

Eastern Europe: A Blind Spot on the Map of Culture of Remembrance

Berlin/Bielefeld, July 13, 2022

Berlin/Bielefeld – Germans' memories of World War II are centered on events and places in Western Europe. This is a result of MEMO - the Multidimensional Remembrance Monitor. The fifth study on German culture of remembrance was presented today by the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (Institut für interdisziplinäre Konflikt- und Gewaltforschung, IKG) at Bielefeld University and the EVZ Foundation. According to the survey, 58.5% of the 1,000 representative respondents have never visited a place of remembrance of World War II and its victims located outside of Germany intentionally. Those who visited a memorial site outside Germany most often refer to France, and there to the warfare and the war graves in Normandy.

Dr. Andrea Despot, CEO, EVZ Foundation: "As MEMO V illustrates, the European, and especially the Eastern European, extent of the crimes committed by the National Socialists is little known in this country. There is a low level of awareness of the massive violence during the German occupation in Eastern Europe. This poses a challenge to educators and stakeholders of culture of remembrance, for example, when it comes to standing up against the instrumentalization of history in Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. In the MEMO youth study, which will be published in spring 2023, we will explore how this historical rupture has affected the way in which young people are shaped by culture of remembrance."

Lack of awareness of the persistent discrimination against Sinti and Roma

Two thirds of the participants (69.9%) were unable to name any place dedicated to Sinti and Roma murdered during the time of National Socialism. In principle, the respondents consider Germany to have "special moral responsibility" regarding the group of Sinti and Roma. However, more than half (55.2%) have no clear opinion on the question of whether the systematic marginalization of and discrimination against these groups persisted beyond the time of National Socialism in Germany. This also reveals that the more intensively respondents have dealt with Germany's National Socialist past, the more sensitive they are to historical continuities such as the continuing discrimination against minorities up to the present day.

Younger respondents see representatives of persecuted groups not sufficiently represented in the culture of remembrance

Only one in three respondents (33.2%) thinks that representatives of the groups persecuted under National Socialism are sufficiently represented in the German culture of remembrance. In this regard, younger respondents are particularly critical - to them, the perspective of the formerly victims of persecution is even more clearly not represented in the culture of remembrance.

Prof. Dr. Andreas Zick, head of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence, Bielefeld University: "Several challenges and areas of conflict for the culturalization of remembrance are reflected in these findings: On the one hand, it is evident that in the established, ritualized German culture of remembrance, selective stories are untold and that they are not represented enough. In particular, young people are

aware of this issue and are demanding that the multitude of perspectives be represented - in the German post-migration society, this also goes beyond the history of National Socialism and its victims. The opportunity for new, diverse approaches to Germany's National Socialist past serves as an educational capital, and the culture of remembrance can create cohesion despite all the conflicts about what should be remembered."

About MEMO

MEMO is conducted by the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (IKG) at the Bielefeld University and is funded by the EVZ Foundation. 1,000 randomly selected respondents were interviewed by telephone for MEMO 2022 between **December 2021 and January 2022.**

The respondents were aged between 16 and 93 years. MEMO Germany is an empirical study on the culture of remembrance among Germany's citizens. Since 2017, it has been an annual representative survey of the German general population that shows how our remembrance is changing. This cycle ends with MEMO V. The IKG and the EVZ Foundation will then present a representative survey of young people on the culture of remembrance in the spring of 2023.

About the IKG

The Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (IKG) was established in Bielefeld in 1996 with the aim of filling a gap in interdisciplinary research on conflict and violence. Today, the IKG is one of the leading German research institutions in this field and provides a comprehensive structure for interdisciplinary theory development and empirical research on politically and socially relevant phenomena around conflict and violence and their consequences for social cohesion, participation, democracy and peace. The IKG has been one of the sites of the Research Institute Social Cohesion (RISC) since 2020.

About the EVZ Foundation

The EVZ Foundation's mission is to keep alive the memory of the injustices of National Socialist persecution, to assume the resulting responsibility in the present, and to actively shape the future. The Foundation's central purpose when established in 2000 was to pay humanitarian compensation to former forced laborers under the National Socialist regime - a milestone in Germany's efforts to come to terms with the past. Nowadays, within the fields of activity Education and Action, the Foundation funds projects and activities that support the survivors of National Socialist persecution, international understanding and the strengthening of human rights.

Further information at www.stiftung-evz.de/memo

- MEMO - Multidimensional Remembrance Monitor V, 2022
- Download press graphics



Press contact

Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ)

Katrin Kowark

Friedrichstrasse 200 | 10117 Berlin

T: +49 (0)30 25 92 97-24

M: +49 (0)151 500 470 64

E: kowark@stiftung-evz.de