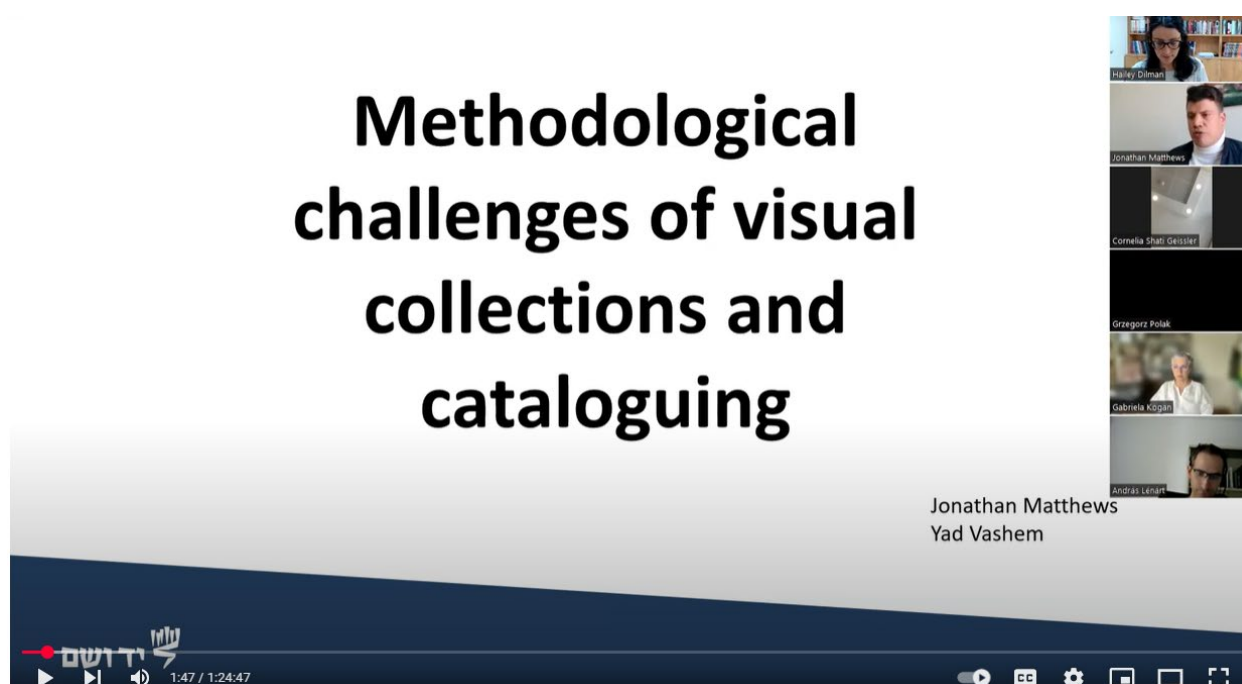


Figure 3: A screenshot from the recording of Jonathan Matthews lecture, posted on the EHRI YouTube channel. As of February 10, 2025, the lecture has received 195 views

2.1.3.2 One-on-one sessions

In addition to the webinar, one-on-one sessions with Jonathan Matthews were also offered, as a way to provide specific consultancy and practical advice to any institution that felt it would benefit from follow-up. This service was advertised along with the original promotional materials for the lecture. In response to this call, we were able to organize a 1:1 session with the Swedish History Museum which was in the process of creating a new archive. As a result, they were looking for advice on several issues: challenges of categorization, ethical questions (for example, when related to photos which contain nudity), registration processes (scanning, metadata, research), tagging and thesaurus, and how to title labels. The session provided an opportunity for colleagues to meet and discuss the challenges that were shared. The museum did mention that the session focused more on how Yad Vashem dealt with specific problems, and would have liked to hear more practical tips specifically relevant to their case. However, their takeaway from the meeting was that it is important to discuss common challenges with other institutions, that the digitization process takes a lot longer than they had initially thought,

⁷ <https://www.ehri-project.eu/ehri-webinar-9-april-methodological-challenges-photography-collections-and-cataloging/>

and that ethical issues are a constant feature, which must continually be discussed and to which no “one decision” can be made.

In conclusion, this one-on-one session was a great way to offer a follow-up to a large and relatively impersonal Zoom webinar. (Although the Zoom meeting allowed for on-the-spot questions, and follow-up mail, which the expert replied to.) The feedback given by the museum, to offer clear practical tips relevant to the institution was passed on to the second photography expert, Maaty Frenkelzon.

Although the 1:1 meeting with the Swedish History Museum was set up through the webinar, additional interest in photographic guidance was expressed by the Mauthausen Memorial Archive. The meeting with Mauthausen was prompted by a larger effort on their end to increase cooperation with different museums and in the face of various challenges in cataloguing and research on the Holocaust and Concentration Camps. Therefore, they were interested in hearing from the Experts lab photography expert on a few separate issues. Maaty Frenkelzon, the Experts Lab’s second photography expert, met with the Mauthausen photography department’s staff on January 21, 2025 on Zoom for an introductory meeting. In this meeting Maaty Frenkelzon was able to understand the archive’s current departmental organization, challenges they face, and put together a plan for the second Zoom meeting which took place in February. This meeting tackled the following issues: challenges in cataloguing, including an overview of Yad Vashem’s current system, dilemmas, including ethical questions, and tips for the use of tools which utilize AI technology in aiding with photography registration. One such tool is Large Language Models (LLM) which has the potential to ease manual cataloguing and advance the arrangement of photography collections. During these meetings, the experts from Mauthausen were interested also in turning towards EHRI to create connections with more established and larger institutions, such as Yad Vashem and Arolsen Archives. Already following the first meeting, new cooperation possibilities were explored between Mauthausen and Yad Vashem on photography rights and online uploads. Therefore, a side effect of the lab's activity was fostering direct cooperation between institutions.

2.1.4 Digitization and Advice on Arranging Materials for Digitization

This service was offered with the aim of providing consultancy in the selection and analysis of collection digitization, including the prioritization of items for digitization, selection of the appropriate digitization methods for each item, proper storage, as well as best practices for archival description of digitized collections. Krzysztof Czajka, from the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw (JHI) approached this service with a local mindset. One of the goals of the task was to preference geographical areas and archives with insufficient knowledge in the field of documentation of the Holocaust. Many small archives in Poland therefore fitted that description. Therefore, it was decided to focus in this specific service to local archives in Poland, with the future aim of expansion at a later time. In addition to the fact that many small Holocaust-era archives in the country lack proper access to professional digitization services, organizing consultation meetings with the lab’s experts will be much easier when done on a local level and in a language common for both the expert and the archivists receiving the training.

As a first step, a list of candidate institutions located within Poland was put together jointly by Krzysztof Czajka along with the EHRI WP4 team. This included 12 museums across Poland, including such in Warsaw, and outside, in places like Włodawa, Bełżec and Wejherowo. Each of these institutions was personally contacted and, as a result, one museum was keen for a consultation: the National Museum of Ethnography in Warsaw. In consultation with them, it was decided that the best way to move forward was two in-person seminars: one at their museum, and the second at the JHI.

The first meeting, as already mentioned, took place at the Ethnographic Museum, where JHI's experts, Krzysztof Czajka and Magdalena Romanowska were first introduced to the museum's scanners, storage facilities, and digitization system. This allowed them to develop a plan and compile a list of topics for discussion.

The next step was to create a full day training, which would be molded around the Museum's specific needs. The primary goal of the full day training was to expose the Ethnographic Museum's staff to the full spectrum of digitization practices available to cultural institutions. Due to the early development stage of their digitization department, their perspective was somewhat limited.

Secondary goals of the workshop included: a) Demonstrating technical possibilities and modern equipment capabilities, by showcasing advanced tools like scanners, and cameras to encourage them to explore additional funding opportunities for modernizing their lab. b) Presenting different digitization strategies; the in-house photographer at the ZIH conducted this segment, sharing various approaches and methodologies. c) Highlighting the significance of the digitization process; they consistently emphasized the value of digital repositories and demonstrated how they contribute to fulfilling the Institute's responsibilities. d) Illustrating the multidimensional nature of the digitization process; they provided an example by digitizing an object from start to finish, showing how it was scanned/photographed, entered into the internal system, processed by the next responsible staff member, described with metadata (the user-facing description), and ultimately published online.

The conclusions from the visit were clear: seeing the lab, and particularly the equipment, inspired the Ethnographic Museum to pursue modernization efforts for their own lab. Additionally, in the framework of the Experts Lab they had the opportunity to consult with the JHI's digitization specialists and resolve technical questions they had been facing. After the workshop, the JHI received positive feedback, which expressed satisfaction and willingness to implement the suggestions. In addition, the connection between the institutions continued, even after the second meeting and the JHI was contacted for advice regarding new equipment. Krzysztof Czajka provided further assistance, sharing his expertise and details about the equipment and software used at the Institute.

As a result of the meetings with EHRI experts, the museum appeared to prioritize modernizing their lab and may have applied the recommendations on metadata description processes. While further details are unclear due to structural and HR changes within both institutions, it was encouraging to see the enthusiasm for improvement and active pursuit of modernization efforts. This indicates that the collaboration had a meaningful and lasting impact on the museum's digitization journey.

2.1.5 EHRI's Content Provider Agreement

In order to safeguard personal data protection for the collection descriptions imported from a collection holding institution, EHRI (via NIOD, the controller, as EHRI is based in the Netherlands) enters into content provider agreements (CPA) with collection holding institutions. CPAs are concluded with all collection holding institutions that have collection descriptions eligible for integration in the EHRI Portal (unless (1) these collection descriptions have been ingested automatically from open data platforms or (2) they are manually selected and integrated by EHRI staff). In the CPA, collection holding institutions guarantee that their collection descriptions do not contain (special categories of) personal data that cannot be published according to the GDPR, the UAVG (the Dutch privacy law implementing GDPR) or international privacy laws and that the transfer of collection descriptions is legally allowed. For the EHRI partners that are collection holding institutions, this CPA is part of the consortium

agreement.”⁸ One of the offers of the expert-lab was a detailed presentation of EHRI’s privacy policy, the legal context to comply with and the context and objectives of the CPA.

The aim of this presentation was to explain why the signing of a content provider agreement is needed, to clarify to partners in non-EU countries the GDPR and the national implementing law to be complied with (for EHRI the Dutch privacy law) and to make clear how this content provider agreement fits in the framework of the policy of EHRI regarding protection of personal data.

In follow-up questions after the presentations (also by mail) specific articles of the content provider agreement were explained in more detail.

In the summer of 2024 the content provider agreement was also presented by the experts from CEGES/SAB Dirk Luyten and Adina Babesh-Fruchter in an in-person meeting with experts of the Polin Museum in Warsaw. As a result, later that year, the museum signed the content provider agreement.

The content provider agreement and EHRI’s privacy policy were presented also in online meetings through the Zoom platform with collection holding institutions and aggregators in the UK and with a number of Holocaust-related archives in Israel. In the first case, the Zoom meeting was especially useful to clarify the legal position and obligations of national archival aggregators transferring collection descriptions to the EHRI Portal, and their role as a potential party in the content provider agreement with EHRI. Based on the presentation, these questions could be discussed further in the context of the UK National Node of EHRI. In the second case, some archival institutions had questions about the purpose of the CPA, the precise scope of some of its articles, as well as specific questions relating to the relationship between the Dutch privacy law and Israeli law. Clarifications were provided and, after consultation, it was decided to slightly amend Article 4 of the CPA, which concerns the status of the data transferred and their reuse.

In the context of the future expansion of EHRI there was also a Zoom meeting with the Swedish Holocaust Museum, who had already been in contact with EHRI with regard to the future of EHRI-ERIC. The museum had some specific questions related to privacy issues in the context of a specific exhibition. The privacy policy of EHRI was presented and explained in more detail as well as the relation between the GDPR and national implementing law.

The service of presenting and explaining the context and details connected to the CPA proved to be useful to advance the process of signing of the agreement in parallel with the preparatory work for the data integration and often it is a prerequisite to finalize the data integration process successfully. During the presentations, the difference with ingesting collection description via an open data portal were made clear since in these cases signing of the CPA is not relevant. The already mentioned online meeting with the consortium of Israeli archives facilitated the signing of the agreement with the Wiener Library Israel, enabling the advance of the data integration process.

The presentation of the CPA was also an opportunity to explain the privacy policy of EHRI and the broader legal context to (smaller) institutions which are not always especially familiar with privacy legislation since they usually do not have privacy specialists in their team. Finally, the

⁸ For more detailed information on EHRI’s Content provider agreements: *Report on Content provider Agreements and Privacy legislation* (Deliverable 3.3 EHRI-2, August 2019) and *Report on CPA’s and Privacy Legislation* (Deliverable 3.6 EHRI-3, July 2024).

presentations facilitated further contacts with the institutions concerned, as appeared from the follow-up questions.

2.2 Future Work for the Experts Lab

Based on the successful work of the Experts Lab, a suggestion can be made that continued work should be a goal of any future EHRI activities. First, it would be significant to expand the outreach to even more institutions in regions with limited access to professional resources. Some of the expertise, like photography, EHRI Portal tools, and digitization and advice on arranging materials for digitization proved critical to participating institutions. To do this, we suggest not only utilizing the experts that have already been cultivated in this task, but locating more local experts in different countries. This might be a good opportunity to connect the outcomes of this task with Task 4.1, which has already developed an international community of experts in photography and reference services. If those already existing communities could provide expertise to local institutions, this could be a good way to expand the Experts Lab outreach. In particular, local consultations seemed to be some of the most successful frameworks, and this included the work done within Poland for the digitization expertise, as well as the training done by Arolsen Archives with local German institutions seeking advice and best practice help with the Arolsen database.

Other future work would be to strengthen connections with micro-archives. If EHRI continues to connect and encourage micro-archives to add their information to the EHRI Portal, there should be a liaison between them, and the Expert Lab. This way, a list of the different services could be offered to them. In particular this would include the EHRI Portal tools expertise, as data integration would be the most important for uploading information on the Portal, and a session with EHRI's experts on the Content Provider Agreement.

If the Experts Lab continues within the framework of the leading institutions of the National Nodes, the list of services should be expanded. This is especially true in light of workshops and seminars already taking place in EHRI. The Experts Lab could identify within those workshops which services would be useful to offer to participating institutions. Some services were not offered due to lack of demand, but also because of lack of experts. This could be solved by expanding the pool of experts, but also looking at new services to be offered. For example, a new service addressing emerging challenges such as the use of artificial intelligence in archival practices or the use of technology for digitization or categorization. By continuing to evolve its offerings, the Experts Lab could further impact its contribution to the preservation and understanding of Holocaust history for future generations.

3 Overall Conclusions

Within the time that the Experts Lab functioned, 19 institutions received one-on-one advice and support from our experts, as well as many others through larger frameworks (such as Zoom meetings or lectures). With regard to raw numbers, the Experts Lab not only met but rather exceeded its target. This is especially true in light of the fact that this Experts Lab functioned for a long time during the COVID-19 pandemic, making personal meetings particularly challenging.

Therefore, the Experts Lab successfully fulfilled its mission to provide tailored support and consultancy services to a wide range of institutions engaged in Holocaust research and archival works. Each expert was given a relative amount of freedom, in consultation with the rest of the team, to decide how to provide the institutions with the help they needed. This in turn empowered the experts to come up with plans and modules which expressed themselves in different practices, essentially creating a multifaceted approach, including lectures, personal consultations, and in-depth workshops. Therefore, the Lab not only facilitated knowledge

transfer but also strengthened institutional capacity in areas such as privacy compliance, digitization, and archival practices.

Overall, the Experts Lab's activities demonstrated its critical role in advancing Holocaust documentation and research. By this standard, the Experts Lab has reinforced the foundation for future collaboration and innovation in the field.