



**European Holocaust Research Infrastructure  
Preparatory Phase  
H2020-INFRADEV-2019-2  
GA no. 871060**

**Deliverable 6.6**

**Updated scientific case and research priorities**

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**Start: December 2019 [M1]**

**Due: August 2022 [M33]**

**Actual: February 2023 [M39]**



**EHRI is funded by the European Union**

## Document Information

Project URL	<a href="http://www.ehri-project.eu">www.ehri-project.eu</a>
Document URL	<a href="https://www.ehri-project.eu/deliverables-ehri-pp-2019-2022">https://www.ehri-project.eu/deliverables-ehri-pp-2019-2022</a>
Deliverable	D6.6 - Updated scientific case and research priorities
Work Package	WP6
Lead Beneficiary	5 - IfZ
Relevant Milestones	MS3
Dissemination level	Public
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Abstract (for dissemination)	Based on a critical assessment of the foresight studies and examination of EHRI's thematic scope, this deliverable presents EHRI's updated and enhanced scientific case, highlighting the focal points of EHRI's long-term research and innovation priorities.
Management Summary	(required if the deliverable exceeds more than 25 pages) [Max. 500 words]

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## 1 Introduction

Throughout the duration of EHRI-PP, *WP6 Research and Innovation Strategy* engaged in a number of ways to learn about the state of the field of Holocaust studies, including the identification of gaps in current research provisions as well as trends and (potential) future developments in the field. The goal was to advance EHRI's scientific case and to identify research priorities that EHRI ERIC should put forth once it is operational.

This Deliverable (DL) presents an overview of the key results of the WP's Foresight Studies undertaken to gather a better understanding of EHRI ERIC's potential future role in the landscape of Holocaust studies. The findings relate to research but also to infrastructural needs and suggestions made by various stakeholders in the field. In addition, it includes the findings from *D6.4 Position paper on thematic scope*, which especially addressed the question of to what degree EHRI should expand its thematic scope, a question that was echoed in the Foresight Studies as well.

Based on the results and findings, some overall applicable recommendations relating to EHRI's scientific case are presented in the last section of this DL.

## 2 Results Overview

### 2.1 Foresight Studies

#### Foresight Study 1

*The first Foresight Study was based on a survey conducted jointly with WP5 User, access and training strategy and distributed at EHRI partner institutions. We received 45 completed surveys from 14 EHRI partner institutions located in 12 different countries. This included people working at EHRI partner institutions who did not have direct connections with the project. The survey contained a variety of questions, ranging from the overall development of the field of Holocaust studies to more specific questions on the state of Holocaust research and education in the respondents' respective countries. A portion of the survey was dedicated to questions about EHRI's role in the field of Holocaust research (i.e. "What role might EHRI, as a research infrastructure, play beyond national and international cooperation? What impact might EHRI and its offerings have in the realm of research and innovation?") Based on the replies, the feedback was grouped into four categories:*

#### ***EHRI supports digital/technical advancement***

The participant from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) summarizes aptly: "We are hoping that EHRI will advance the will of institutions to make digitally available metadata about their holdings and help the development of online tools for research." Indeed, most participants see EHRI playing a central role in making Holocaust-related data more accessible and more easily searchable. It is acknowledged that the "opportunities EHRI provides particularly in terms of knowledge on archives with Holocaust-related documentation, notably through the Portal, can be extremely helpful for future Holocaust research" (Yad Vashem (YV)). However, the process of identifying these materials and making them available poses its challenges. Small institutions with limited resources need technical support to make data on their collections digitally available in the first place. On the other end of the archival spectrum are larger institutions such as state and national archives, where often only a fraction of the holdings are Holocaust-related. Here, the challenge is surveying, making selections, and indexing the material towards one specific research topic. EHRI's experience should allow

institutions to react to both challenges and to identify, professionalize, organize, and present the data accordingly.

It is also noted that “bundling references to sources in a comprehensive search engine is not the same as showing a source’s research potential or making the links between sources more transparent” (Belgian State Archive/Cegesoma(CEGES/SAB)). This underscores the need to continue with the necessary tools the identification of relevant material while “providing ‘coordinates’: standards, definitions, vocabularies, and whatever is useful in ‘structuring’ information about the Holocaust” (Foundation Jewish Contemporary Documentation Center (CDEC)). Opinions among the respondents differ in the desired depth of the available material. While some underscore the need for *complete digitization* of the material, others argue for the benefits of *detailed metadata* and note that “researchers above all desire metadata (finding aids, etc.)” (CEGES/SAB). In sum, EHRI is seen as ideally qualified in making metadata *and* sources widely available as well as in supporting the “collaboration among Holocaust-related institutions in the awareness of each ones’ holdings” (YV).

### ***EHRI helps to write a European history of the Holocaust***

Throughout the survey, it has become apparent that one of the central aspects missing in Holocaust studies is more comparative and integrated approaches to research. Many respondents suggest that EHRI should play a crucial role in filling this gap, i.e., by offering “easier access to research and archival resources and the development of collaborative research projects with international participation. In this way, the field of Holocaust studies will be further enriched by bringing together different theoretical approaches and local specificities” (Elie Wiesel National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania (INSHR-EW)). EHRI’s twofold goal of making data accessible and fostering research Europe-wide/internationally is seen as the ideal foundation to tackle research questions in a comparative perspective, with up-to-date digital tools in a collaborative environment “without borders (neither digital/technical nor national)” (Vienna Wiesenthal Institute (VWI)). In this way, EHRI would not only contribute to a ‘European history of the Holocaust’ but could help to address other gaps in Holocaust research by supporting and facilitating cooperation that fosters transnational, interdisciplinary, and methodologically robust research by drawing on a variety of sources.

### ***EHRI supports research exchange and professional growth***

So far, EHRI’s outreach takes place via workshops, online courses, seminars, and fellowships. It is seen as an important offering to the research community. Respondents emphasise the need to continue supporting and providing networking opportunities to researchers, especially from Eastern Europe, and offering room for skill sharing, discussion, and exchange. Ideally, “the various training and research fellowships offered by EHRI enable further research and perhaps, more importantly, a heightened interaction among current scholars in the field encouraging open debate and discussion” (YV).

One respondent noted that EHRI has been successfully providing a hub for scholarly exchange and networking “for early career researchers as well as practitioners such as archivists, librarians, and heritage professionals” (Wiener Library (WL)). However, compared to EHRI’s engagement with researchers, EHRI’s outreach to other groups of professionals in the field of Holocaust studies still has significant potential.

### ***EHRI fosters cooperation, exchange, and awareness on a national level***

It comes as no surprise that EHRI’s internationality is praised as an advantage and prerequisite for fostering a transnational approach to Holocaust research. Interestingly, several respondents see EHRI also playing a relevant role on the national level, where it ideally would replicate its international course of action: the idea is to “bring together relevant actors in the field of Holocaust study, education, memorialization, develop joint projects, exchange ideas and update one another about major projects, fostering cooperation” (Leibniz Institute for

Contemporary History (IfZ)). The reasoning behind these suggestions seems more acutely driven by social and political considerations and observations than by developments on the international level: respondents suggest that on a national level, EHRI "may strengthen awareness of the importance of Holocaust research" (YV) and "might help to achieve a better social recognition of the danger of the antisemitism" (INSHR-EW).

More generally, the responses to the survey stress that research conducted and promoted by EHRI should address several gaps and challenges – national as well as transnational – in the field of Holocaust research. EHRI can help by ensuring **flexibility** in defining "what entails Holocaust research" and extending that perspective beyond the crucial dates between 1939-1945. Equally, the survey proved the rich **interdisciplinarity** of the field, which should be reflected in research conducted within the EHRI framework. A strong case is made also for a more **comparative** analysis of the events unfolding in various countries and regions, ensuring a truly European perspective of the Holocaust. In addition, a call for a more **integrated** history of the Holocaust – both regarding analytical tools and theories as well as content-related multi-perspectivity – should be taken into account. A prerequisite for this is being familiar with **new methodological, theoretical, and technical developments**, especially when it comes to using Digital Humanities tools and methods.

EHRI is ideally suited to support Holocaust research, and in this way provide a foundation for the **commemorative** and **education-oriented communities** as well. In addition, when looking at the concrete suggestions made by the respondents, three somewhat complementary and amplifying "Emphases" of these roles can be identified. These should equally be considered when developing the research, innovation and training strategies of EHRI:

**Emphasis on training and education** – EHRI is seen as a knowledge hub for offering study programmes, university classes, and educational tools. It must be ensured that research is passed on via education and training offerings in a sustainable way. Ideas for the extension of the already established training programmes include the support of university-level courses or mentorships between scholars and students. Research results should equally feed into online material, such as encyclopedias on varying topics.

**Emphasis on EHRI's networking capacity** – EHRI is a vector of effective connectivity. This does not only apply to the potential of European research teams or the archival connectivity via the Portal. Rather, it underscores that EHRI brings together people working in the field of Holocaust research, preservation, education, and commemoration as well as allowing enhanced access to and connection with, the dispersed sources necessary for achieving their professional goals.

**Emphasis on financial support** – There is no doubt that EHRI will have to provide funds to achieve the goals of a state-of-the-art research and innovation strategy. The funding requirement is especially linked to the possibilities to publish research which has been supported by EHRI (in-house or through suitable publishing houses); to supporting smaller archives, especially in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, in their technical development; and providing training in data preservation and management to its partner institutions. A very concrete idea raised is the establishment of international research teams (or graduate schools), i.e., having researchers working on similar topics in different countries, thereby allowing for comparison and synthesis of research results, as well as serving as a platform for joint European research and educational projects on the Holocaust.

## Foresight Study 2

*A central finding of the first Foresight Study was the diversity of disciplines active in the field of Holocaust studies. Without a doubt, Holocaust studies have always been multidisciplinary, but disciplinary boundaries and the resulting methodological imbalance often hinder interdisciplinary research and the potential for collaboration and synergies. The second Foresight Study, therefore, paid special attention to the question of the state of multi- and interdisciplinarity in the field of Holocaust studies. Consequently, 35 researchers were invited to a total of 14 online group interviews of two to three participants, which lasted about 90 minutes each. The researchers all came from outside of the EHRI consortium, their other commonality being that they had experience working on interdisciplinary projects related to the Holocaust.<sup>1</sup> Though there was a specific emphasis on how to foster interdisciplinarity and overcome disciplinary boundaries, many of the suggestions and recommendations for EHRI's future as a permanent research infrastructure were of a more general nature. The main focus of these interviews was on ways in which EHRI can help to answer **academic challenges**, although EHRI's **societal** and **political relevance** were discussed as well. These three roles are discussed below under I, II, and III.*

### I. EHRI to answer academic challenges

#### I.1 Supporting research and research results

EHRI is seen as an important format for building and sustaining “an international network of scholars” (Interview(Int)5Person(Ps)1) which can support research and research results. More so, it is seen as a place to foster and support multi- and interdisciplinarity within the field by providing “a framework for corroboration of researchers from different disciplines” as well as “greater exposure” to the matter of Holocaust research (Int10Ps2). The emphasis here is especially on support for young researchers who – compared to established and tenured researchers – lack a “safety net” (Int11Ps1). Of course, support might be provided in different ways (see also I.2 and I.3). Still, funding for multi- and interdisciplinary research and young researchers is named as a necessity multiple times: “So I would love to see EHRI spending time helping these younger scholars, especially those in the ‘leaky pipeline’ – the drop-off that happens either between the PhD and the job or the post-doc and the job. All these people, going through so many years of training and are so well trained – and then you cannot get a job! So supporting early-career scholars, making sure there is either funding for projects or working together with other funding bodies to create some kind of safety net for people to get them through to the job stage” (Int11Ps1). The idea of providing funding for research is closely linked to the necessity of supporting “collaborative mechanisms for scholarship, rather than fairly solo endeavours” (Int12Ps1). Multi- and interdisciplinary research is seen as a necessity to highlight the relevance of Holocaust research, which needs to be reflected accordingly in the projects potentially supported by EHRI in the future: “So one way to think about how EHRI can support innovative and productive research would be to promote collaboration. Not make it a requirement but really strongly encourage collaborative projects, that also can articulate what is their larger contribution outside of Holocaust research. Because I think that really forces people to think about the questions they ask and ask better questions that can also make a case for why is it actually important for us to understand the Holocaust? Why is it important to think about Holocaust memory?” (Int14Ps3) The recommendation for collaborative projects echoes the idea of the international research teams suggested in *Foresight Studies 1*. In general, participants of the group interviews with no formal ties to EHRI were more outspoken

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<sup>1</sup> Including people active in the following disciplines: Anthropology, Computational Studies, Cultural Studies, Economics, Geography, History, Gender Studies, Literature, Medical Science, Political Science, Psychology, Visual Studies.

about the need for EHRI being an “institutional home for robust Holocaust discourse is important as well as providing a different node on the political landscape” (Int13Ps1).

Beyond the financial aspect of funding projects, EHRI is also seen as well-positioned as a knowledge hub “that allows collaborative projects to share their experience with others and their specific challenges to learn from these experiences in future projects” and “to accompany the application process for new projects and provide advice, support and things like that. I mean, I know there are institutions that will want to collaborate and others will answer the same call so it may be tricky and difficult. But on the other hand, if it's some neutral guidance and with the aim to get as many projects for the field as possible, I think it would also be extremely helpful” (Int8Ps3).

The Conny Kristel EHRI Fellowship was praised by interviewees as an important tool for supporting researchers since it “gives many students and young academics the opportunity to be in a place where they wouldn't otherwise be because it would be difficult to organize” (Int3Ps2). To make use of the Fellowships to support multi- and interdisciplinary research projects it was suggested to broaden the number of places offering fellowships geographically as well as methodologically by including “access to not traditional archives, but also other collections which for example would have artwork, art collections, so museums and places, which are not necessarily just straightforward archives, which are not easy to get into and which would allow for research on not only printed documents” (Int3Ps2). The fact that King's College London's EHRI Fellowship has been specifically addressed to historians interested in exploring the possibilities of the Digital Humanities was seen as a successful example to foster multi- and interdisciplinary research via the Kristel Fellowship.

Overall, a number of interviews spoke in favour of expanding the duration of the Kristel Fellowship to allow for longer research stays. Especially regarding the at times precarious employment situation of younger researchers and the situation of those coming from countries where political pressure on Holocaust research is perceptible, the opportunity to do research via an expanded Kristel Fellowship could prove to be significant.

Another area for EHRI to get (more) involved in is the support for publishing of multi- and interdisciplinary research results. The need for more options to publish multi- and interdisciplinary findings has been addressed above. The EHRI Document Blog is identified as a useful option to put more of this kind of research on display and up for discussion: “I would recommend bringing more inter- or multidisciplinary posts into the blog. And also encourage scholars to contribute, since it is also good to look at the contributors, especially if they are interested in similar topics” (Int2Ps1).

## ***1.2 Access to sources and promotion of usage of diverse types of sources***

Advancing digitization is seen as a central and important task of EHRI and interviewees praised EHRI's endeavour to overcome the fragmentation and dispersal of sources via the EHRI Portal. However, it was pointed out that so far repositories in the EHRI Portal are largely focused on textual sources. To advance and enlarge the information on available sources and to make it more relevant for multi- and interdisciplinary research, the Portal should include information on other, non-textual types of sources: “if there would be this integration of different types of sources, to include digital sources, like reproductions of films and corporations with film archives and so on” (Int7Ps1). It should be pointed out, that the EHRI Portal has not excluded references to photo collections, oral histories, or objects and information on these sources can be found in the Portal as well. Still, it is worth taking note that the visibility of the information on non-textual source types in the Portal should be increased.

While the EHRI Portal provides information for conducting research, interviewees also pointed out that EHRI is ideally suited for securing the preservation of research data by offering sustainable “solutions for the results of projects, and Digital Humanities projects in particular, because they have a very short lifespan after the end of a project and it's not just about hardware infrastructure, like server space, but all the software components of a more or less



complex platform need updates and they need to be synchronized with each other. And these resources are not available because no funding institution [provides] funds for the afterlife of projects and especially for collaborative projects, this is a real challenge. So an infrastructure like EHRI could step in there and help a lot with future projects” (Int8Ps3).

Another suggestion for the digital realm of EHRI is making more material for research and educational purposes available online. This would ideally have a two-folded impact: setting up proper collaboration and exchange between people creating these materials and tools and then sharing it with the wider public, “for instance, on an online exhibition. (...) I think that would be really great because then people who work in different countries but have similar approaches, they could cooperate. (...) And they could prepare educational materials which could be available online” (Int1Ps2). In general, it would be desirable to secure the longevity and usability of projects conceived and conducted by EHRI for other researchers and – where applicable – for a wider audience as well.

In addition to expanding the information already available via the EHRI website and the Portal, interviewees also voiced the need for gathering and displaying information on various types of institutions included in Holocaust research and education (e.g. NGO’s, small archives, research institutions). In this way, EHRI would have a chance to connect various institutions linked to Holocaust research and education (including those only working on a regional level) and make them at the same time more accessible for researchers and educators: “I was thinking that there are so many smaller associations, or foundations, who are dealing with the Holocaust either via research, or education or publishing and I'm not sure that they are collected anywhere. So I think it could be nice to have a site with links to all of these foundations so people can find them” (Int1Ps2). This could be expanded to various other organizations, e.g. “the survivor organization to have possible contact with the people, not survivors themselves anymore, but survivor families. It would be great to have the opportunity to find people from a special place which you are working on” (Int1Ps1). Opening up the EHRI website and the Portal to such information would even further enhance another important aspect of EHRI: its ability to connect and build networks in the field of Holocaust studies.

### ***1.3 Networking and connecting***

Throughout the interviews, EHRI’s role in connecting people via workshops and seminars was highlighted multiple times. In this way, the following suggestions for thematically, methodologically, multi- and interdisciplinary workshops may be read as confirming as well as advancing some of EHRI’s key offerings.

Compared to conferences, the advantage of workshops and other events in smaller settings are said to be obvious: “So, for example, we have these huge conferences, which is not the place to really deeply communicate about things. And I find that it's these kinds of workshops where a small group of people come together and they have the time to talk over things – and not just in a short coffee break – but really talk about things. That can bring something. But we don't have time for that. And I think we should have time for that” (Int2Ps1). Workshops are seen as an ideal option to expand one’s horizon, especially when other institutional offers are not available: “Recently, I entered the digital domain but I don't have a lot of confidence in that. I would love to see more workshops displaying these new avenues, like digital humanities, and demonstrating how they can be used. I don't know how to utilize digital humanities – and I do see scholars moving into that, not in grad school but early or mid-career and that is a big leap if you do not have support or resources” (Int4Ps2). Calls were made to offer more workshops focusing on work-in-progress. One interviewee described their experience of a workshop “about reframing the Holocaust/paradigms of understanding the Holocaust, bringing in different disciplines who came together to discuss in-depth a shared focused topic, based on pre-circulated work, but also work that has not been done, which is in progress and not yet published – giving every paper or presentation an hour to be discussed to help expedite and develop that research further. The depth of that is greater as opposed to going to a conference

– that is great for networking but not so much for fostering multidisciplinary approaches” (Int2Ps2).

Another argument for investing time and resources into workshops is that the discussions and exchanges fostered there can become a springboard for new project ideas as well as the preparation for grant proposals: “In that way, one is not only fostering workshops but grants that could enforce the work of the researcher but also the work of EHRI, that are practice-driven, including issues of preservation, issues of access and reception and transmission – which are all interrelated. So having everyone involved in a multi-stage process grant, fostering grants by way of addressing questions which we otherwise would be incapable to address with a diverse group of people and the institutional backing of EHRI” (Int2Ps2).

Apart from the suggestion to continue and expand workshops, the interviewees provided various suggestions for driving excellent research (e.g. labs, and research groups). Oftentimes, they referred to best practice offerings by other institutions and suggestions for cooperation, like the Holocaust Educational Foundations Summer Schools “with this idea of training people in many different areas, to teach the Holocaust in their institutions and in particular disciplines. That has been very fruitful and could be done in cooperation or at the own initiative of EHRI. It is also about bringing in early graduate students and exposing them to that world of Holocaust studies and exposing us as Holocaust scholars to their different disciplines” (Int2Ps2). “I would do workshops like USHMM does them or similar to the Holocaust Educational Foundation (HEF) Summer School, with a focus on, for example, feminist studies, or queer studies or cultural take and have two or three people there who lead the whole thing. Have lectures in the morning and in the afternoon discussion on readings and that really pushes it a lot. I taught one the Royal Holloway Holocaust Educational Foundation Summer School, three or four years ago and to date, I'm in touch with the former students” (Int3Ps1).

Again, the need to bring together people from various backgrounds – be it geographically, disciplinarily, professionally – and let them share their research approaches was widely acknowledged: “An example that occurred to me was since we do talk about data and data sets differently, that EHRI could be very helpful in developing a mini data set and invite digital Humanists and social scientists to show us what projects they could develop from this data set. So, take the same data, now that many things are digitized and we can have these incredibly expanded data sets, put it out for people from different disciplines to work with and then come together again and kind of show each other what kind of work we do with the same data set – so that was one idea for a workshop, but that's the kind of thing I imagine would be helpful” (Int12Ps3). “To hold intensive training workshops, and then to work with institutions trying to identify collections, prioritize collections for analysis, and then invite scholars without pre-existing connections but from different backgrounds to come in and have a THATCamp assessment mining of those collections to generate new collaborative groupings. I think it is important because we see the same people working in interdisciplinary groups, doing the same research, but we need those mechanisms to bring together people who don't know each other, but who could potentially form new groups and I would also say that collaborative residencies would be another way to do that. Because they're all fairly individual right now from what I've seen” (Int12Ps1).

To sum up, the relevance of EHRI as an important enabler for networking and engagement is widely acknowledged. There are different venues to explore for developing these offerings further. Collaboration and consultation with other initiatives (i.e. by USHMM or HEF) should be reinforced, as well as the continued investigation into different formats and professional compositions of EHRI events.

#### ***1.4 Conceptual suggestions for the future of EHRI***

Apart from the fairly concrete suggestions for workshops and cooperation, several interviewees pointed out that EHRI should invest time into the discussion and overall

conceptualization of what kind of a Forum/Platform it eventually wants to be: “I think that it is about a kind of reconceptualization of what role EHRI plays and I think a bit of it is about thought leadership – it is about the question of how far EHRI positions itself as something that has thought leadership or whether it's primarily a kind of resource tool. I feel like EHRI could do intellectual work, but I don't know if EHRI is ready for intellectual work. ... I think EHRI started off very much around resources so it's about the archives and opening of archives and making the archives available – in a sense a major cataloguing project. And then there's also a kind of training dimension, especially for younger scholars. [...] I think EHRI could have a role to do some more meta-level reflection about the field. [...] I think you actually have to do a lot of background work about what the whole project is, and how we imagine the intellectual endeavour and how we conceptualize what this thing is about – like what does it mean to do Holocaust studies? And I don't think that's wasted work. I feel like that could be really important work, because I think that's the key to other things, following from that” (Int9Ps2).

In the words of another interviewee: “I would be somewhat more practical, taking a cue from the notion of the lab. EHRI could do some self-reflective work, think a little bit about its intended audience and its intended users beyond the field of the humanities and social sciences. Engaging, for example, the life sciences or law or neuroscience might be a way to move forward. The Holocaust is so closely related with questions and issues of memory that are at the core of neuroscience and other related disciplines that I think there is a lot of fertile ground here. This also means thinking about the somewhat subconscious certainties of the field that determine our archives and the organization of our archives and the way we conduct research. I'm thinking primarily about the notion of the survivor and how it has to a great extent framed our approach to the sources, how we collect them and catalogue them. If you remove the survivor or if you replace the survivor or if you have the notion of network next to that of a survivor, you get a very, very different kind of archive ecology. And I think EHRI is an incredibly privileged space to experiment with different kinds of concepts that bear on the way the material is organized and then offered to others. I would definitely like to see EHRI becoming a forum, as much as a depository of material, where people could meet, exchange and even try things out in a lab kind of way, in a more experimental kind of way, a sort of incubator” (Int9Ps1).

The key to exploring the potential for EHRI's permanent role is said to be communication. One interviewee reflected on the group interview itself: “I think what you are doing now, could be very useful: meeting some Holocaust researchers and asking what they are doing in focus studies” (Int1Ps1). And here again, it is important to be aware and reflective about whom to invite: “I think for the next phase it would be a matter of convening a discussion with people from less traditional Holocaust studies and disciplines, learning from them, finding out how they perceive Holocaust studies, why they think their disciplines have not participated in the past. So in other words: invite actual people in other disciplines, the non-traditional Holocaust studies disciplines to speak with Holocaust scholars. So, a little bit of very specific programming to discuss what different disciplines bring to the table, what they can learn from each other. A focused conversation would be very helpful so that we have somewhat of a shared understanding of what the goal is and how people see themselves contributing to Holocaust studies from different perspectives. I would like to see inclusion of people who have not yet been seen in Holocaust studies and heard from. And this, I think, EHRI could do simply through programming. That would be an enormous help and contribution, to making the field more truly multidisciplinary” (Int12Ps3).

## II. EHRI's societal relevance

Even though the group interviews were largely focused on the academic realm, some interviewees also stressed the need for fostering exchange between society and academic research and turning academic results toward society as well as engaging non-academic participants. As one interviewee noted: “We often only look at people who are professors,

adjuncts, lecturers. There are people out there in the community who do really great work and make important contributions. There is a need to recognize this non-academic expertise. But that is not only for EHRI but for the humanities in general” (Int13Ps3). Another pointed out that EHRI was ideally positioned to convey to the public the notion of the Holocaust as a European event: “I think scholars and the public have a perception of what the Holocaust is. But in terms of integrating the Holocaust into European and global history as much as local histories of communities, but also broader histories of migration, and humanitarianism – there’s so much room for adding nuance to the public perception of the Holocaust, through our cultural institutions, but also shifting lenses from, for example, the non-ghetto or non-concentration camp geographies and perceptions of persecution. And these two images very much dominate the landscape. It’s changing but it seems like you turn to every country and there is a different Holocaust, different visions and different scholarships” (Int12Ps1).

### III. EHRI’s political relevance

Given the political challenge presented earlier, which Holocaust research faces in some countries, EHRI’s relevance as a safe environment for researchers from countries where Holocaust research is under political pressure is underscored by the group interviews: “I think that given that the politics of history is not going to disappear tomorrow, it’s very important to create safe spaces for research and conversation. This means, among other things, that especially young, unestablished scholars, can get funding for carrying out research and not depend only on their national institutions in the countries in which they live. Which can, as in the case of Poland, be increasingly problematic. And I’ve been evaluating some of these big national grants and I’ve seen already that people are formulating their projects, not only to sound smart and interdisciplinary but because they’re very cautious in how they formulate their projects not to be nixed on political grounds. So there is a great deal of good that can be done by creating short-term fellowships, by creating workshops where people can meet, and by funding the kind of research that would remain independent as much as possible” (Int3Ps2).

Another pointed out: “I have lots of thoughts about how to support and what to do with this political issue and I want to say something which might be relevant for this EHRI survey. In Hungary, EHRI is the only infrastructure which works for Holocaust research [...]. There are very few research academics who have got a position in Hungary as Holocaust historians. It is not an appointment in Holocaust studies, but in 20th-century History. And there are some who have done research and exhibitions in the field of the Holocaust but they are not trained as Holocaust researchers. So the most important infrastructure which at the moment is operational is EHRI, whatever you think about its effectiveness. So I just want to say that this is actually a very effective strategy to create parallel supporting institutions.” (Int12Ps2)

For the time being, it seems the safeguards EHRI is providing for independent Holocaust research are satisfactory, and yet urgently needed. In a similar vein, the hope was voiced that EHRI, operating on an international level, would be able to publish political statements in support of independent Holocaust research when necessary.

### Foresight Study 3

*In contrast to Foresight Studies 1 and 2, the third and last Foresight Study focussed less on aspirations and future expectations for a permanent EHRI. Rather, it focussed on an already existing EHRI offer – the EHRI Conny Kristel Fellowship. The goal was to investigate to what degree a central offer of EHRI already reflects the developments and trends identified in the previous Foresight Studies. To do so, the anonymized application material from the 245 applicants for an EHRI Fellowship between 2015 and 2018 was coded as to research topics, methodologies and research spectrum, in addition to their personal data and professional profile. The results were supplemented with and compared to (1) two non-EHRI Fellowship programs run by EHRI partners (Yad Vashem (YV) and the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for*

*Holocaust Studies (VWI)), and (2) a qualitative analysis of the authors and contributions in a selected number of international Holocaust journals as well as prominent historical journals in European countries.*

Looking at the results of Foresight Study 3 and putting it into context with the outcomes of the two previous Foresight Studies, some general observations and suggestions can be made about the future shape of EHRI's Conny Kristel Fellowship as well as about the EHRI's research strategy more broadly:

The **geographic distribution** is diverse, with emphasis on Eastern, and Western Europe as well as North America. The large percentage of (successful) applicants born and/or affiliated in Eastern Europe validate that EHRI is achieving one of its main goals: encouraging research on the Holocaust in Eastern Europe from Eastern Europe. The numbers from Southern Europe are somewhat lower, which should be considered as an incentive to encourage more applications from this region – in this way also underscoring EHRI's European and transnational approach to Holocaust research.

Although not exclusively addressed to junior researchers, EHRI does fill a gap in a landscape of fellowships, which often cater (at least in part) to more senior researchers. Kristel Fellowships are especially attractive to **researchers pursuing their PhD or early postdocs**. This is also reflected in their 'publication history' – though most have already published at least one article. The majority has, at the time of applying for an EHRI Fellowship, not published or edited a book. Most applicants work at universities and pursue academic careers.

EHRI's offering **to people who work in adjacent fields to Holocaust research** (archivists, librarians, curators, memorial site staff) is a unique opportunity, for other Fellowships are generally exclusively addressed at academics. However, the eventual number of EHRI Fellows with these professional backgrounds remains small, for various reasons. While we should keep the offer as part of the Fellowships, EHRI ERIC should also be **open to exploring other possibilities to engage with them**.

The **majority of applicants have a background in historical research**, and about 60% of the proposals suggest an archive-based history writing approach to their research. While there is a certain diversity in historical actors investigated in the projects, the majority consists of **victims and survivors**. We also see an increase of projects invested in researching **memory communities**. Compared to the diversity in historical actors, the victim groups the proposals are focussed on are, with little exception, **exclusively Jewish**, meaning that the majority of proposals suggest research on Jewish victims and survivors of the Holocaust. They are being researched within a **broad geographical scope**, the majority of roughly 40% being transnational projects taking two or more countries into account, while the remaining applications are fairly evenly split in a national and rather regional (microhistorical) geographic scope.

Input gathered during the run of EHRI-PP has suggested a need to bring people from different disciplinary backgrounds together and **encourage multi- and interdisciplinary approaches** to Holocaust research. This vision is, as of yet, not reflected in the (successful) application profiles. Even if EHRI's Kristel Fellowships largely cater to researchers needing to do archival work, it will be helpful to engage with future partners in the EHRI ERIC from different disciplinary backgrounds who can offer different kinds of expertise for an EHRI Kristel Fellowship.

While a growing number of research projects are taking the post-war years into consideration (or exclusively focusing on them), the years preceding 1933 (respectively 1939) are often excluded from the projects. To situate the Holocaust in its historical context and especially to take the roots of antisemitism in the respective countries into account, **projects with a longer timeframe (longue durée) should be encouraged**.

Finally, **assessing the field of Holocaust research via statistical assessment and literature landscape scans should become an integral part of EHRI-ERIC's work**, since it will be indispensable for the continued shaping of its research (support) strategy. An important

part of this work is to have access to successful applications/publications as well as to those who – for whatever reasons – did not make the cut.

## 2.2 Thematic Scope

EHRI focuses first and foremost on the Holocaust and connecting sources and research(ers) on the Holocaust remains at the heart of its mission. However, the topic of the Holocaust cannot be considered in a void. The project already established working relationships and collaboration with individuals, institutions and projects working in closely related fields such as studies of non-Jewish victims of Nazi crimes, war and genocide studies. In our experience there is considerable overlap in terms of research trends and questions, methods, source materials, and infrastructural requirements between these fields. This observation was confirmed by a number of participants in the interviews conducted within the scope of Foresight Study 2, and by the fact that several of the core EHRI partners have research remits beyond Holocaust studies.

Therefore, *D6.4 Position paper on the thematic scope* was used to outline EHRIs relations with and contributions to neighboring fields of research in a more structured way. This Deliverable identified four areas which constitute or have significant overlap with EHRI's thematic scope<sup>2</sup>:

- **researching the Holocaust**
- **supporting research on other Nazi persecution and murder**
- **supporting research on antisemitism**
- **supporting research on other mass atrocities**<sup>3</sup>

Three areas were identified to assess the potential ways of engagement: **Integration into the EHRI-Portal, EHRI activities and methodological guidance**, and **cooperation beyond the EHRI consortium**.

Facilitating research on the Holocaust will remain **at the core** of every EHRI activity, but EHRI-ERIC will also provide **methodological guidance** and will **encourage cooperation** with all the above-mentioned areas (e.g. applying methodological and theoretical approaches to Holocaust research to researching other mass atrocities), as long as there is mutual benefit. Especially in the area of research on other victim groups of Nazi persecution as well as research on antisemitism, EHRI will **deepen and enlarge existing forms of cooperation** and open up fellowships and workshops to researchers interested in these topics. This will help to demonstrate the various ways in which the history of the Holocaust was related, entangled and intersected with the persecution of other victim groups, while at the same time underscoring the significant relevance that antisemitic convictions and hatred had for the unfolding of the Holocaust.

Thus, Collection Holding Institutions with relevant archival holdings on other victims of Nazi Germany are welcome to make their **metadata available via the EHRI Portal**. For researchers studying antisemitism before, during and after the Holocaust, **the Portal already offers access to scientifically contextualised information** about more than 300,000 archival units. A significant portion of the Portal's information base is of direct relevance to antisemitism research and can be accessed via a structured multilingual thesaurus containing 30 terms related to the topic.

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<sup>2</sup> The areas were conceived during discussions within the WP and developments in organizations and initiatives such as the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and the EU Coordinator on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life.

<sup>3</sup> Following the USHMM's "Definitions: Types of Mass Atrocities", <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/learn-about-genocide-and-other-mass-atrocities/definitions>.

In the future, EHRI will continue and expand these fruitful exchanges and collaborations, ranging from methodological and theoretical considerations to sharing technical expertise. Realizing these synergies will not only support the research areas identified in the Deliverable 6.4 but will also be essential for the advancement of research and innovation in the field of Holocaust research itself.

### **3 Overall recommendations relating to the scientific case and research priorities**

The Foresight Studies as well as the Deliverable on the thematic scope of EHRI have helped to shape EHRI's scientific case and to identify research priorities for a permanent EHRI-ERIC. It should be noted, however, that both the scientific case and the research priorities are not set in stone, but are subject to constant review and updating. Likewise, the widespread Consortium operating on both international and national levels will be encouraged to engage in projects and activities which might not fit a concrete research priority – knowing that scientific and methodological openness is key to staying relevant as an infrastructure in an ever-developing field, such as Holocaust research.

From the diverse and important suggestions and recommendations gathered by WP 6, some are highlighted again below:

#### **Transnational and regional**

EHRI supports transnational and comparative research which contributes to the understanding of the Holocaust as a European event. At the same time, EHRI promotes research on a regional level which allows further investigation of the local relations and dynamics playing out before, during and after the unfolding of the Holocaust. EHRI has successfully promoted research(ers) from Eastern Europe and will continue to do so. In addition, increased attention should be paid to research on Southern and South Eastern Europe.

#### **Interdisciplinarity and methodological openness**

The field of Holocaust research spawns interest in a variety of disciplines. EHRI acknowledges the diversity of methodological approaches and encourages and supports inter- and multidisciplinary Holocaust research. Furthermore, while research on the history, aftermath and memory of the Holocaust remains at the core of EHRI, it maintains an openness towards neighboring fields of research and functions as a forum for multi-disciplinary engagement, methodological exchange and guidance.

#### **Engaging with digital tools**

While there is a lot of talk about the relevance of Digital Humanities (DH) for asking (and answering) new questions in the field of Holocaust studies, we do see relatively few projects making concrete use of the tools and methodological considerations provided by DH. As a digital infrastructure, it is a concern of EHRI to support and encourage scholars to integrate DH offerings into their research.

#### **Landscape scanning**

To continue to provide excellent services to the field of Holocaust Studies, it will be necessary to regularly monitor the research landscape – as it has been done via the Foresight Studies in EHRI-PP. The National Nodes will also be included in this research in order to gain a better overview of country-specific developments. The results will lay

the foundation for a regular update and renewal of EHRI's scientific case and research priorities.

The most often-named activities, through which EHRI can support and foster scientific excellence are:

### **Networking opportunities**

The possibility for meaningful connection, professional growth, networking possibilities and the prospect of collaborative work will remain core aspects of each EHRI activity.

### **Training offers**

EHRI provides a number of training possibilities (in-person, online, hybrid) that train researchers, archivists and others involved in the field of Holocaust research as well as education and commemoration. Currently, a particular focus is on familiarizing users with methodological and technical developments. However, the updating of research priorities will also lead to new priorities in training offered by EHRI.

### **Publishing possibilities**

A number of participants in the surveys and interviews conducted for the Foresight Studies stressed the limited publishing possibilities, especially the options for publishing multi- and interdisciplinary research results are still limited or less attractive. Since EHRI has an interest in making innovative research available to the scientific community as well as to a broader audience, EHRI will support its users in providing open access to their research results (e.g. HAL repository).