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**Final report on integrating regional communities and related initiatives and integrating new research communities**

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Abstract (for dissemination)	Work Package 4 (WP4) focuses on fostering collaboration and strengthening regional research communities in Holocaust documentation. Through workshops and partnerships in four countries: Italy, Slovakia, Romania, and Poland, WP4 has helped integrate local institutions into international research networks, improve archival accessibility, and promote knowledge exchange. These efforts have contributed to enhancing digital access, preserving Holocaust records, and supporting interdisciplinary cooperation. This deliverable provides a final report on the workshops conducted in each country and EHRI's efforts to sustain and expand local archival and research networks through continued engagement and capacity-building initiatives.
Management Summary	n/a

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## 1 Introduction

Since its inception, EHRI has placed great emphasis on building international networks of experts, fostering collaboration, and expanding access to Holocaust documentation. Over the years, significant progress has been made in connecting professionals working across diverse fields, from collection management and preservation to cataloguing and archival access. However, the challenge remains in ensuring that local experts, especially in regions with limited access to resources and expertise are fully integrated into these broader efforts.

Work Package 4 (WP4) focused on deepening these international collaborations while also nurturing the development of local research communities. In many regions, practitioners working with Holocaust documentation often operate in isolation, with limited opportunities to connect with their peers or gain exposure to new methodologies. WP4 sought to bridge this gap by prioritizing engagement in areas where expertise is still developing, such as smaller institutions, archives in Southern and Eastern Europe, and collections housed in institutions not primarily focused on Holocaust research. Through fostering connections between emerging local networks and established experts, WP4 strengthened capacity building while simultaneously gaining valuable insights into the distinct challenges researchers face in different regional contexts.

To facilitate these exchanges, WP4 employed a range of tools, including workshops, seminars, communication networks, online publications, and even mobile expert labs. The aim was to encourage knowledge-sharing, create sustainable partnerships, and ensure that local researchers feel supported in their work.

## 2 Integrating New Research Communities and Strengthening Research Initiatives

A key component of Work Package 4 (WP4) was Task 4.3, which focused on integrating regional research communities and fostering new academic collaborations. This initiative placed special emphasis on four countries: Italy, Romania, Poland, and Slovakia. Recognizing the importance of both local expertise and international cooperation, EHRI partners have adopted a highly collaborative approach. Each participating country benefitted from a strategic pairing - matching a local institution with an external partner. This structure ensured the creation of sustainable and meaningful connections between national and international Holocaust research efforts.

The initiative encouraged cross-disciplinary cooperation by bringing together archivists, historians, and institutions that hold or work with Holocaust-related documentation. Through this synergy, professionals from different backgrounds engaged in critical discussions on the challenges and opportunities in researching and preserving Holocaust history. By facilitating connections between local experts and bringing them in touch with international peers, the project strengthened the broader research landscape and enhances accessibility to vital historical records.

### 2.1 Mapping the Holocaust Research Landscape

To develop a comprehensive understanding of the existing Holocaust research infrastructure in each country, extensive efforts were made to identify and map relevant institutions. In the first phase of the task, a detailed survey was conducted, resulting in comprehensive lists of 54

to 63 institutions per country.<sup>1</sup> This meticulous mapping process served as a crucial first step, allowing EHRI to assess the specific needs, resources, and gaps within each regional research ecosystem. By establishing this foundation, EHRI was able to tailor its approach to suit each country's unique research landscape. The data gathered through this effort played a pivotal role in ensuring that the initiative was not only well-informed but also capable of addressing local concerns and priorities effectively. This targeted strategy allowed EHRI to engage meaningfully with stakeholders, fostering a more inclusive and responsive research network.

## 2.2 Workshops and Engagement Strategies

One of the primary strategies employed to facilitate collaboration and engagement was the organization of workshops in each country. These workshops served as key platforms for experts and practitioners to connect, share insights, and discuss common challenges. More importantly, they provided opportunities for participants to explore how EHRI's extensive resources could support their work and enhance their research capabilities.

The workshops were organized by the local institutional partners from the Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea (CDEC), the Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania (INSHR-EW), the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute (ZIH), and the Holocaust Documentation Center in Bratislava (DSH) with the support of two other members of the EHRI-3 consortium – Yad Vashem (YV) and the Arolsen Archives (ITS). In order to better facilitate the preparatory work, ITS worked closely with CDEC and DSH while INSHR-EW and ZIH cooperated with YV.

## 3 Country-Specific Initiatives

### 3.1 Italy: Expanding Holocaust Research Networks

Italy was selected as the pilot country for implementing the task, with a workshop serving as a model for subsequent events not only in the country but also in Romania, Slovakia, and Poland. The insights gained from the first Italian workshop proved invaluable, shaping the structure and content of future engagements. Beyond immediate discussions, the Italian event successfully laid the groundwork for a national research network, illustrating how similar frameworks could be developed in other countries. By fostering dialogue, collaboration, and resource-sharing, these workshops played a crucial role in strengthening Holocaust research and preservation efforts across the region.

#### 3.1.1 Workshop: *EHRI in Italy: Expanding the Research Community Network*

The workshop "*EHRI in Italy: Expanding the Research Community Network*,"<sup>2</sup> organized by CDEC, in cooperation with Arolsen Archives and Yad Vashem was a milestone event. Conducted virtually on 1 July 2021 due to the restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic, it sought to introduce EHRI's resources to Italian scholars and archival professionals while also exploring opportunities for building a sustainable national research network. The workshop was structured into two sessions: the first, held in English, featured presentations on EHRI's

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<sup>1</sup> A full list of the institution from each country can be seen in Annex 1 of Deliverable 4.2, Guidelines for integrating regional communities and related initiatives and integrating new research communities, <https://www.ehri-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/D4.2-Guidelines-for-integrating-regional-communities-and-related-initiatives-and-integrating-new-research-communities.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Detailed report on the workshop is available in Deliverable 4.2, Guidelines for integrating regional communities and related initiatives and integrating new research communities, <https://www.ehri-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/D4.2-Guidelines-for-integrating-regional-communities-and-related-initiatives-and-integrating-new-research-communities.pdf>

digital infrastructure and the expansive archival resources available through Yad Vashem. The second session, conducted in Italian, allowed for in-depth discussions on how Italian institutions could benefit from EHRI's network. A particular focus was placed on archives that traditionally had limited involvement in Holocaust research, such as university and hospital archives, which contain valuable yet often overlooked materials.

The event was met with enthusiasm, with attendees expressing strong interest in developing a lasting research network. Many emphasized the need to include smaller municipal archives that, despite their historical significance, are often underfunded and lack proper cataloguing systems. The workshop concluded with a clear call for continued engagement, ensuring that momentum was not lost after this initial introduction. Therefore, moving forward, T4.3 aimed to organize further events and refine strategies to enhance engagement not only in Italy but also in the other three countries under the task's operation. Strengthening the research and archival communities there through continuous interaction and resource-sharing was viewed to be essential in ensuring long-term impact and collaboration within the EHRI network.

### **3.1.2 Workshop: Exploring 'Other' Archives for the History of the Shoah in Italy**

On 6 December 2023, the Memoriale della Shoah di Milano hosted the EHRI WP4 National Workshop, titled "*The 'Other' Archives for the History of the Shoah in Italy: Meeting about the Enhancement of the Sources and New Research Perspectives.*" Organized by the CDEC Foundation (Laura Brazzo, Chiara Renzo) with the support of Arolsen Archives (Lorenzo Camerini) and Yad Vashem (Angel Chorapchiev), the workshop gathered Italian archivists and researchers to discuss lesser-known archival collections related to the Holocaust in Italy. Representatives from ten Italian archival institutions and three researchers from different universities participated, creating an environment of meaningful scholarly exchange.

The workshop had two primary objectives. The first was to highlight archival collections that, while valuable for Holocaust research, remain difficult to locate in standard inventories. These collections include materials housed in both smaller, specialized archives and larger institutions such as state and university archives. The second objective was to present historical research projects that have relied on these lesser-known archives, demonstrating their significance in shaping Holocaust studies.

The event began with an introduction by Laura Brazzo, who presented the EHRI project and provided an overview of the EHRI Portal, its functionalities, and the Italian collections currently accessible through it. She also discussed the EHRI Content Provider Agreement, which facilitates the inclusion of archival materials in the portal, making them more widely available for research.

The workshop featured presentations from a diverse group of speakers, including archivists and researchers, who shared their experience in work on collections that have been instrumental in uncovering new aspects of Holocaust history in Italy. The presentations gave examples how business and financial archives, such as those of Italgas and Banca Intesa Sanpaolo, provide critical data on economic persecution, property confiscation, and forced labor. University archives hold records that document the disenfranchisement of Jewish students and faculty, offering crucial evidence of systematic discrimination. Religious and social assistance archives, including those of the Vatican and municipal assistance agencies, help paint a broader picture of Jewish life and persecution during the Holocaust.

Following the archivists' presentations, researchers shared their experiences using these archives to advance Holocaust studies. Mara Dissegna from the University of Trento discussed the archives of the Italian Red Cross and their relevance to Holocaust research. Emanuele Edallo from the University of Milan analyzed the university's archives to study the expulsion of

Jewish academics in 1938. Enrico Palumbo from La Sapienza University in Rome explored school archives as a source for researching Holocaust history and Jewish persecution in education. Throughout the event, the audience - comprised of archivists, historians, and researchers - actively engaged with the speakers, contributing valuable insights and further enriching the discussions and highlighting the need for better indexing, digitization, and inclusion in international research platforms like EHRI.

The workshop was a crucial step toward enhancing the visibility and accessibility of underutilized archival sources for Holocaust research in Italy. By bringing together archivists and historians, the event successfully demonstrated how 'other' archives - beyond those traditionally associated with Holocaust studies - contain invaluable materials that contribute to a deeper understanding of the Shoah. Moving forward, strengthening collaboration between smaller archives and larger institutions can be essential to facilitating access to these scattered collections. The participants stressed the need to focus efforts on improving archival indexing and visibility through integration into platforms like the EHRI Portal. Encouraging further research using these lesser-known archives, particularly in areas such as economic persecution, social history, and gendered perspectives on the Holocaust, will contribute to new discoveries in the field. Additionally, promoting interdisciplinary approaches by engaging scholars from different fields in archival-based Holocaust research will enhance the depth and breadth of study.

The discussions and connections established at this workshop will undoubtedly lead to new research opportunities and archival discoveries, ensuring that these 'hidden' sources become more accessible to scholars, educators, and the public. By enhancing archival awareness and research methodologies, EHRI continues to play a pivotal role in advancing Holocaust studies and historical understanding.

### **3.1.3 Workshop: Greece, Italy, and the Jews during the Occupation and Holocaust – Archival Sources on Entangled Stories**

As part of the ongoing collaboration between WP4 and WP9 (Identification and Integration), on 17 September 2024 the CDEC Foundation and Yad Vashem, with support from the Arolsen Archives, organized a one-day international workshop titled "*Greece, Italy, and the Jews during the Occupation and Holocaust: Archival Sources on Entangled Stories*". The event, hosted by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, aimed to uncover and explore scattered or lesser-known archival sources related to the Holocaust and the period of Italian occupation in Greece during the Second World War. Bringing together archivists, historians, digital humanities experts, and institutional representatives, the workshop provided a multidisciplinary platform for dialogue and knowledge exchange. Participants engaged in expert presentations, discussions, and site visits, gaining a deeper understanding of Jewish experiences under Nazi and Fascist rule, as well as the role of archival materials in preserving and reconstructing this history. A central theme of the event was the potential of digital tools to enhance archival research and facilitate broader access to historical documentation. In addition to examining archival resources, the event encouraged discussions on strengthening research collaboration between Italian and Greek archival and research institutions, highlighting the benefits of working within EHRI's framework. Certain steps in this direction are already taken by the Southern European hub managed by WP9.

The workshop commenced with an introductory session led by Laura Brazzo (CDEC Foundation), Giorgos Antoniou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, AUTH), and Angel Chorapchiev (Yad Vashem), who outlined the significance of the EHRI project in advancing Holocaust research. The first session focused on archival collections and research methodologies, featuring presentations that addressed key sources for studying the social



history of occupation, the persecution of Greek and Italian Jews, and the archival holdings of institutions such as the Arolsen Archives and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This segment also included an overview of Holocaust-related materials housed in Greek archives, underscoring the importance of local sources in reconstructing Jewish experiences during the war.

In the afternoon, attendees participated in a site visit to the Thessaloniki Jewish Community Archives, where Aliki Arouh guided them through key historical documents and discussed best practices for preservation and accessibility. The final session of the day centered on case studies highlighting Holocaust research in Italy and the Aegean region. Presentations covered a diverse range of topics, including the archival history of Corfiot Jews in Trieste, documentation of Jews from Rhodes, and the history of the Italian-occupied Aegean Islands from 1912 to 1945. The workshop concluded with a discussion on future research collaborations, emphasizing the need for cross-border archival integration and joint scholarly initiatives.

The workshop provided a critical opportunity to uncover and contextualize underutilized archival materials that are essential for understanding the complex history of Jewish communities in Italy and Greece during the Holocaust. One of the key takeaways was the recognition that many Holocaust-related sources remain dispersed across different institutions and archives, making them difficult to access for researchers. By bringing together archivists and scholars from both countries, the workshop successfully highlighted these challenges while also proposing solutions, particularly through the use of digital platforms like the EHRI Portal.

Another major outcome of the event was the strengthening of academic and archival networks between Italy and Greece. The discussions underscored the importance of cross-border research, as Jewish histories in both countries are deeply interconnected, particularly in regions affected by the Italian occupation. The workshop demonstrated that fostering international collaboration is not only beneficial for uncovering new sources but also for developing a more comprehensive understanding of Holocaust history in Southern Europe.

The inclusion of digital humanities experts and discussions on digitization projects emphasized the transformative potential of technology in Holocaust research. Several presentations illustrated how digital tools can facilitate the organization, categorization, and accessibility of archival sources, ultimately making research more efficient and inclusive. Given the continued fragmentation of Holocaust-related documentation, the integration of these materials into digital platforms remains a crucial step forward.

Overall, the workshop successfully laid the foundation for future research initiatives and institutional partnerships. By promoting greater visibility for underexplored archival sources, encouraging cross-disciplinary collaboration, and advocating for the expansion of digital resources, the event contributed to the broader goal of preserving and studying Jewish history during the Holocaust. Moving forward, it will be essential to build on these discussions, ensuring that the knowledge and connections established during the workshop translate into concrete research projects, archival discoveries, and educational initiatives that further enrich Holocaust studies.

### **3.2 Slovakia: Archival Integration, Digital Tools, and Cross-Border Cooperation**

As in the case of Italy, in Slovakia, the work of T4.3 was also used for strengthening the cooperation with WP9, thus assisting EHRI's goals for data identification and integration and



supporting the activities of the Central European Hub. In parallel, local partner Holocaust Documentation Centre in Bratislava worked during the duration of the project for the development of local networks and the integration of local archival and research institutions into EHRI, which provided a broader forum for interdisciplinary exchange. Experts discussed the role of ego documents, the accessibility of archival materials, and how digital humanities tools could enhance Holocaust research. The workshops underscored the importance of combining traditional archival methods with modern digital approaches, ultimately strengthening regional cooperation in Holocaust studies.

### **3.2.1 Workshop: *Holocaust in the Slovak-Hungarian Borderlands: Archives, Research and Digital Humanities***

The workshop Holocaust in the Slovak-Hungarian Borderlands: Archives, Research and Digital Humanities took place on 3 May 2022, in Bratislava. Organized by DSH and KD, the event aimed to provide an overview of the current state of Holocaust research in the Slovak-Hungarian borderlands and to strengthen cross-border academic cooperation.

A key focus of the workshop was the examination of available archival collections and their role in studying the Holocaust in southern Slovakia. Participants presented ongoing research projects, highlighting both the potential and challenges of accessing historical records from this region. Additionally, the event featured the EHRI Marketplace, an interactive session where attendees engaged with new resources such as the EHRI Portal and micro archives. This session also facilitated discussions on critical issues, including the development of common terminology to navigate the multilingual nature of borderland research.

The workshop was a significant step in fostering a network of scholars and experts dedicated to Holocaust research in southern Slovakia. By encouraging collaboration and knowledge exchange, the event laid the groundwork for future joint projects. Moving forward, continued efforts to integrate archival resources, establish standardized research approaches, and strengthen international cooperation will be essential in deepening our understanding of the Holocaust in this historically complex region.

### **3.2.2 Workshop: *The Holocaust in Slovakia – Possibilities and Limits of Research***

On 25 January 2024, Bratislava hosted the second workshop organized by DSH in cooperation with YV and ITS - "*The Holocaust in Slovakia – Possibilities and Limits of Research*". The event aimed to foster interdisciplinary discussions on the challenges and opportunities of Holocaust research in Slovakia while creating a platform for knowledge exchange among scholars, archivists, and digital humanities experts.

The workshop brought together representatives from the major academic and scientific institutions in Slovakia engaged in the study and preservation of Holocaust-related materials. Attendees included historians, archivists, geographers, librarians, and specialists in digital humanities, as well as representatives from non-governmental organizations dedicated to Holocaust commemoration and education. The diverse backgrounds of participants underscored the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in addressing the complexities of Holocaust research.

Throughout the day, discussions focused on several critical areas. One major topic was the role of ego documents - such as personal letters, diaries, and testimonies - in reconstructing individual stories and broader historical events. Participants also examined the opportunities and limitations associated with archival and library collections, particularly micro-archives, which often contain invaluable yet underutilized sources. Another key theme was the integration of online databases and modern technological tools into Holocaust research, with

a focus on how digital humanities can facilitate the analysis of large datasets and enhance accessibility. The workshop also featured discussions on the latest methodological approaches and research findings, highlighting the need to bridge traditional archival methods with innovative digital solutions.

The presentations and subsequent debates underscored the necessity of combining conventional archival research with advanced technologies to improve the processing, preservation, and analysis of historical documents. The importance of regional research was also emphasized, along with the value of fostering closer cooperation between academic institutions and the NGO sector to ensure that Holocaust memory remains an integral part of public discourse and education.

Beyond scholarly exchange, the workshop provided an essential space for dialogue on how to effectively safeguard and utilize historical materials for future research and educational initiatives. It reinforced the significance of interdisciplinary collaboration and encouraged the development of new approaches to studying the Holocaust in Slovakia. By facilitating these discussions, the event contributed to the broader mission of EHRI in advancing Holocaust research and ensuring that historical materials remain accessible to scholars, educators, and the wider public.

### **3.3 Romania: Connecting Archives and Researchers**

In recent years, efforts to connect archival institutions and researchers have become increasingly vital in advancing Holocaust studies in Romania. The workshops organized in the framework of T4.3 of EHRI-3 played an important role in strengthening these connections by bringing together representatives from national and regional archives, scholars specializing in Holocaust and antisemitism studies, and local universities. Participants explored the tools and services offered by EHRI, examined case studies from major international archives, and addressed the challenges of accessing Holocaust-related archival materials. The inclusion of cross-border perspectives, particularly from Hungarian institutions, further enriched the discussions. These workshops not only facilitated dialogue between archivists and researchers but also laid the foundation for stronger local and national networks, enhancing the accessibility and study of Holocaust documentation in Romania.

#### **3.3.1 Workshop: *EHRI and Holocaust Studies in Romania: Connecting Archives and Research***

The first workshop, held in Romania in the framework of T4.3 was “*EHRI and Holocaust Studies in Romania: Connecting Archives and Research*”, organized by INSHR-EW in Bucharest on 29 November 2022. There were three categories of audience: representatives of national and regional archives, researchers of Holocaust and antisemitism studies, and representatives of local universities. The presentations covered two thematic directions: 1. the tools and services offered by EHRI and the ways they could be used by local researchers. Here the local perspective was emphasized by discussing two case studies on documenting the Holocaust in Romania through the archival resources held by Yad Vashem and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; and 2. the state-of-the-art, prospects and challenges faced both by the archival institutions holding Holocaust-related materials and the researchers of the field. The open discussions at the end of the day focused on the accessibility of the archival materials, especially related to the documents held by the Archive of the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Military Archive of Romania.

The main achievement of the workshop was bringing together representatives of six archives (The National Archives of Romania, The Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Military Archives, The Archive of “Wilhelm Filderman” Center for the Study of the Jewish History in Romania, The National Council for the Study of Securitate Archives, and The Archive of the Romanian Orthodox Church) holding Holocaust-related materials and putting them in contact with researchers of the field. The challenges faced by both categories were discussed by the participants as well as the potential methodologies of making Holocaust documentation available in the digital era.

### **3.3.2 Workshop: *EHRI and Holocaust Studies in Northern Transylvania: Connecting Archives and Research***

The second workshop, “*EHRI and Holocaust Studies in Northern Transylvania: Connecting Archives and Research*”, took place in Cluj-Napoca on 24 November 2023 and was organized again as a result of the cooperation between the T4.3 partners INSHR-EW and YV. This time the emphasis was put on the institutions holding archival materials related to the Holocaust of the Jews from Northern Transylvania and their history in pre- and post-war times.

The workshop was organized also in partnership with the Faculty of Political Sciences, Management, and Communication at the “Babes Bolyai” University in Cluj-Napoca which hosted the meeting. The presentations focused on presenting EHRI as a transnational actor connecting archives and Holocaust Research as well as discussing local challenges both for Archive and Research institutions. A representative of the Hungarian National Archives participated in the event, offering a cross-border perspective on the archival collections related to the Holocaust perpetrated under Hungarian authority. Challenges related to preservation, conservation, cataloguing, and access were also discussed by the participants. Researchers and PhD students on the Holocaust in Northern Transylvania actively participated in the event, the moderators being particularly interested and focused on stimulating the development of local networks of knowledge.

By fostering an exchange between archivists and researchers, both workshops organized in Romania by T4.3 contributed to the development of local networks, thus fostering the capacity building at local and national levels.

### **3.4 Poland: Preserving Holocaust Documentation: Testimonies, Photographs, and Archival Practices**

The trend to improve the documentation, preservation, and study of Holocaust-related materials had assisted EHRI in its task to bring together researchers, archivists, and museum professionals in Poland to discuss the evolving methodologies of Holocaust documentation. The workshops organized in the framework of the task examined the collection and archival practices of Holocaust testimonies, and visual materials, addressing the challenges of collecting, identifying, and cataloguing these types of documentation. These events fostered interdisciplinary collaboration and underscored the need for methodological innovation in Holocaust research.

#### **3.4.1 Workshop: *Collecting Holocaust Testimonies since 1944. Archiving Practices and Use in Research***

On 25 October 2023, the Jewish Historical Institute (ZIH) in cooperation with Yad Vashem organized a one-day workshop entitled: “*Collecting Holocaust Testimonies since 1944. Archiving Practices and Use in Research*”.

The aim of the workshop was to learn about different practices of collecting Holocaust documentation, to consider their potential and research challenges, possibilities of use in scientific research, in writing local history as well as incorporating into integrated history.

Participants discussed how the methods of collecting documentation, research questions and paradigms, the methods of data processing and integration have changed over the decades.

After an introduction and welcoming by heads of organizing institutions, 10 speakers took part in the panels. In the first one, presenters spoke about the methodology of collecting documentation immediately after the war by state institutions: the Jewish Historical Institute, the State Museum at Majdanek, and the Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi Crimes (today the Institute of National Remembrance).

The second part of the workshop dealt with collecting historical documentation within the framework of the oral history methodology. Experts from the Museum of the History of Polish Jews POLIN, the Grodzka Gate - NN Theatre and the Polish Academies of Sciences talked about development of oral history in Poland in the context of research on the Holocaust, as well as about methodological practices and difficulties.

The third panel focused on the phenomenon of community archives. Representatives of the Centre of Community Archive, the Saga Grybów Association and the Virtual Museum of Jewish History in Białowieża discussed the principles of operating of their organizations in the local context, about the impact on shaping the local community, and also the experience of lack of trust.

As many of the participants in the workshop represented relatively small institutions across Poland, in the last panel, EHRI representatives talked about methodological and practical solutions for micro archives in the framework of the project.

This first workshop of T4.3 in Poland brought together experts from various institutions (national institutes, museum and libraries) and researchers, thus creating a common language and cross-disciplinary discourse on the challenges of working with Holocaust related documentation.

#### **3.4.2 Workshop: *Photographs from the Holocaust. Collecting and identifying photographs from occupied Poland***

On 29 January 2025, in the Jewish Historical Institute a second workshop organized by T4.3 under the title: "*Photographs from the Holocaust. Collecting and identifying photographs from occupied Poland*" was held, this time taking a different approach by focusing only on visual Holocaust related documentation.

The largest Polish research and museum institutions devoted to the history of the war and the Holocaust have vast collections of photos and films, which they research, digitize and make available in their depositories to academics and general audience. Unknown number of photos also circulate on online auctions. They are bought by collectors and commercial photo banks.

During the workshop these issues and the visual resources from the period of World War II as a whole were discussed by nine speakers from around Poland. In addition, the director of EHRI-3 Karel Berkhoff from the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies in the Netherlands presented the EHRI project *Bibliography of Photography and the Holocaust*, realized as a result of the work of the Experts group in Holocaust photography operating in the framework of T4.1.

Papers presented during the workshop focused on how state institutions newly created in Poland after the war like the State Museum at Majdanek and the Jewish Historical Institute, or such created much later like the Eagle Pharmacy in Kraków or the National Film Archive - Audiovisual Institute, had built their photo and film archives, how the visual documentations were and are described and identified then and now, and how the neglect from the past period

creates challenges for contemporary research in these institutions. Furthermore, speakers talked also about the most important or still unrecognised individual or group photographs and film records at their institutions.

In the final part of the workshop, the participants focused on important questions like the ways of determining the location of war photographs. Three speakers focused on case studies and discussed specific cases like the war photo album of a German Red Cross nurse and Soviet photographers (including women) capturing liberation of Majdanek and Auschwitz death Camps. The workshop also presented an important opportunity to listen to a collector of war time photographs, who had spent 20 years in researching on-line auctions of photographs. Another presentation was devoted to the work of a professional photographer who works on re-photographing past places in scenography of contemporary Łódź.

The workshop brought together around 40 representatives of different organizations and researchers in the field of the audio-visual documentation working with Holocaust related materials. The fact that this second event in the framework of EHRI had even larger audience than the previous one showed the importance of the working meetings with library, museum and archive leaders as well as research experts where they can share their experience and gain enrichment regarding innovations in the field of Holocaust research and documentation. The event not only facilitated knowledge exchange but also aimed at enriching the Polish language entries to the *Bibliography of Photography and the Holocaust* presented in the workshop.

## 4 Conclusion

The EHRI-3 project, particularly through Work Package 4 (WP4) and Task 4.3, has made substantial progress in fostering international collaboration, strengthening local archival and research communities, and improving their familiarity with various EHRI resources as the EHRI Portal, the Conny Kristel Fellowship Program etc. Through a series of workshops, surveys, and targeted engagement strategies, EHRI has successfully connected researchers, archivists, and institutions across countries, facilitating knowledge exchange and the development of sustainable networks.

A key achievement of these efforts has been the integration of local expertise into a broader, transnational research framework. By focusing on countries such as Italy, Romania, Poland, and Slovakia, EHRI has not only expanded the knowledge on critical archival materials but also fostered interdisciplinary cooperation. These initiatives have demonstrated the value of connecting smaller, often overlooked archives with larger, well-established institutions, ensuring that valuable historical records are preserved and made more accessible to scholars worldwide.

The workshops conducted under Task 4.3 have also focused on incorporating digital humanities tools and exploring underutilized archival sources. Discussions on ego documents, oral histories, photographs, and local archival practices have underscored the importance of adopting innovative approaches to documentation, preservation, and research. By encouraging methodological innovation and interdisciplinary discourse, EHRI has contributed to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of Holocaust history.

Moreover, the establishment of regional research networks, facilitated by EHRI's engagement strategies, has had a lasting impact on Holocaust studies. The ongoing integration of archival materials into digital platforms such as the EHRI Portal ensures that researchers worldwide have greater access to critical sources. These efforts not only enhance historical scholarship

but also reinforce the importance of Holocaust education, remembrance, and documentation for future generations.

Looking ahead, continued investment in these networks and research initiatives will be essential to maintaining the momentum generated by EHRI's work. Strengthening ties between institutions, expanding the reach of digital archives, and further integrating local researchers into international collaborations will ensure that Holocaust studies remain dynamic, inclusive, and responsive to contemporary scholarly needs. The foundation laid by EHRI's initiatives provides a strong basis for future research endeavors, helping to preserve the memory of the Holocaust and deepen our understanding of its historical complexities.